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# GULF TIMES SPORT



**SPOTLIGHT**

## Sterling says newspapers are fuelling racism

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**QNB STARS LEAGUE**

# Sparks set to fly in Duhail vs Al Sadd clash

By Sports Reporter  
 Doha

Can the feared trio of Baghdad Bounedjah and Akram Afif crack the mean Al Duhail defence when they clash in the QNB Stars League tomorrow?

Can Al Duhail's Youssef El Arabi or Almoez Ali overcome the resoluteness of AFC Player of the Year Abdelkarim Hassan who is known for his no-nonsense ways in the Al Sadd defence?

These are some of the questions on every Qatar football fan's mind as the domestic giants square off for the first time this season in a high-voltage match where sparks are expected to fly and set the tone for the remainder of the tournament.

The match was rescheduled from week 9 due to Al Sadd's semi-final match against Iran's Persepolis in the AFC Champions League, which the Wolves lost on aggregate. The kick-off is at 6.30pm at the Al Sadd Stadium.

The encounter could prove a turning point in the league in which Al Duhail have 36 points, with Al Sadd close behind on 35.

Al Duhail are the only unbeaten team in the tournament but their three



**TERRIFIC TRIO:** Akram Afif (L), Baghdad Bounedjah (C) and Hassan al-Haydos form a lethal combination for Al Sadd.

draws - two against Al Rayyan and one against Qatar Sports Club - allowed Al Sadd to close the gap to just one point and raise expectations of a tight finish.

Al Sadd are coming off a 4-1 victory over Al Shahania, while Al Duhail were held to a 1-1 draw by Qatar SC in Week 15. It was the third time that The Red Knights were dropping points this season and second successive time they were held to a draw, having had to play out a 2-2 draw with Al Rayyan in the previous round.

Both Al Sadd and Al Duhail are level on the number of victories (11). Al Duhail have a goal difference of +26 (36 goals for and 10 against).

However, The Wolves have the best goal difference among the 12 teams (+49, 62 goals for and 13 against). Al Sadd also have one defeat (against Al Ahli in the first leg) and two draws against their name.

The contest will also be noted on the tactical front.

Al Sadd's Portuguese coach Jesualdo Ferreira has had over 30 years' experience in the game, and has managed a host of top European sides including the likes of Malaga in Spain and Panathinaikos in Greece.

Al Duhail's Tunisian coach Nabil Maaloul, who replaced Algerian

Djamel Belmadi ahead of the 2018-19 season QNB Stars League, also has an impressive track record in coaching. He guided his country Tunisia at the 2018 FIFA World Cup in Russia.

The Al Sadd attack will be led by Algerian striker Bounedjah, who last week became the Qatar league's all-time top scorer in a single season when he took his personal tally to 28 goals after scoring twice against Al Shahania.

He surpassed Brazilian striker Clemerson Soares' record of 27 goals set in the 2007-08 season for Al Gharafa.

Al Sadd also have Hassan al-Haydos and Afif in attack, while their midfield will be held together by Spaniards Xavi Hernandez and Gabi Fernandez.

Moroccan striker Youssef El Arabi will spearhead Al Duhail's offence, in the company of Almoez Ali and Paolo Edmilson.

Though they will continue to miss injured midfielder Nam Tae-hee, they have the services of the likes of Karim Boudiaf and Luis Martin in the middle, and Lucas Mendes, Mohamed Mousa and Murad Naji at the rear.

Al Sadd are 13-times winners, but their last title was in 2013 after which it has been Duhail all the way except for 2016 when Al Rayyan won the title.

**SPOTLIGHT**

# QNB announces Neymar as Global Brand Ambassador

The agreement grants QNB all exclusive marketing rights of Neymar Jr as a Brand Ambassador of all the Group's marketing campaigns and advertising platforms in which he will appear across its major businesses

QNB Group, the largest financial institution in the Middle East and Africa, has announced the appointment of Brazil and Paris Saint-Germain football star, Neymar Jr, as the Group's Global Brand Ambassador.

The exclusive partnership was signed by Youssef Darwish, General Manager of QNB Group Communications, and Neymar Silva Santos, the owner of NR Sports, at QNB's Paris branch.

The agreement grants QNB all exclusive marketing rights of Neymar Jr as a Brand Ambassador of all the Group's marketing campaigns and advertising platforms in which he will appear across its major businesses.

The partnership with Neymar Jr underpins the bank's key values that reflect its commitment and passion to provide its global community of customers around the world with the best banking products and raise its US \$4.2bn valued brand's visibility in support of its vision to become a leading bank in the Middle East, Africa, and Southeast Asia by 2020, QNB said.

Neymar Jr's selection as QNB's latest Global Brand Ambassador is a reflection of the bank's commitment to enrich the lives of its customers through its growing network of international branches around the world and motivating them to persevere and pursue their dreams through the inspiring image of an exceptional player. Neymar Jr has an extraordinary social-media presence; where he boasts a total follower count of 209 million across Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

Youssef Darwish, General Manager of QNB Group Communications, said: "We are delighted to welcome Neymar to the QNB family; a man who shares many of the same values



Youssef Darwish, General Manager of QNB Group Communications (R), and Neymar Silva Santos (L), the owner of NR Sport & Marketing, sign the agreement in Paris in the presence of Brazil and PSG star Neymar Jr. At right, Darwish with Neymar Jr.

with our brand and who is always looking for opportunities to reach greatness. Named one of the 100 most influential people in the world, Neymar Jr is a true sport icon who inspires fans worldwide to strive to reach the ultimate standards of excellence.

"Neymar Jr is undoubtedly the best brand Ambassador with whom we share the same values that will bring a lot of passion to deliver an

exceptional experience to our customers. This partnership with Neymar Jr enhances our brand awareness in international markets, where QNB puts great efforts, in line with our global business strategy, and further strengthens our bid to develop the communities where we operate across our growing international network."

Neymar's father, Neymar Santos Sr, said: "We are very pleased to

be partnering with QNB. Neymar Jr shares the same values with QNB and its constant pursuit of excellence and achieving great results in every game.

"We are happy to support QNB's efforts to bring football community together through football and inspire people not to only pursue success but challenges, to be better."

QNB Group sponsors various initiatives and sports programmes in a



number of countries as part of CSR activities across its international branches as an integral part of its overall strategy to become one of the leading brands in Middle East, North Africa and South East Asia.

The Group's presence through its subsidiaries and associate compa-

nies now extends to more than 31 countries across three continents providing a comprehensive range of advanced products and services. The total number of employees is around 29,000 operating through more than 1,200 locations, with an ATM network of more than 4,300 machines.

## SPOTLIGHT

# Liverpool leapfrog Man City: do we have a real Premier League race?

City remain firm favourites to win their second consecutive title but their aura of invincibility has been shaken and a hungry Liverpool are not in the mood to back off

AFP  
London

Manchester City – Premier League champions-elect in the eyes of many – now know they are in a real scrap after Liverpool leapfrogged them to the top of the table on a telling day in the title race. Both sides started Saturday unbeaten after 15 matches with an impressive 25 wins between them – but it was Pep Guardiola's champions who blinked first.

Mohamed Salah scored a hat-trick for Jurgen Klopp's side as they romped to a 4-0 win at Bournemouth in the early kick-off, taking them to 42 points, one clear of City. City had the tougher task of taking on Chelsea at Stamford Bridge later in the day and despite dominating the first half they ended up losing 2-0 – their first league defeat since April.

City remain firm favourites to win their second consecutive title but their aura of invincibility has been shaken and a hungry Liverpool are not in the mood to back off. Guardiola took pride in his team's performance despite the defeat, saying he never felt they were going to match the Arsenal Invincibles, who went through an entire Premier League season unbeaten in 2003-04.

"We are going to try to be champions," he said. "In a season like this, with a lot of games – plus after last season – everybody wants to beat us. They put in something extra. What is important is how we react. Even if we would have won today, it's still only the beginning of December. There are still a lot of points to play for."

For all of City's much-vaunted squad depth, they sorely missed the injured Sergio Aguero at Stamford Bridge, mustering 14 shots but managing just four on target. Kevin De Bruyne – last season's club player of the year – has barely featured during this campaign because of injury and although City have an enviable supply of creative players, it is difficult to replace a player of that standard. Liverpool have not been playing with the same fluency as they did last season but they have added steel to their game and boast a phenomenal defensive record, with just six goals conceded in 16 Premier League matches.

The addition of centre-back Virgil van Dijk and goalkeeper Alisson Becker has made an enormous difference at the back and at the other end of the



Liverpool's Mohamed Salah (left) had a quiet start to the campaign by the standards of last season, but is now the Premier League's joint-leading scorer, with 10 goals.

pitch, Salah has started firing again. The Egyptian forward had a quiet start to the campaign by the standards of last season, in which he scored 44 goals in total, but is now the Premier League's joint-leading scorer, with 10 goals.

The manner in which he took his third goal yesterday in particular showed a player who is back to his best after a nasty shoulder injury in the Champions League final appeared to knock his

confidence. Liverpool are also showing the resilience of would-be champions – scoring deep into injury time last week to beat Everton and battling back from a goal behind against Burnley in midweek. It is almost impossible to overestimate what winning the Premier League would mean to Liverpool fans. Last crowned champions of England in 1990 – before the birth of the Premier League – they had to stand by and

watch as Manchester United overhauled their proud record of 18 top-flight titles.

Klopp said: "The thing is that we just really want to be as successful as possible. Nobody knows what that means, nobody. This league is so difficult to play in, but 42 points I usually had in April and now it is December. That's massive and it's exceptional and it is all to the boys, they deserve all the credit for that because they really fight for each yard."

Guardiola does not think it is going to be just a two-horse race. Arsenal, under new manager Unai Emery, are on a 21-game unbeaten run in all competitions and Tottenham are only six points off top spot while Chelsea are still in the mix. "We are only in December," said the City boss. "Can Liverpool win the Premier League? Yes. Ask me if Tottenham, Arsenal or Chelsea can – yes, of course."

## AMBITION

## Pochettino urges Spurs to fight for title

AFP  
Leicester, United Kingdom

Mauricio Pochettino challenged his Tottenham squad to fight for silverware on two fronts after seeing his team thrust themselves back into the Premier League title race with a 2-0 victory at Leicester City ahead of a Champions League trip to Barcelona in midweek.

The Tottenham manager saw his side brush the Foxes aside despite Harry Kane and Christian Eriksen, two of his most potent attacking players, playing only cameo roles off the bench. The pair will now be fresh for tomorrow's crucial Champions League trip to Catalonia with Spurs needing to win at the Camp Nou to guarantee progress to the last 16. And Pochettino believes all of his players will have a role in the hectic weeks ahead. "To show the belief you have in the squad is massive," said Pochettino.

