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Roy century sets up England win over Bangladesh

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**TENNIS**

# Barty ends 46-year Aussie wait for French Open title

She will be best-ranked Australian woman since Evonne Goolagong Cawley in 1976 when she rises to second on Monday



Australia's Ashleigh Barty hugs the Suzanne Lenglen trophy after winning the French Open women's final at Roland Garros in Paris yesterday. (AFP)

**AFP**  
Paris

Ashleigh Barty ended Australia's 46-year wait for a French Open singles title yesterday by thrashing nervous Czech teenager Marketa Vondrousova in a one-sided women's final.

Eighth seed Barty got off to a strong start and never looked back, winning 6-1, 6-3 after only 70 minutes to claim her maiden Grand Slam title.

The 23-year-old will rise to second in the world behind only Naomi Osaka when the latest rankings are released next week, after becoming the first Australian winner at Roland Garros since Margaret Court won the last of her five trophies in 1973.

She will be best-ranked Australian woman since Evonne Goolagong Cawley in 1976.

"It's unbelievable, I'm a little bit speechless. I played the perfect match today. I'm so proud of myself and my team, it's been an incredible two weeks," said Barty.

"It's a special place for Australians here. Sam (Stosur) has done well here before and come so close. It's been a magical two weeks."

Barty, who famously took a break from tennis to play professional cricket in 2015, struck 27 winners past an opponent riddled with nerves.

The 19-year-old Vondrousova saw her bid to become the first teenage Grand Slam champion since Maria Sharapova won the 2006 US



Barty (left) poses with Australian tennis legend Rod Laver after her win in the French Open women's final yesterday. (Reuters)



Czech Republic's Marketa Vondrousova poses with the runners-up trophy. (Reuters)

match on the premier Roland Garros arena in Vondrousova's career, although she did have a brief practice session yesterday morning.

The tension got the better of the Czech early on, as she double faulted to gift Barty two break points, before firing long to put her opponent 2-0 ahead.

Barty, who also reached the Australian Open quarter-finals earlier this year, consolidated the break with a confident love hold, leaving Vondrousova firmly on the back foot after only seven minutes of play.

Another break followed as Vondrousova threatened to fall apart, but she settled down and got herself on the scoreboard.

Barty quickly got back on track, and wrapped up the first set after only 29 minutes with a crunching forehand winner.

Vondrousova had it all to do in the second set having managed just two winners in the opener, but she contrived to drop serve again at the first time of asking.

She finally held serve for the first time in the match, though, saving two break points in the third game.

Vondrousova had reached the final without dropping a set and had the best record on tour since the Australian Open, but she left it too late to get her game in order on this occasion.

And Barty broke once more, hammering away a simple smash on her first match point to seal her moment in the spotlight, with Vondrousova left sitting on the bench in tears.

**Barty's path to title**

**1st rd:** bt Jessica Pegula (USA) 6-3, 6-3

**2nd rd:** bt Danielle Collins (USA) 7-5, 6-1

**3rd rd:** bt Andrea Petkovic (GER) 6-3, 6-1

**4th rd:** bt Sofia Kenin (USA) 6-3, 3-6, 6-0

**QF:** bt 14-Madison Keys (USA) 6-3, 7-5

**SF:** bt Amanda Anisimova (USA) 6-7 (4), 6-3, 6-3

**F:** bt Marketa Vondrousova (CZE) 6-1, 6-3

**Last 10 French Open champions**

**2019:** Ashleigh Barty (AUS)  
**2018:** Simona Halep (ROM)  
**2017:** Jelena Ostapenko (LAT)  
**2016:** Garbine Muguruza (ESP)  
**2015:** Serena Williams (USA)  
**2014:** Maria Sharapova (RUS)  
**2013:** Serena Williams (USA)  
**2012:** Maria Sharapova (RUS)  
**2011:** Li Na (CHN)  
**2010:** Francesca Schiavone (ITA)

**Barty files**

**Full name:** Ashleigh Barty  
**Date of birth:** April 24, 1996 (23 years old)  
**Height:** 5ft 5in (1.66m)  
**Plays:** Right-handed  
**Turned pro:** April 2010  
**Highest ranking:** 8  
**Current ranking:** 8  
**Career prize money:** \$10,086,380  
**WTA titles (five):** Malaysian Open (2017), Nottingham Open (2018), WTA Elite Trophy (2018), Miami Open (2019), French Open (2019)

**SPOTLIGHT**

# Thiem rides the storm to beat Djoko in semis

**Reuters**  
Paris

Austrian Dominic Thiem crushed Novak Djokovic's French Open hopes as he survived a weather-ravaged semi-final spanning 24 hours to complete a 6-2, 3-6, 7-5, 5-7, 7-5 victory yesterday and set up a repeat of last year's showdown with Rafael Nadal.

More than an hour after the women's final should have started on another stormy day on Court