"There's no point players playing every three days. It's not healthy, they need to rest and need some time to breathe. For some teams it's so difficult to manage. The most important thing is being genuine in the trust you have in the squad. We are showing we trust all the players. In this busy period everybody needs to be focused."

Victory in the East Midlands moved Tottenham back into third, just six points off the top of the Premier League, now headed by Liverpool following Manchester City's first defeat of the season at Chelsea.

By staying in the race despite a host of injury problems and delays over moving into the club's new stadium, Pochettino now believes his players can keep pace with the league leaders.

"The three points are massive to keep our position in the table," he added. "It's a massive win for us. The reality is we are there, fighting Liverpool, City, Chelsea and Arsenal – that's the reality. It was a tough place so I'm very happy with the performance. I am so pleased and it allows us to start thinking about Barcelona."

In the absence of Kane and Eriksen, Son Heung-min came to the fore by opening the scoring with a left-footed rocket from the edge of the penalty area before crossing for Dele Alli to head home Spurs' second just before the hour mark.

Son's impact in the first few months of the season was limited by his participation in the Asian Games, but the South Korean has been in fine form in recent weeks after skipping international duty last month.

## FOCUS

## Mata hails 'exciting' United win after frustrating run

AFP  
London

Juan Mata says Manchester United's "complete performance" against Fulham was just the tonic for a team that has endured a frustrating start to the season. United started Saturday's game on a four-match winless streak, leaving them well behind in the race for a top-four Premier League finish, but overpowered bottom club Fulham 4-1.

Ashley Young, Mata and Romelu Lukaku netted in an impressive first-half display, with Marcus Rashford sealing a 4-1 win after substitute Aboubakar Kamara had reduced the deficit from the spot. Mata said the performance and result were "basically what we needed".

"Good start, good goals, creating a lot of chances, making the fans excited about the game, about our performance,"

the Spaniard said. "We know that we are not in the position that we want to be and should be, so every game I go onto the pitch, or we go onto the pitch, I think about giving everything for the fans and giving a performance like today, so we must face every game like we did today."

Mata was one of four changes to the line-up following the 2-2 midweek draw with Arsenal and made an important contribution, becoming the third Spanish player to score 50 goals and register 50 assists in Premier League history.

"It's not bad," he said. "Fifty and 50. When I came to the Premier League a few years ago I was very excited and very motivated about my period in the Premier League and I am enjoying it so much. I am lucky to have been able to score and assist that many goals but I am still hungry for more. I want more assists, more goals, more enjoyment in the pitch, so hopefully I can do (so)."



Manchester United's Juan Mata (centre) in action against Fulham during the Premier League match at Old Trafford in Manchester on Saturday. (Reuters)

## BOTTOMLINE

## Rangers held by Dundee in Scottish Premiership

AFP  
Glasgow

Rangers lost ground in the Premiership title race with a 1-1 draw at 10-man Dundee yesterday, missing out on the chance to draw level on points with Celtic at the top of the table. After losing 1-0 at home to Aberdeen at Ibrox in midweek, the visi-

tors found themselves in trouble again when former Rangers striker Kenny Miller scored in the ninth minute, capitalising on a hesitant rearguard to beat goalkeeper Allan McGregor.

That advantage was cancelled out in the 21st minute when Dundee defender Nathan Ralph was dismissed by referee Alan Muir for a foul on Daniel Candeiias just outside the box and defender Andy Halliday fired in the resultant free-kick.

Rangers enjoyed the bulk of possession after that but their numerical superiority failed to pay off as Dundee defended stoutly for a well-deserved point that extended their unbeaten run to four games and lifted them off the bottom.

Steven Gerrard's side moved into second place, two points behind Celtic, who have a game in hand. But Rangers will have to improve significantly if they are to beat Rapid Vienna on Thursday and secure a place in the Europa League knock-out stages.

"It was not good enough," Gerrard said.

"We didn't look like a Rangers team, individually we didn't look like Rangers players. We kept making stupid decisions, we never really carried out the game plan that we worked on for the last couple of games. So no surprises in terms of the result because our performance didn't deserve better."

## MATCH REPORT

## Doherty snatches late winner for Wolves against Newcastle

Reuters  
Wolverhampton Wanderers, UK

Ten-man Newcastle United were beaten 2-1 by Wolverhampton Wanderers in the Premier League yesterday when Matt Doherty scored in the fifth minute of added time. The home side suffered from having United States international defender DeAndre Yedlin sent off for a professional foul with more than half an hour to play.

Manager Rafa Benitez was furious, apparently believing a covering defender was in position to prevent an attempt on goal. Promoted Wolves, who had beaten Chelsea 2-1 on Wednesday after six games without a win, went ahead in the 17th minute with Diogo Jota's second goal of the week.

Newcastle equalised six minutes later when Salomon Rondon, having crashed a free kick against the bar, crossed for Ayoz Perez to score. But Doherty's last-gasp header from close range pushed Wolves into the top half of the table and left Benitez's side 15th, three points above the bottom three.



Wolverhampton Wanderers' Matt Doherty celebrates after scoring against Newcastle yesterday. (AFP)

Down to ten men for 38 minutes, including five of added time, Newcastle had held out with defiance and some composure – though goalkeeper Martin Dubravka made a trio of excellent saves. But when Dubravka pushed away Diogo Jota's rising shot, the rebound fell onto the head of Matt Doherty who nodded in from six yards.

SPOTLIGHT

# Sterling accuses newspapers of fuelling racism

AFP  
London

Raheem Sterling has accused British newspapers of helping to "fuel racism" with the way they portray young black footballers after he suffered alleged abuse during Manchester City's defeat at Chelsea. Chelsea and the police are investigating the incident at Stamford Bridge on Saturday, which was highlighted on social media.

Sterling, 24, posted on Instagram yesterday, referencing a story from January about City teammate Tosin Adarabioyo reportedly buying an expensive house despite never having started a Premier League match. "The young black kid is looked at in a bad light. Which helps fuel racism and aggressive behaviour," Sterling wrote.

"So for all the newspapers that don't understand why people are racist in this day and age all I have to say is have a second thought about fair publicity and give all players an equal chance."

Sterling received a barrage of abuse from home supporters as he retrieved the ball from behind the goal during the first half of the Premier League match

at Stamford Bridge, which City lost 2-0. The England international said he was not surprised by the behaviour of the fans but did not elaborate on what was said.

"I just want to say, I am not normally the person to talk a lot but when I think I need my point heard I will speak up," he posted. "Regarding what was said at the Chelsea game, as you can see by my reaction I just had to laugh because I don't expect no better."

In his social media post, Sterling refers to headlines about Adarabioyo, 21, and fellow City youngster Phil Foden buying houses. While the article about Adarabioyo focuses on how he spent £2.25m (\$2.9m) on a property without making a top-flight appearance, midfielder Foden, 18, is described as having "set up a future".

"You have two young players starting out their careers - both play for the same team, both have done the right thing, which is buy a new house for their mothers who have put in a lot of time and love into helping them get where they are," said Sterling.

"But look at how the newspapers get their message across for the young black player and then for the young white player. "I think this is unacceptable,

both innocent, have not done a thing wrong but just by the way it has been worded."

The Football Association released a statement condemning any act of discrimination in the game. "We take all allegations of discrimination extremely seriously and will work with the clubs and the relevant authorities to ensure this matter is dealt with appropriately," it said. Former Manchester United defender Patrice Evra, who was racially abused by Luis Suarez in 2011, expressed his dismay at the incident at Stamford Bridge. "I saw what happened with @sterling7 yesterday... How does this happen still in 2018?!" the Frenchman tweeted.

Sterling, who recently signed a contract extension with Manchester City, has previously faced negative publicity, often for non-football issues. Treated as a scapegoat during England's disastrous Euro 2016 campaign, he dubbed himself "The Hated One" on Instagram. Sterling was widely criticised again ahead of this year's World Cup in Russia for having a tattoo of a gun on his leg. He explained it was a tribute to his father, who was shot dead in his birthplace of Jamaica when Sterling was just two years old.



Raheem Sterling (left) suffered alleged racial abuse during Manchester City's defeat at Chelsea on Saturday. (AFP)

LA LIGA

# Bale snaps drought as Real edge past Huesca

Messi steals the show with two free-kick goals as Barcelona maintain their lead at the top

AFP  
Madrid

Gareth Bale ended a run of 802 minutes without a goal in La Liga as Real Madrid won 1-0 at bottom side Huesca yesterday to climb back to within five points of leaders Barcelona. The Welshman struck his first goal in the league since the start of September to lift Real to a fourth win in five matches and move the European champions up to fourth place.

Bale put a halt to his longest spell without scoring in the league since joining Real as he expertly cushioned in a volley from an arcing cross by Alvaro Odriozola on eight minutes. Huesca winger Ezequiel Avila forced a brilliant stop from Real goalkeeper Thibaut Courtois, the Belgian international punching the ball to safety midway through the first half.

Bale nearly added to his haul on 25 minutes when his fierce drive from the edge of the area was tipped over by a scrambling Aleksandar Jovanovic. Gonzalo Melero should have levelled for Huesca right after the break only to nod wide of the goal despite having the whole target at which to aim.

A swerving David Ferreiro shot drew another smart save from Courtois as Real withstood a spirited fightback from the hosts, but Bale continued to threaten and forced two further saves from Jovanovic. Courtois turned over a late Moi Gomez free-kick and Huesca, who slumped to a 10th defeat in 15 games this season, were denied a point when Dani Carvajal headed off the line from Christian Rivera. Earlier, Borja Mayoral salvaged a point for Levante with a stoppage-time equaliser in a thrilling 4-4 draw away to Eibar. Eibar, who beat Madrid 3-0 in their last home game, led 4-2 with 15 minutes to play after a quick-fire brace by Charles added to goals from Sergi Enrich and Gonzalo Escalante. But Levante snatched a draw



Real Madrid's Gareth Bale celebrates after scoring against Huesca in the La Liga yesterday. (AFP)

as Tono halved the deficit before Mayoral struck at the death.

On Saturday night, Lionel Messi stole the show with two free-kick goals in a blistering display as Barcelona maintained their lead at the top of La Liga with a thumping 4-0 derby win over Catalan rivals Espanyol.

The Argentine superstar curled home two sensational set-pieces and set up

another goal as he and his teammates romped to victory at the RCDE Stadium and made sure Barca kept chasing Atletico Madrid and Sevilla at bay. Atleti and Sevilla had moved level on 28 points with Barca on Saturday after Diego Simeone's side defeated Alaves 3-0 and the Andalusians drew 1-1 at Valencia. However Messi made sure that Ernesto Valverde's team kept their place at

the top of the pile with a mesmerising display alongside front-three partners Luis Suarez and Ousmane Dembele that left Espanyol dead and buried by half-time. Messi began the rout in the 17th minute with a perfectly placed free-kick that arched past a desperate Diego Lopez, and followed that up by keeping possession under intense pressure before providing the pass for Dembele

from which the French attacker curled in a fine second.

It was then Dembele's turn to become provider a minute before the break, slipping in a super through ball that Suarez somehow took on and squeezed home from near the byline.

Messi capped a dominant team and individual display with his second free-kick of the night, which this time whipped past Lopez which such venom the Spanish goalkeeper could barely move towards it.

Nikola Kalinic opened his league account for Atletico Madrid with the opener against Alaves earlier on Saturday, before Antoine Griezmann and midfielder Rodri sealed all three points at the Wanda Metropolitano with goals in the final 10 minutes.

The only negative note for Simeone was World Cup winner Lucas Hernandez leaving the field with a knee injury in the first half. Mouctar Diakhaby's header in second half stoppage time for Valencia meant Sevilla missed the opportunity to stay just a point behind Barca. Pablo Sarabia had put the visitors into the lead nine minutes into the second half and Sevilla had chances to seal the points at the Mestalla with Ever Banega and Andre Silva hitting the post.

SPANISH LA LIGA RESULTS

Eibar 4 (Enrich 8, Escalante 57, Charles 61-pen, 65) Levante 4 (Morales 10, Rober Pier 26, Tono 75, Mayoral 90+2); Huesca 0 Real Madrid 1 (Bale 8)

Playing today: Athletic Bilbao v Girona (2000 GMT)

Played Saturday: Atletico Madrid 3 (Kalinic 25, Griezmann 82, Rodrigo 87) Alaves 0; Valencia 1 (Diakhaby 90+2) Sevilla 1 (Sarabia 55); Villarreal 2 (Bacca 83, 87) Celta Vigo 3 (Mendez 44, Okay 49, Gomez 51); Espanyol 0 Barcelona 4 (Messi 17, 65, Dembele 26, L. Suarez 45)

Played Friday: Leganes 1 (Nyom 64) Getafe 1 (Cabrera 39)

Disputed penalty earns Mainz draw with Hanover

Berlin: Daniel Brosinski's 86th-minute penalty rescued a dramatic 1-1 draw for Mainz and robbed struggling Hanover of a much-needed win in the Bundesliga yesterday. Visitors Hanover accused Mainz striker Jean-Philippe Mateta of diving to win the penalty, and were left fuming after the video assistant failed to intervene on their behalf.

"It was clearly the wrong decision," Hanover's Matthias Ostrzolek said. "Mateta told us himself that he had dived. I said that if he was a real man he would go to the referee and own up."

The second of two hotly disputed penalty decisions in the game, Brosinski's late equaliser left Hanover second from bottom in the Bundesliga table, and doomed them to a 20th consecutive away game without a win.

Hanover got off to a perfect start when Hendrik Weydandt put them ahead on 12 minutes, turning in a deflected cross from Genki Haraguchi. A resurgent Mainz had a penalty appeal waved away after the ball struck the hand of Hanover defender Kevin Wimmer just before the half-hour mark.

Referee Robert Hartmann upheld his decision after a VAR review. Hartmann was forced to suspend the game for several minutes early in the second half as flares in the away block filled the stadium with smoke.

Yet Mainz remained unfazed, and continued to push for an equaliser. The home side were finally rewarded on 83 minutes when they were given the controversial penalty. Tempers flared as Hanover protested the decision, before Brosinski coolly slotted the ball in.

Anthony Ujah appeared to have won the game for Mainz with a header in added time, but his celebrations were cut short as the goal was ruled out for offside. A second yellow card for Oliver Sorg, though, put the final flourish on a bitter afternoon for Hanover.

SERIE A

# Zapata hat-trick has Atalanta aiming for Champions League

AFP  
Milan

Duvan Zapata got Atalanta back winning ways in Serie A after consecutive losses with hat-trick against former club Udinese yesterday that brought them to within touching distance of the Champions League places.

Colombian striker Zapata's goals put Gian Piero Gasperini's side seventh, just four points away from fourth place and the final Champions League spot held by AC Milan. "We're aiming for the Scudetto (league title) now," laughed Atalanta coach Gian Piero Gasperini.

Atalanta move above Roma, both on 21 points alongside three other teams, after the capital club was thrown away a

two-goal lead to draw 2-2 at nine-man Cagliari on Saturday. Leaders Juventus are eight points clear of second-placed Napoli, who smashed Frosinone 4-0 on Saturday, with Inter Milan a further three points back in third after losing to the champions on Friday.

Milan host Torino later Sunday looking to close the gap on their city rivals to just one point. "We're in the company of great teams, everyone can fight for the Europa League and maybe even for fourth place," added Gasperini.

Zapata opened the scoring after just two minutes when Rafael Toloi nodded on a Papu Gomez corner and the Colombian finished from close range, only for Kevin Lasagna to quickly respond for the hosts, levelling 10 minutes later.

However Zapata struck again on 62 minutes when teenage substitute Musa



Barrow failed to finish Hans Hateboer's cross and the ball fell to the striker. The 27-year-old sealed the points 10 minutes from time with his first ever hat-trick in Italy, again off an Hateboer cross. "Zapata's enjoying a good moment," said Gasparini, after the South American also

scored in last week's defeat to Napoli, who had loaned him to Udinese.

Earlier on-loan Everton winger Kevin Mirallas struck his first Serie A goal six minutes into injury time to snatch a point for Fiorentina in a dramatic 3-3 draw at Sassuolo that saw both teams

finish with 10 men. Belgian Mirallas, 31, who joined the Tuscan side on a season-long loan after falling out of favour at Goodison Park, came on as a late substitute and made an instant impact when he beat Sassuolo keeper Andrea Consigli with seconds remaining.

A chaotic final period saw Sassuolo's Filip Djuricic and Fiorentina's Nikola Milenkovic sent off before Fiorentina struck back. Mirallas' late leveler, which came after his side had gone 3-1 down with 10 minutes remaining, means ninth-placed Sassuolo are also on 21 points, two points ahead Fiorentina, who drop to 12th after their eighth game without a win.

Elsewhere Parma were held 1-1 at home by 10-man Chievo after Bruno Alves' free-kick cancelled out Mariusz Stepinski's shock opener for the Serie

A bottom club, while Empoli beat Bologna 2-1 in a battle between relegation candidates.

ITALIAN SERIE A RESULTS

Sassuolo 3 (Duncan 62, Babacar 67, Senci 80) Fiorentina 3 (Simeone 70, Benassi 89, Mirallas 90+6); Empoli 2 (Caputo 10, La Gumina 80) Bologna 1 (Poli 41); Parma 1 (Bruno Alves 53) Chievo 1 (Stepinski 46); Udinese 1 (Lasagna 12) Atalanta 3 (Zapata 2, 62, 80)

Played Saturday: Napoli 4 (Zielinski 7, Ounas 40, Miliik 68, 85) Frosinone 0; Cagliari 2 (Ionita 84, Sau 90+5) Roma 2 (Cristante 14, Kolarov 41); Lazio 2 (Acerbi 79, Immobile 90+6-pen) Sampdoria 2 (Quagliarella 21, Saponara 90+9)

Played Friday: Juventus 1 (Mandzukic 66) Inter Milan 0

## SPOTLIGHT

# Ballon d'Or was an amazing night for women: Hegerberg

The Norwegian striker named the world's best female footballer tells of her pride – and why the furore over the compere's sexist remark 'got out of hand'

By Suzanne Wrack  
The Guardian

Ada Hegerberg says she wants to be remembered as the first woman to win the Ballon d'Or, after the moment she collected the biggest individual prize in football was marred by the male compere of the awards ceremony asking her if she would like to twerk on stage. "It got out of hand and I want the attention to be on the historic moment for the Ballon d'Or and what it meant for me," says Hegerberg, 23.

The elite of football gathered last Monday in Paris to crown a new king, and for the first time in its 62-year history, a queen. The Ballon d'Or, the most prestigious individual prize in the men's game, won by either Cristiano Ronaldo or Lionel Messi for the preceding 10 years, was lifted aloft by World Cup finalist Luka Modric.

And the new era also saw the inaugural women's prize picked up by Lyon striker Hegerberg – a Norwegian player with almost 300 career goals, four French league titles and a hat-trick of Coupe de France trophies and of Champions League titles.

As Hegerberg collected her prize, she gave a speech with the message for young girls all over the world to "please, believe in yourselves".

At which the host, French DJ Martin Solveig, asked the record-breaking goal-scorer "do you know how to twerk?" Cool-headed as ever,

Hegerberg replied with a curt "no" and turned to leave and, in that moment, a viral clip was born. Fury ensued. Tennis star Andy Murray, a vocal supporter of women's rights, was one of the first to voice his anger, describing levels of sexism within sport as "un-real".

"Why do women still have to put up with that shit. What questions did they ask Mbappe and Modric? I'd imagine something to do with football," Murray said on Instagram.

Hegerberg, speaking to the Guardian about her latest place in the history

books, said it was important that "outrage is there in every situation where that theme comes up", but was keen to tilt things away from the sexism row and what it says about the industry, and back to what the award represents.

"It was an amazing night for women in general and women who play football. I really want to say thank you to France Football for putting it in place, I know it's 2018 and it's been a long time coming, but at the same time it's important to show what a big step forward this is for women's football.

"It was, and is, quite emotional to be honest," she says. "I try not to use the word proud too often but I was really proud, because I was in a position to promote women's football and that's what I'm passionate about. It's a night when we celebrate the best footballers in the world, male and female.

"They're the same as us, we've been working hard every day to achieve things like this. The mutual respect is there. There is no difference. That's what's so nice about nights like this because it puts both sexes up front, and that's how it should be."

Of the 15 nominees for the inaugural award, seven were from Lyon, a testament to the five-times European champions. "It shows the mentality in the group," says Hegerberg. "I call it a team award as much as an individual award. I know I've had some fantastic seasons, but we've achieved great things together."

On Wednesday night Hegerberg was applauded by almost 60,000 fans as she took to Lyon's Groupama Stadium pitch. "It was fantastic to go home to my home pitch, a fantastic stadium, in front of great fans. It shows they appreciate the football," said Hegerberg.

"That's the philosophy from (Lyon owner) Jean-Michel Aulas and the club, it's a modern way to think. We have everything we need to perform at the highest level, that's why I feel like the club should be seen as an example. This isn't something Aulas has built in one year, it was a project, he was patient and now he has the best team. It pays off."



Lyon's forward Ada Hegerberg (centre) is congratulated by her teammates after she won the Women's Ballon d'Or award for best player in Paris last Monday. (AFP)

For serial winners, both as a team and personally, you might imagine staying motivated would be hard. But Hegerberg describes winning and scoring as an addiction: "When you first win a trophy you want to do it again and again. It keeps you hungry. People wonder what you are going to do after you've won the Champions League three times? Win it again, if I can. That's what defines the best athletes, being capable of showing up year after year at the highest level."

Last season the striker scored 15 Champions League goals, a record, and

matched Ronaldo's tally for the same duration. With 41 goals in 41 games she is 10 shy of the all-time Champions League record held by Anja Mittag of Germany, but setting that as a target for this term is looking too far ahead. "I don't think too much about how many goals I'm going to target. I work really hard and prepare really well for the season to come ... I know when I'm well prepared, when I've worked hard, the results will come."

Missing from her cabinet is international acclaim, and that is a situation unlikely to change. Having made the

decision to step back from the Norwegian national team in 2017, dismayed by the lack of commitment of the Norwegian Football Federation to women's football, the Ballon d'Or winner will not be seen on the biggest stage, at the World Cup in France next summer. But to her, principles matter.

"I wouldn't be the player I am today if I didn't stand for my values, what I'm passionate about and what I believe in. It's easy to lose yourself on the road and you have to take some tough decisions to stay true to yourself."

She is animated discussing the future

of women's football and what is needed for its growth. "Our job is to work hard. Every woman player has a responsibility to work hard and stay out of your comfort zone every day to deliver good football. We need to continue to deliver good football ... so that in the end they can't see through us, they have to see the value in it.

"There's a long way to go, there are small fights and bigger fights we need to (have). We don't have to be alone in this, we need help from bigger organisations, from men as well, who have the power to help make a difference."

## FOCUS

## Aspire Academy's 3K and 6K runs attract top athletes

Aspire Academy's third edition of the annual 3K and 6K cross-country runs featured prominently on Saturday with the participation of 16 student-athletes and over 100 recreational runners from schools, sports clubs, and sports enthusiasts across Qatar.

Renowned athletes in Qatar and the region, including Qatar's triathlete, Abdulla al-Humaidi and Kuwaiti triathlete Jassim al-Ostath, also took part in the event. The cross-country run comes as part of Aspire Academy's celebratory activities for Qatar National Day 2018. Stemming from its keenness to promote an active and healthy life-

style, Aspire Academy organised this run for both genders, aged 12 years and above.

The winners from the 6K run were, from the men, Saeed Farhan al-Adaa, who finished the race in 17 minutes and 30 seconds. In the women's event, Laila Salem clocked 32 minutes and 56 seconds.

As for the 3K run, Dery Youssef secured first place after finishing the race in 8 minutes and 56 seconds, whilst Natasha Cros clinched the first position for females as she clocked 11 minutes and 37 seconds.

The Qatari triathlete al-Humaidi described the race as an exceptional experience due to the natural terrain path at Aspire

Park. While the Kuwaiti runner Jassim praised the overall excellent organisation of the event and expressed his excitement to participate in upcoming activities at Aspire.

Cross-country running is one of the disciplines that comes under the umbrella of athletics. It also allows individuals and families to race with their loved ones as well as professional athletes, which increases the spirit of competition.

The cross-country run was organised by the athletics department at Aspire Academy with a vision of providing an opportunity for its student-athletes to partake in a wide range of running competitions.



Over 100 recreational runners from schools, sports clubs, and sports enthusiasts across Qatar took part in the Aspire Academy's third edition of the annual 3K and 6K cross-country runs.

## BOTTOMLINE

## Atlanta beat Portland to win MLS Cup

AFP  
Atlanta

Atlanta United won the Major League Soccer title in its second season of existence, defeating the Portland Timbers 2-0 in the MLS Cup final on Saturday. Atlanta's MLS Most Valuable Player Josef Martinez led the way in front of a league-record crowd of 73,019 at Mercedes-Benz Stadium, opening the scoring in the 39th minute with his 35th goal of the 2018 campaign.

Argentine defender Franco Escobar doubled the score in the 54th minute as Atlanta made coach Gerardo "Tata" Martino's last match at the helm a victory before he departs to take over as coach of Mexico. Atlanta pressed from the beginning. Martinez was sent tumbling by a challenge from Larrys Mabiala in the penalty area but play was waved on and VAR backed up the call. Atlanta's Miguel Almiron had a clear chance in the 29th minute from a cross from Greg Garza but Portland goalkeeper Jeff Attinella dived right to swat the shot away.



Atlanta United players celebrate after winning the MLS Cup. (USA TODAY Sports)

Ten minutes later Atlanta seized the lead as a sliding Michael Parkhurst sent the ball toward the penalty area and Martinez beat Liam Ridgewell at the top of the box then rounded Attinella to slot the ball into an empty net. Four minutes later Atlanta keep-

er Brad Guzan denied Portland's first real chance, set up by Sebastian Blanco's cross to Jeremy Ebobisse.

Ebobisse's close-range header was pushed away by Guzan to keep it 1-0 at the interval.

## Afghan football chiefs suspended over abuse on women's team

Kabul: Afghanistan has suspended five officials including the president of the country's football federation over allegations of sexual and physical abuse against the national women's team, officials said yesterday. The decision comes days after President Ashraf Ghani ordered the attorney general to conduct a "thorough investigation" into what he called "shocking" claims of abuse by male officials against members of the women's team – allegations that were first reported in Britain's Guardian newspaper.

"The attorney general's office has suspended...the president of the football federation, his deputy, the federation's secretary general, the head of goalkeepers and the head of provincial coordinators," Jamshid Rasuli, spokesman for the

attorney general, said. "To conduct the investigations thoroughly, collect evidence and to ensure justice, the team of prosecutors decided to suspend these people," he said, adding that all the suspended officials were male.

The Guardian cited what it described as senior figures associated with the women's team who said the abuse had taken place in Afghanistan, including at the Afghanistan Football Federation (AFF) headquarters, and at a training camp in Jordan last February.

The story quoted former captain Khalida Popal – who fled the country after receiving death threats and has spoken out previously about the discrimination women face in Afghanistan – as saying male officials were "coercing" female players.

Popal welcomed news of the suspensions, tweeting: "If we all stand together and raise our voice no one would be dare to hurt innocents. #Football is not abuse."

Safi Sadab, an AFF spokesman, said the federation was ready to "cooperate with the investigation". Football's world governing body FIFA has also said it was looking into the claims, while the Danish sports-wear Hummel announced it had cancelled a sponsorship deal with the team due to the allegations.

Afghanistan has made strides to promote female football – as well as the national side, four years ago it launched its first all-women's football league that ran in parallel with the men's. In 2017 the female teams were sidelined by a lack of funding.

NBA

# Celtics dominate Bulls for franchise record 56-point win

'It's pretty clear that he's got a flair for the moment. He's unafraid'

AFP  
Los Angeles

Jaylen Brown came off the bench to score 23 points as the Boston Celtics recorded the biggest margin of victory in franchise history with a 133-77 demolition of the Chicago Bulls on Saturday.

The Celtics improved to 15-10 on the season and the 56-point win eclipsed a 51-point victory (153-102) over the Philadelphia Warriors in 1962.

Daniel Theis delivered a career-high 22 points and 10 rebounds for the Celtics who went wire-to-wire Saturday to stretch their winning streak to five games.

The 56-point loss was the worst ever for the hapless Bulls, surpassing a 53-point (127-74) shellacking at Minnesota on November 2001. Boston exploded for a 17-0 start in the first six minutes of the game cruised to their second consecutive one-sided victory after beating New York 128-100 two days ago. Jayson Tatum had 18 points and Terry Rozier added 15 for the Celtics, who have outscored opponents an average of 126.2 to 97.6 during their five-game streak.

RESULTS		
Clippers	98-121	Miami
Atlanta	106-98	Denver
Cleveland	116-101	Washington
New York	104-112	Brooklyn
Portland	113-105	Minnesota
Chicago	77-133	Boston
Memphis	88-111	Lakers
Indiana	107-97	Sacramento
Dallas	107-104	Houston

Shaquille Harrison came off the bench to score a career-high 20 points for the Chicago, whose previous worst loss was 122-83 to Toronto last month.

The Celtics led 35-17 after one quarter as it shot 60.9 percent, and led 64-43 at the half thanks to 52.4-percent shooting.

Chicago didn't score its first field goal until the 5:06 mark of the first quarter.

Elsewhere, Luka Doncic and Wesley Matthews scored 21 points apiece as the Dallas Mavericks overcame a 35-point night from James Harden to beat the Houston Rockets 107-104. Slovenian rookie Doncic started slowly but caught fire late in the fourth, scoring 11 consecutive points to erase an eight-point Houston lead as the Mavericks recorded their ninth straight win at home.

Doncic, 19, made a floater to tie the contest 102-102 late in the fourth after Chris Paul had missed two free throws.

Harden then put up an air ball from beyond the arc and Doncic made the Rockets pay for their mistakes by draining a three-pointer to give Dallas a three point lead,



Boston Celtics guard Terry Rozier shoots on Chicago Bulls forward Cristiano Felicio of Brazil (left) during their NBA game at the United Center in Chicago. (EPA)

105-102. Eric Gordon then missed a potential tying three-pointer for Houston at the buzzer. "It's pretty clear that he's got a flair for the moment," Dallas coach Rick Carlisle said of Doncic. "He's unafraid. You don't see that every day. It's a unique three or four minutes, whatever he put together there." Harden, who overcame

early foul trouble, led all scorers while Paul finished with 23 points and eight assists. However, the Rockets couldn't hold the lead less than two weeks after losing to Dallas by 20 points at home. The Mavericks extended their longest home winning streak since winning nine straight in 2011, the year they won their only NBA

championship. Doncic finished seven of 17 from the field with seven rebounds. DeAndre Jordan finished with 12 points and 20 rebounds. Also, LeBron James had 20 points, nine assists and eight rebounds, Kyle Kuzma added 20 points and nine rebounds, and the Los Angeles Lakers dominated the Memphis Grizzlies 111-88.

SPOTLIGHT

## Booker and Ayton exchange words as frustration grows with Phoenix Suns

Reuters  
New York

With the Phoenix Suns appearing to be headed for a fourth straight season with a sub-.300 winning percentage, frustration is definitely mounting in the desert.

And according to a report by the Arizona Republic's Duane Rankin, that frustration may be reaching new heights.

After scoring just nine first-quarter points for the second straight game and suffering their seventh loss in a row, the Suns on Thursday night saw their two most high-profile players exchange emotional words to cap a night full of them.

According to Rankin, "After the game, Phoenix's top two players, Devin Booker and Deandre Ayton, exchanged words after the 10-minute cooling off period as members of the media entered the visiting locker room for the tail end of that conversation."

They have had animated conversations on the court when discussing plays but, according to Rankin, "this felt different."

"I'm an emotional guy, too," Ayton told Rankin. "I start to feel stuff. When I don't sense it and the energy is not there, that's when you start to hear my mouth. I don't care who it is. Nineteen-year vet or 15 years, it don't matter. We all have a job to do and I have to step it up a little more, too."

According to the report,

rookie Mikal Bridges and coach Igor Kokoskov were visibly upset with each other at the end of the third quarter. Video from the telecast showed Kokoskov trying to talk to Bridges and the rookie trying to walk away. But Kokoskov would not let him, constantly staying in front of Bridges' face as he tried to talk to him.

When asked by a reporter what the conversations on the bench were like when the Suns were down 25 after the first quarter, veteran player Trevor Ariza reportedly replied, "How long have you been around Basketball? ... So what do you think the conversation would be like after that?"

After the reporter responded, "Probably not very positive," Ariza summed the situation up. "Exactly. Not too happy, but again, that's on us for not playing hard."

The 108-86 loss to the Trail Blazers at Portland dropped the Suns to 4-21.

If there were doubts about whether All-Star outfielder Bryce Harper would return to the Washington Nationals, team owner Mark Lerner on Friday didn't give fans any reason to be optimistic.

"I really don't expect him to come back at this point," Lerner said on 106.7 The Fan, making his first substantial comments on the matter. "I think they've (Harper and agent Scott Boras) decided to move on. There's just too much money out there that he'd be leaving on the table. That's just not Mr. Boras' M.O. to leave money on the table."

### 12-year MLB veteran Napoli retires

Veteran catcher/first baseman Mike Napoli announced his retirement from baseball on Saturday.

Napoli, 37, played 12 seasons in the major leagues, starting with the Los Angeles Angels and followed by Texas, Boston and Cleveland. He had three stints with Texas.

He had hoped to rejoin the Indians in 2018 and was with Triple-A Columbus in April when he suffered a season-ending knee injury. An All-Star with Texas in 2012, Napoli appeared in three World Series - one each with the Rangers, Red Sox and Indians - and was part of Boston's 2013 championship team. He hit 30 or more homers twice and had one 100-RBI season during his career. In a statement on Twitter, he thanked his family, teammates and fans. He said he would pursue other career opportunities in baseball.

"I am proudest of positively affecting peoples' lives and putting smiles on peoples' faces by simply being myself, reflecting the way I was brought up in South Florida," Napoli wrote.

"I played through many injuries as well as major surgeries and I would do it all over again the exact same way." Napoli had a career batting average of .246. He hit 267 home runs and drove in 744 runs in 1,392 games. Meanwhile St. Louis Cardinals catcher Yadier Molina is slated to undergo minor surgery on his left knee next week, according to multiple reports. Cardinals president of Baseball operations John Mozeliak told St. Louis Baseball Weekly that Molina will undergo a "very small procedure." Molina is expected to recover prior to the start of spring training.

NHL

# Flames top Predators for 5th straight win

Reuters  
New York

Olivier Kylington scored his first NHL goal in a two-point game and Elias Lindholm and Sean Monahan also netted one goal and one assist as the host Calgary Flames beat the Nashville Predators 5-2 Saturday night. Goalie Mike Smith made 25 saves for his sixth consecutive victory as the Flames - who are riding a five-game winning streak - vaulted into the top spot in the Western Conference.

Kylington, a second-round pick in 2015, scored his milestone goal 72 seconds into the game to open the scoring, ripping a top-corner shot set up by Lindholm. Colton Sissons drew Nashville even with 52.6 seconds left in the opening frame, redirecting a bouncing puck into net to give him six goals on the year, but Monahan restored Calgary's lead with the lone tally of the second period at 16:40 for his team-high 18th goal.

Again the visitors drew even when Craig Smith scored 54 seconds into the third period, but Garnet Hathaway scored the eventual game-winning goal with a right-out-of-the-playbook tally at 6:03 of the third period. The Flames won a faceoff and worked the puck to Matthew Tkachuk for a point-shot blast that Hathaway deflected home.

Alan Quine, who was called up due to injuries to the Calgary forward ranks, added a much-needed insurance tally six minutes later to make his first NHL game of the sea-

RESULTS		
Philadelphia	6-2	Buffalo
Los Angeles	5-1	Las Vegas
Boston	6-3	Toronto
Ottawa	2-2	Pittsburgh
Islanders	3-2	Detroit
Tampa Bay	7-1	Colorado
Rangers	5-4	Florida
Washington	4-0	Columbus
San Jose	5-3	Arizona
Islanders	3-2	Detroit
Tampa Bay	7-1	Colorado
Rangers	5-4	Florida
Washington	4-0	Columbus
San Jose	5-3	Arizona

son even more memorable, and Lindholm iced the game with an empty netter with three minutes left on the clock. Lindholm is riding a six-game point streak in which he's collected five goals and 11 points while Johnny Gaudreau collected two assists to give him four goals and 13 points in a seven-game spree.

The Flames were without captain Mark Giordano, who served the first outing of the two-game suspension he was handed for a knee-on-knee hit on Minnesota's Mikko Koivu on Thursday, and Mikael Backlund, who was injured late in that same game after taking a hard check. Juse Saros made 20

saves for the Predators, who have lost two straight and are 2-4-0 in their last six.

### DZINGEL'S OT WINNER LIFTS SENATORS OVER PENGUINS

Ryan Dzingel's power-play goal in overtime Saturday lifted the Ottawa Senators to a 2-1 win against the visiting Pittsburgh Penguins.

After Pittsburgh was tagged for having too many men on the ice, Mark Stone, from the left circle, found Dzingel on a back-door pass. Dzingel scored on a severe-angle shot along the extended goal line 1:20 into overtime. Neither team scored in the third period after Ottawa tallied in the first and Pittsburgh in the second.

Thomas Chabot also scored for the Senators, who snapped a two-game losing streak.

Jean-Sebastien Dea scored for the Penguins, who had won two in a row. Craig Anderson, who has faced more shots than any other NHL goalie, stopped 35 Pittsburgh shots. Penguins goaltender Casey DeSmith, making his fourth straight start, stopped 27 of 29 Senators shots. Ottawa earlier in the day announced two significant injuries. Leading scorer Matt Duchene will be out for a number of weeks because of a groin problem, and winger Bobby Ryan has a concussion.

Pittsburgh played without winger Patrik Hornqvist, who left the team's game Thursday. He participated in the morning skate but was ruled out because of a lower-body injury.

Chabot opened the scoring at 4:24 of the first period. His shot from the left point sailed past DeSmith's glove for his eighth goal.



Calgary Flames centre Elias Lindholm and Nashville Predators defenseman Ryan Ellis (left) battle for the puck during the third period at Scotiabank Saddledome. PICTURE: USA TODAY Sports

HOCKEY WORLD CUP

# Germany down spirited Malaysia 5-3, Dutch beat Pakistan

Malaysia's fourth-place finish in Pool D resulted in their elimination from the event

FIH  
Bhubaneswar

The pool phase of the Odisha Hockey Men's World Cup Bhubaneswar 2018 has come to an end, with Germany confirming themselves as the winners of Pool D while the second-placed Netherlands and third-placed Pakistan reached the cross-over play-offs.

Sadly, it proved to be the end of the line for Malaysia, whose fourth-place finish in Pool D resulted in their elimination from the event.

Germany's first place finish in Pool D earns them a direct ticket to the quarter-finals, where they will await the winner of the cross-over play-off match between Belgium and Pakistan tomorrow.

A second-place finish for the Netherlands sets up a cross-over match against Canada on December 11, with the winner playing host nation India in the quarter-finals.

Germany sealed their place at the top of the Pool D standings with a 5-3 victory over Malaysia, but they certainly did not have everything their own way.

Die Honamas were outstanding in the first period, with Timm Herzbruch finding the roof of the net from a penalty corner in the opening minute before Christopher Ruhr crashed an unstoppable backhand effort into the top left corner just before the end of the quarter.

Ruhr played a decisive role in Germany's third goal, surging into the circle before seeing his cross-shot touched home by Marco Miltkau.

At 3-0, things were looking bleak for Malaysia, who desperately needed at least a draw if they were to have a realistic chance of reaching the knock-out phase. Remarkably, they dragged themselves back into the game with two goals just before half time.

Razie Rahim scored the first before setting up the second, finding the goal with a penalty corner before providing the perfect assist for the diving Nabil Noor from another penalty corner situation.

The two sides traded goals in the third quarter, with Miltkau



Germany's Christopher Ruhr scores a goal against Malaysia during the 2018 Hockey World Cup match in Bhubaneswar yesterday. (AFP)

once again showing his incredible reflexes to touch home another cross to make it 4-2 before Razie netted another to keep Malaysia within touching distance at 4-3.

Malaysia found themselves reduced in numbers due to disciplinary cards for much of the final quarter, but that did not stop them having a great chance to pull his team level from a penalty corner situation. The effort was charged down, with Germany going straight down the other end to kill the game at 5-3 thanks to Herzbruch's second goal of the day to all but end Malaysia's hopes of remaining in the competition.

"We are happy that we could win against Malaysia", said Germany's Tobias Hauke, who today made his 300th international appearance for Die Honamas, after the game.

"It was a tough game. We started really well with 3-0 up in the beginning of the second quarter, but then we got a little

bit in trouble. But I think Malaysia played quite nice today, they had good counter-attacks and good penalty-corners. We knew it before but we were not so concentrated in the third quarter in the defence.

"We're really happy to be now through to the quarter-finals. That was our aim today. Finishing at the top of the pool is good for the self-confidence and for the rhythm."

Pakistan knew that by avoiding a heavy defeat against the Netherlands they would be certain of a place in the knock-out phase of the competition.

A win against the Netherlands would be enough to move ahead of the Dutch into second place in the Pool, which would set-up a cross-over match against Canada, who finished third in Pool C, as opposed to Olympic silver medalists Belgium, Pool C's second-placed finisher.

The Netherlands were first to make a mark on the scoreboard when Thierry Brinkman netted

from close range just seven minutes into the contest, but two minutes later Pakistan's Umar Bhutta restored parity from a second phase penalty corner situation, sliding the ball under the body of onrushing Dutch goalkeeper Pirmin Blaak from a tight angle.

Pakistan gave an excellent showing in the second period, but it was the Dutch who took a 2-1 lead into half time when a beautiful interchange between Valentin Verge and player of the match Seve Van Ass ended with the former firing a cool finish between the legs of Green Shirts shot-stopper Imran Butt.

The Netherlands confirmed a second-place finish in Pool D with three goals in the second half, with Jeroen Hertzberger supplying Bob de Voogd for an easy finish before Jorrit Croon forced home a penalty corner from close range.

A 5-1 score-line was completed by Mink van der Weerden, who slammed a stunning pen-

alty corner into the roof of the net. It was the final goal of the pool phase, with total number of goals scored so far in Bhubaneswar being 111.

Speaking after the match, Netherlands midfielder Robbert Kemperman said: "We played a very solid game. In the first two quarters Pakistan defended really well. It was difficult to find the gaps but we kept the pace high. I think we can be happy after this match."

The knock-out phase begins today, with two cross-over play-off matches taking place.

At 16:45 IST, England will play New Zealand, with the winner setting up a quarter-final meeting against Pool A winners and reigning Olympic champions Argentina on Wednesday 12 December.

The second match today sees France facing China, with Pool B winners and reigning world champions Australia lying in wait in the quarter-finals for the winner.

RUGBY

## Late tries enable NZ to avoid shock Sevens exit

AFP  
Cape Town

Two tries in the last minute enabled New Zealand to stay in contention for the title on the first day of the World Rugby Cape Town Sevens tournament at Cape Town Stadium on Saturday.

New Zealand, winners of the opening tournament of the 2018/2019 season in Dubai last weekend, faced elimination before the quarter-final stage for the first time in their history until they rallied to beat hosts South Africa 26-21 in the final match of the day.

An injury-hit New Zealand side needed to win to qualify for the knock-out stage after suffering a shock 21-17 defeat against Samoa in an earlier Pool A match.

Inside the last minute, South Africa's Blitzboks led 21-14 but Sione Moliia scored a late converted try to draw the teams level. There was just enough time for New Zealand to kick off, South Africa were unable to secure possession and Vilimoni Koroi scored in the left corner.

South Africa, New Zealand and Samoa were tied at the top of the table but South Africa, the defending series champions, won the group ahead of New Zealand on points difference.

While South Africa and New Zealand go through to Sunday's

Cup quarter-finals, Samoa will have to compete for the secondary Challenge Trophy.

"The belief was always there," said New Zealand captain Andrew Kneustubb.

"It was a matter of taking it on to the park. It was lucky we pulled up our socks in the last couple of minutes."

South Africa captain Philip Snyman, wearing a special multi-coloured jersey to mark the 100th anniversary of the birth of former president Nelson Mandela, said: "New Zealand kept their composure.

"It's lucky (for us) that it's only day one. We'll have to be a bit sharper tomorrow."

South Africa meet Scotland in the quarter-finals while New Zealand play Australia.

New Zealand's win over South Africa was a reverse of their defeat against Samoa, for whom Tula Maloi came off the bench to score the winning try after the final hooter.

The United States, runners-up in Dubai, won all three matches against Japan, Spain and Argentina to top Pool B and qualify to play England at the last-eight stage.

Spain gained a surprise 35-12 win over Argentina to earn a place in the quarter-finals and condemn Argentina to the Challenge competition.

The Spaniards will play perennial contenders Fiji, who clinched first place in Pool C with a 21-19 win over England in a top-of-the-table clash.



Branco du Preez of South Africa is chased by Jona Nareki of New Zealand during the 2018 HSBC Cape Town Sevens at Cape Town Stadium in Cape Town. (EPA)

FIGURE SKATING

# Kihira upsets Zagitova to win ISU Grand Prix Final

AFP  
Los Angeles

Japan's rising star Rika Kihira won the battle of the 16-year olds, upsetting reigning Olympic champ Alina Zagitova to claim ladies' gold at the ISU Grand Prix Figure Skating Final on Saturday. Skating her free programme 'Beautiful Storm' by Jennifer Thomas, Kihira missed her first triple Axel but skated clean the rest of the way, including nailing her triple Lutz-toeloop.

"I made a mistake early but got to go out there and finish. I am really happy to perform that way on this stage," said Kihira. Kihira, who also won the short programme, finished with a personal best total score of 233.12 points to beat runner-up Zagitova by more than six points.

European champion Zagitova, skating to "Carmen" in her free programme, earned a total of 226.53 points while her Russian compatriot Elizaveta Tuktamysheva grabbed the third spot on the podium with 215.32 points. The women's competition was a Japan-Russia affair as Japan's Kaori Sakamoto placed fourth, Russia's Sofia Samodurova finished fifth and Japan's Satoko Miyahara was sixth.

Kihira earned \$25,000 for finishing first while Zagitova collected \$18,000. Kihira's victory continued

RESULTS	
<b>Women</b>	Final standings after free skate
1. Rika Kihira (JPN) 233.12 pts, 2. Alina Zagitova (RUS) 226.53, 3. Elizaveta Tuktamysheva (RUS) 215.32, 4. Kaori Sakamoto (JPN) 211.68, 5. Sofia Samodurova (RUS) 204.33, 6. Satoko Miyahara (JPN) 201.34	
<b>Free skate</b>	1. Rika Kihira (JPN) 150.61, 2. Alina Zagitova (RUS) 148.60, 3. Elizaveta Tuktamysheva (RUS) 144.67, 4. Kaori Sakamoto (JPN) 141.45, 5. Sofia Samodurova (RUS) 136.09, 6. Satoko Miyahara (JPN) 133.79
<b>Ice Dance</b>	Final standings after free dance
1. Madison Hubbell-Zachary Donohue (USA) 205.35, 2. Victoria Sinitsina-Nikita Katsalapov (RUS) 201.37, 3. Charlene Guignard-Marco Fabbri (ITA) 198.65, 4. Alexandra Stepanova-Ivan Bukin (RUS) 196.72, 5. Tiffani Zaggorski-Jonathan Guerreiro (RUS) 184.37, 6. Kaitlin Hawayek-Jean-Luc Baker (USA) 184.04	
<b>Free dance</b>	1. Madison Hubbell-Zachary Donohue (USA) 124.82, 2. Victoria Sinitsina-Nikita Katsalapov (RUS) 124.04, 3. Charlene Guignard-Marco Fabbri (ITA) 120.35, 4. Alexandra Stepanova-Ivan Bukin (RUS) 119.52, 5. Kaitlin Hawayek-Jean-Luc Baker (USA) 112.71, 6. Tiffani Zaggorski-Jonathan Guerreiro (RUS) 111.39
<b>Pairs</b>	Final standings after free skate
1. Vanessa James-Morgan Cipres (FRA) 219.88, 2. Cheng Peng-Yang Jin (CHN) 216.90, 3. Evgenia Tarasova-Vladimir Morozov (RUS) 214.20, 4. Natalia Zabiako-Alexander Enbert (RUS) 201.07, 5. Nicole Della Monica-Matteo Guarise (ITA) 187.63, 6. Daria Pavliuchenko-Denis Khodykin (RUS) 186.81	
<b>Free skate</b>	1. Vanessa James-Morgan Cipres (FRA) 148.37, 2. Cheng Peng-Yang Jin (CHN) 141.21, 3. Evgenia Tarasova-Vladimir Morozov (RUS) 140.16, 4. Natalia Zabiako-Alexander Enbert (RUS) 125.89, 5. Daria Pavliuchenko-Denis Khodykin (RUS) 125.57, 5. Nicole Della Monica-Matteo Guarise (ITA) 117.86

a breakthrough season in 2018. She won two prior grand prix events - the Internationaux de France in Grenoble and the NHK Trophy in Hiroshima where she posted her previous best score of 224.31. She is the first woman to land a triple Axel-triple toeloop in competition when she did it at the junior grand prix finals last year. Zagitova started the 2018 season several centimetres taller after going through a growth spurt over the summer. But she adapted almost immediately to

the added height, winning grand prix series events in Helsinki and Moscow. Zagitova burst onto the scene last year winning gold at the European Championships. She says she is feeling the pressure more this season.

"The first season is easier than the second one. Because you go out the first time there are no expectations and you can just skate," she said. Madison Hubbell and Zachary Donohue continued the US domination of ice dance by winning the

gold medal with a free dance total score of 205.03. The duo won the sixth ice dance gold medal for the US in the history of the Grand Prix Final. The US has also won a medal in ice dance at every final since 2006. In the pairs, France's Vanessa James and Morgan Cipres rallied from a fourth place finish in the short program to capture gold with 219.88 points. James and Cipres scored 148.37 points in the free skate to beat out runners-up Peng Cheng and Jin Yang of China.



Ladies free programme gold medalist Japan's Rika Kihira poses with her medal at the ISU Grand Prix of Figure Skating Final 2018-19 in Vancouver. (AFP)

MOTORSPORT

# Champ al-Khelaifi clinches double in QTCC opener

Al-Asiri second and third respectively in the two races

By Sports Reporter  
Doha

Defending champion Abdulla al-Khelaifi won both the races of the opening round of the Qatar Touring Car Championship (QTCC) this weekend at Losail International Circuit.

In the first race, the Qatari rider took the lead starting from pole, crossing the checkered flag in a time of 24:32.701 in his new Honda S2000 car.

Newcomer drivers Ahmed al-Asiri in a Honda Civic and Hamad al-Sulaiti, driving a Toyota GT86, finished second and third respectively.

The second race had to be re-started due to a red flag in the first lap as drivers Ibrahim al-Mannai and Nasser al-Ahbabli crashed in turn 7 and their cars got stuck in the gravel.

After the green flag, with a reverse grid in race two, it took only three laps for al-Khelaifi to regain the lead and race to yet another victory.

Mohamed al-Khailat finished second in a Toyota GT86. Al-Asiri completed the podium.

"At the beginning of the three laps, al-Asiri was pushing very hard and I tried to get rid of him because as long as he caught me in the straight I am done, so I had to build a big gap. I managed to do that by the fifth lap and by that time al-Asiri pace came down so I was in the safe zone and managed to secure the win," al-Khelaifi said after the first race.

"Race 2 was a bit difficult after the crash and the re-start of the race but I managed to overtake Mohamed al-Khailat who was leading

the race by the fourth lap. Towards the end of the race, I tried to relax but it was not a good idea as immediately Mohamed caught me and I had a difficult time to build the gap again but finally I got the victory again."

For al-Asiri, it was a great first race. "The race was good for me being my first time racing here. I had to push 120 percent behind the champion and it was very hard. I tried to push in the first three laps, as hard as I can but I couldn't reach him, I was closer in one section but then he went away, so I decided to take it easy and secure the second place," he said.

Newcomer al-Sulaiti was very happy with his first podium of the season. "This is great and I am very happy with my result. First time racing in the championship and getting third place is amazing for me. Hope I can stay like this and be back in the podium," he said.

Another newcomer, al-Khailat, too was happy with his podium finish in the second place. "Overall I am very happy, being my first time in this championship. In the first race I had some problems and finished sixth but in the second race, it was a very good beginning for me because I started in front and kept the first position for some laps. Hopefully for the next round we will be readier and try to take some weight off of the car and be faster on the track," al-Khailat said.

Trophies were presented by Losail Circuit Sports Club (LCSC) vice-president and general manager Khalid al-Remaihi and LCSC CEO Juan Baquero.

The next round of Qatar Touring Car Championship will be held on December 14-15, 2018.



Winner Abdulla al-Khelaifi (centre) poses with second-placed Ahmed al-Asiri (left) and third-placed Hamad al-Sulaiti on the podium for the first race of the opening round of the Qatar Touring Car Championship (QTCC) at the Losail International Circuit.



Winner Abdulla al-Khelaifi (centre) poses with second-placed Mohamed al-Khailat (left) and third-placed Ahmad al-Asiri on the podium for the second race of the opening round of the QTCC.

GOLF / SOUTH AFRICAN OPEN

## Oosthuizen ends 33-month winless run in Johannesburg

AFF  
Johannesburg

Louis Oosthuizen ended a 33-month winless run by lifting the South African Open trophy for two shots at the first time yesterday after a six-shot victory at Randpark Golf Club in Johannesburg.

The 2010 British Open champion last triumphed on the European Tour in 2016 when he won the Perth International in western Australia.

The 36-year-old South African closed with a four-under-par 67, struggling off a poor start to eagle 14 and finish well clear of runner-up Romain Langasque from France.

Schedule clashes meant Oosthuizen was playing in the South African Open for the first time since 2010 and he wept after clinching an ultimately comfortable victory.

"This is a very special victory for me as I become only the sixth golfer to win the two oldest national golf championships, the British Open and the South African Open."

Fellow South Africans Ernie Els, Bobby Locke and Gary Player, Swede Henrik Stenson and New Zealander Bob Charles previously achieved the 'double'.

"I did not start well today, scrambling a par at one and dropping shots at two and three before recovering with four birdies to turn two under for the round," said Oosthuizen.

"For the second successive round I struggled off the tee early on and had to bite the bullet before coming good as the round progressed.

"While realising that I was building a good lead, it was not until 14 that I could relax a little bit.

"My nine-iron second at that par-five hole was a perfect shot, leaving me with a short putt for an eagle."

Oosthuizen opened with a



62 for the first-round lead, but trailed fellow South African Charl Schwartzel by two shots at the halfway mark having carded a 70.

A third-round 67 gave him a three-stroke advantage and the expected final-round challenges from Schwartzel and in-form Matt Wallace of England never materialised.

Instead, Langasque, who trailed Oosthuizen by seven shots after three rounds, fired a five-under 66 that included an eagle and five birdies to surge into second spot.

Major winner Schwartzel closed with a 72 to share third place with compatriots Thomas Aiken (67) and Bruce Easton (66) and Oliver Wilson (67) from England.

LEADING SCORES AFTER FINAL ROUND

- 266 – Louis Oosthuizen (RSA) 62-70-67-67
- 272 – Romain Langasque (FRA) 69-68-69-66
- 274 – Thomas Aiken (RSA) 67-68-72-68, Bruce Easton (RSA) 68-69-71-66, Charl Schwartzel (RSA) 67-63-72-72, Oliver Wilson (ENG) 73-66-68-67
- 275 – Yikeun Chang (KOR) 70-65-72-68, Brandon Grace (RSA) 66-68-71-70, Jbe Kruger (RSA) 66-67-72-70, Anthony Michael (RSA) 67-71-69-68, Madalitso Muthiya (ZAM) 63-68-71-73, Haydn Porteous (RSA) 68-70-68-69, Brandon Stone (RSA) 71-67-71-66, Jeff Winther (DEN) 68-69-68-70

SPOTLIGHT

## Transgender boxer Pat Manuel makes history with pro win

AFF  
Los Angeles

Transgender boxer Pat Manuel made history Saturday with a unanimous decision victory over Mexican super-featherweight Hugo Aguilar in Indio, California.

Manuel, 33, became the first transgender male to fight professionally in the United States.

"I wouldn't trade any of it. It was worth everything I went through to get to this point," Manuel said, according to the Los Angeles Times. "I'm a professional boxer now."

Manuel fought in the 2012 US Olympic trials as a female, but a shoulder injury spelled the end of a bid to make the team for the Lon-

don Games after just one bout.

Months later he began the transition to male, and after surgery and hormone treatments waded through the bureaucracy of getting licensed to fight.

California boxing authorities were wary of granting a license, but once the International Olympic Committee ruled prior to the 2016 Rio Games that female to male transgender athletes could compete "without restriction" the way was cleared for him.

Aguilar, fighting in the United States for the first time, learned of Manuel's transition just two days before the bout," the Times reported. But he said it wasn't a problem.

"For me it's very respectable," he said. "It doesn't change anything for me. In the ring he wants to win and I want to win too."

SECOND TEST

## Woodland, Hoffman in three-way tie for shootout lead

AFF  
Miami

Gary Woodland and Charley Hoffman had eight birdies in their eight-under 64 on Saturday to join a three-way tie for the lead after the modified alternate-shot second round of the QBE Shootout.

Americans Woodland and Hoffman had the round of the

day at Tiburon Golf Club in Naples, Florida. It was good enough for a share of the lead on 19-under 125 alongside two teams who shared the overnight lead: Graeme McDowell and Emiliano Grillo and Patton Kizzire and Brian Harman.

Northern Ireland's McDowell and Argentina's Grillo had eight birdies, including five in a row from the 10th through the 14th. That stretched ended with their second bogey at 15, but their six-

under 66 kept them in a strong position going into Sunday's four-ball final round.

"Emiliano's partner showed up today," said McDowell. "I felt a little bit more comfortable."

He admitted the duo were disappointed with their "slow finish" – after their bogey at 15 they parred the last three – but said they went into the final round with plenty of confidence.

"We both played really well,"

McDowell said. "We look forward to getting out there tomorrow. I think if we continue to play this way we have a chance."

Kizzire and Harman had five birdies, a bogey and an eagle in their 66.

Americans Kevin Na and Bryson DeChambeau, who shared the overnight lead, slipped a shot off the pace after a 67 that included seven birdies and two bogeys.

Having joined the leading group, Woodland and Hoffman said they would keep the lead down in Sunday's best ball round.

"Best ball you've got to be aggressive," Woodland said, with Hoffman adding: "Two looks at birdie on every hole is the most important thing."

The tournament featuring 12 two-person teams is the 30th edition of the unofficial event founded by Greg Norman.

BOXING

# Lomachenko beats Pedraza to unify lightweight belts

AFF  
New York

Vasiliy Lomachenko added the World Boxing Organization lightweight world title to his World Boxing Association belt with a unanimous 12-round decision over Jose Pedraza on Saturday.

Ukraine's Lomachenko, a three-weight world champion who had never before unified two titles in the same class, knocked down Pedraza twice in an explosive 11th round.

Two judges saw it 117-109 for Lomachenko while a third made it 119-107 for the 30-year-old who was fighting for the first time since having shoulder surgery in the wake of his 10th-round technical knockout of Jorge Linares on May 12.

"Everything is good – I'm healthy 100 %," Lomachenko declared after wrapping up the victory to improve to 12-1 with nine wins inside the distance.

"I am happy," he said. "I (moved) a little closer to my dream, to my goal."

That's to unify all of the major lightweight belts.

"Two more belts, and maybe we can make in the next year a fight with Mikey Garcia," he said.

Garcia is the unbeaten World Boxing Council 135-pound champion.

Pedraza, making his first defense of the WBO title he won with a unanimous decision over Ray Beltran on August 25, was the first fighter to go the distance against Lomachenko since Suriya Tatakhum in a featherweight world title bout in 2014. Lomachenko had stopped

eight fighters inside the distance since then.

"He did a very good job," Lomachenko said of Pedraza's staying power. "I respect Pedraza, the Pedraza team – very good job."

On the undercard, Mexico's Emanuel Navarrete battered previously unbeaten Isaac Dogboe to seize Dogboe's World Boxing Organization super bantamweight world title.

Navarrete rocked Dogboe in the 10th round and dominated the rest of the way with two judges awarding him the fight by scores of 116-112 and a third making it 115-113.

Navarrete, an underdog against the London-based Ghanaian champion, made the most of his height and reach advantage.

Dogboe, his face bloodied and swollen, had to dig deep to avoid a knockout over the final two

rounds.

"It was a great fight, and Emanuel Navarrete fought like a true Mexican warrior," said Dogboe, who fell to 20-1 with 14 knockouts.

He was making the second defense of the title he won with an 11th-round knockout of Jessie Magdaleno on April 28. On August 25 in Arizona he stopped Japan's Hidenori Otake.

Navarrete, 23, improved to 26-1 with 22 knockouts.

He hasn't lost since dropping a four-round unanimous decision to Daniel Argueta in his fourth pro bout six years ago.

"Hearing those words was the culmination of a dream," Navarrete said of hearing his name announced as world champion. "This world championship represents every day that I was working away from my family. This title represents sacrifice."



Vasiliy Lomachenko (left) knocks down Jose Pedraza (right) in the eleventh round of their WBA/WBO lightweight unification bout at The Hulu Theater in Madison Square Garden in New York on Saturday. (AFP)

## FIRST TEST

## Australia lose four wickets in record India run chase

AFP  
Adelaide

Australia were staring at defeat in the first Test yesterday, losing four wickets in their record run chase at the Adelaide Oval after being set a target 323 to win by India.

At stumps they were 104 for 4, needing another 219 for an unlikely victory with their fate resting on the shoulders of Shaun Marsh, who was not out 31, and local boy Travis Head who remained unbeaten on 11.

India amassed 307 in their second innings with vice-captain Ajinkya Rahane smashing 70 and first innings century-maker Cheteshwar Pujara a composed 71.

A late collapse got the crowd on their feet and gave Australia a flicker of hope, with India's last four wickets falling for just four runs.

Spinner Nathan Lyon was the pick of the bowlers, taking six wickets for 122 runs off 42 overs. It was his 13th five-wicket haul in Tests. Mitchell Starc snared 3 for 40.

Australia need to make history to win. The only successful fourth innings Test run chase of more than 300 at Adelaide came in 1902, when the hosts made 315 to beat England, with the biggest in modern times the 239 West Indies managed in 1982.



India's Mohamed Shami (right) celebrates the wicket of Australia's Marcus Harris on the fourth day of the first Test in Adelaide yesterday. (AFP)

dies managed in 1982.

"The home side can take some comfort, though, by Western Australia in a domestic match last month scoring 313 to beat South Australia here when Marsh was 163 not out.

"We definitely still believe we can win this. It's just about coming out tomorrow, winning the first ball, the first over, the first hour," said Lyon.

"Just simple cricket, we need to not complicate things and just go out there and enjoy ourselves and compete hard and fight our backsides off."

## SET THE TONE

Australian opener Aaron Finch — who survived being given out lbw second ball when a review showed Ishant Sharma had overstepped the crease — made just

Scorecard		
INDIA 1st inn	250 all out	8-303 (Rahane), 9-303 (Shami), 10-307 (Sharma)
AUSTRALIA 1st inn	235 all out	
INDIA 2nd inn (o/n 151-3)		
K.L. Rahul c Paine b Hazlewood	44	
M. Vijay c Handscomb b Starc	18	
C. Pujara c Finch b Lyon	71	
V. Kohli c Finch b Lyon	34	
A. Rahane c Starc b Lyon	70	
R. Sharma c Handscomb b Lyon	1	
R. Pant c Finch b Lyon	28	
R. Ashwin c Harris b Starc	5	
M. Shami c Harris b Lyon	0	
I. Sharma c Finch b Starc	0	
J. Bumrah not out	0	
Extras	(b21, lb13, w2) 36	
Total	(10 wickets, 106.5 overs) 307	
Fall of wickets:	1-63 (Vijay), 2-76 (Rahul), 3-147 (Kohli), 4-234 (Pujara), 5-248 (Sharma), 6-282 (Pant), 7-303 (Ashwin),	
Bowling:	Starc 21.5-7-40-3, Hazlewood 23-13-43-1, Cummins 18-4-55-0, Lyon 42-7-122-6, Head 2-0-13-0	
AUSTRALIA 2nd innings		
A. Finch c Pant b Ashwin	11	
M. Harris c Pant b Shami	26	
U. Khawaja c Sharma b Ashwin	8	
S. Marsh batting	31	
P. Handscomb c Pujara b Shami	14	
T. Head batting	11	
Extras	(lb1, nb1) 3	
Total	(four wickets, 49 overs) 104	
Fall of wickets:	1-28 (Finch), 2-44 (Harris), 3-60 (Khawaja), 4-84 (Handscomb)	
Bowling:	Sharma 8-3-19-0, Bumrah 11-5-17-0, Ashwin 19-4-44-2, Shami 9-3-15-2, Vijay 2-0-7-0	

11 in his second failure of the match.

He was caught behind off spinner Ravichandran Ashwin when the ball whistled past his glove. He chose not to review the decision, which was a mistake. Replays showed the third umpire would have overturned it.

Debutant Marcus Harris matched his first innings score of 26, hitting three crunching boundaries before he was caught by Rishabh Pant off Mohamed Shami, getting an edge on an attempted cut shot.

Australia desperately needed the

experienced Usman Khawaja to stick around but he decided to run down the pitch to an Ashwin delivery on eight and sliced it to Rohit Sharma, who took a difficult catch.

And when Handscomb miscued a pull shot off Shami on 14 to Pujara, they were in deep trouble.

Play had started 30 minutes early to make up for rain disruptions on Saturday, with Australia needing an early breakthrough to build on the momentum after Virat Kohli fell to Lyon near the close on day three.

But two fours from Pujara off Josh Hazlewood in the second over of the day set the tone.

The right-hander brought up 50 — his 20th in Tests — with a three off Lyon and hardly looked troubled until the off-spinner fooled him half an hour before lunch and Finch caught him off bat and pad.

It was a crucial 87-run partnership with Rahane, who brought up his 16th half-century with a boundary.

He was eventually out going for a needless reverse sweep off Lyon, with Starc picking up the catch.

The aggressive Pant went in search of quick runs as India's lead approached 300, whacking three fours and a six in succession off one Lyon over.

But when he went for another big hit and fell for a quick-fire 28, it prompted a collapse from 282 for 5 to 307 all out.

## SPOTLIGHT

## Mushfiqur steers Bangladesh to easy win against WI

Wicketkeeper-batsman hits unbeaten 55 as hosts reach 196-run target in 36th over



West Indies' Shimron Hetmyer (left) is clean bowled as Bangladesh's Mushfiqur Rahim looks on during the first ODI in Dhaka yesterday. (AFP)

AFP  
Dhaka

Mushfiqur Rahim top scored with an unbeaten 55 as Bangladesh defeated West Indies by five wickets in the first one-day international in Dhaka yesterday.

Set a modest target after three wickets each from Mashrafe Mortaza and Mustafizur Rahman helped Bangladesh restrict West Indies to 195-9, the hosts sailed to 196-5 in 35.1 overs for a comprehensive win to kick off the three-match series.

Mushfiqur shared 57 runs with Shakib Al Hasan for the fourth wicket to steady Bangladesh's innings after West Indies had reduced the home side to 89-3 on a slow pitch at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium.

Royman Powell dismissed Shakib for 30 to break the

stand but Soumya Sarkar killed off the visitors' hopes with a brief cameo of 19 from 13 balls, which included two fours and a six.

Mushfiqur, who hit five boundaries in his patient knock, pushed Roston Chase for a single to complete his 31st fifty in ODIs before an outside edge to leg spinner Devendra flew to third man for two runs to wrap up the victory.

Earlier, opener Liton Das scored 41 off 57 balls with five fours for the home side, but not before he was reprieved on five off a no-ball by Kemar Roach.

West Indies owed their total to 43 off 59 balls by opener Shai Hope and contributions from lower order batsmen Roston Chase and Keemo Paul, who made 32 and 36 runs respectively.

The visitors, who opted to bat first, had been restricted to 127-6 after 40 overs despite Hope's effort, but Chase and

Paul put on 51 runs for the seventh wicket to give their bowlers something to fight for.

Paul hit two sixes and a four in his 28-ball innings before he was dismissed by Mustafizur in the final over.

Left-arm pacer Mustafizur finished with 3-35 after fellow fast bowler Mashrafe grabbed 3-30 playing his 200th ODI — the first Bangladeshi to do so.

Mashrafe was named man of the match for his effort.

"The West Indies are very dangerous in this format but our bowlers were brilliant," Mashrafe said after the match.

West Indies' Powell blamed his side's batting for their defeat.

"We just didn't bat as well as we wanted to and that brought about our downfall. The players who got starts on such a hard wicket should have carried on," he said.

The second match of the series will be held at the same venue tomorrow.

## Scorecard

WEST INDIES	10-0-61-1 (w1)
K. Powell c Hossain b Shakib 10	
S. Hope c Hasan b Mortaza 43	
D. Bravo c Tamim b Mortaza 19	
M. Samuels c Liton b Hossain 25	
S. Hetmyer b Hasan 6	
R. Powell c Das b Mortaza 14	
R. Chase c Hasan b Rahman 32	
K. Paul c Hasan b Rahman 36	
K. Roach not out 5	
D. Bishoo c & b Rahman 0	
O. Thomas not out 0	
Extras (lb 3, w2) 5	
Total (nine wickets, 50 overs) 195	
Fall of wickets:	1-29 (Powell), 2-65 (Bravo), 3-78 (Hope), 4-93 (Hetmyer), 5-119 (Powell), 6-127 (Samuels), 7-178 (Chase), 8-194 (Paul), 9-195 (Bishoo)
Bowling:	Hasan 10-0-30-1, Shakib 10-0-36-1, Rahman 10-0-35-3, Mortaza 10-0-30-3 (w1), R. Hossain
INDIA 1st inn	250 all out
AUSTRALIA 1st inn	235 all out
INDIA 2nd inn (o/n 151-3)	
K.L. Rahul c Paine b Hazlewood	44
M. Vijay c Handscomb b Starc	18
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R. Pant c Finch b Lyon	28
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AUSTRALIA 2nd innings	
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## FOCUS

## Qatar Superstock will be the best in Middle East, says Sports Minister



HE the Minister of Culture and Sports Salah bin Ghanem bin Nasser al-Ali.

QNA  
Doha

HE the Minister of Culture and Sports Salah bin Ghanem bin Nasser al-Ali has expressed the hope that the Qatar Superstock 600 series will develop into the best event of its kind in the region.

In a press statement while attending the first round of the event at Losail International Circuit, HE al-Ali said that Qatar has the ability to make this tournament the largest and most important in the region through increasing investments and attracting leading riders.

HE added that the organisers want the competition to develop annually and achieve sustainability through high participation.

HE the Minister expressed his delight at the large number of riders who took part in the event and was particularly happy that there were lots of entries from Kuwait, Australia and Hungary.

HE praised the Losail Circuit Sports Club for organising events that help the youth develop their skills and giving them a safe environment to compete in prestigious competitions.

He said that the championship

has achieved great success despite being only in its third year, pointing out that it welcomed new faces. This fact confirms the competition has made great progress over the past two years.

The Minister lauded Losail Circuit Sports Club for establishing the Qatar Motorsports Academy, saying it was a pleasure for him to visit it and learn about its work, especially as it offers the opportunity to children to enjoy motorcycling.

HE added that the academy emphasises the role of the State of Qatar in sports, as it includes 71 children of different nationalities who were selected out of the 211 children.

HE pointed out that 25 of the 71 children were Qatari and it represents a remarkable success.

HE stressed that the academy aims to co-operate with other academies around the world, as well as expand its scope in the future by training aspiring four-wheel racers, especially as Qatar has many heroes in this sport, notably Nasser Saleh al-Attiyah.

HE the Minister said that this academy will be able over time to attract riders from abroad, especially Europe, as Qatar offers appropriate weather during the European winter.

## Want tailenders to show bit more application, says Bangar

India's batting coach Sanjay Bangar wants the tail-end batsmen to show a bit more application than what they did in the second innings on the fourth day of the opening Test match here yesterday.

Ravichandran Ashwin (5), Ishant Sharma (0), Mohamed Shami (0) and Jasprit Bumrah (0) could only manage to add five runs to the total as India

were all out for 307. "We were expecting at least 25 (more) runs from there. That is an area where we are continuously looking to improve. And we are hoping that the lower order, especially the tailenders at 9, 10, 11 show a bit more application than what they did today," Bangar told reporters after the end of the day's play.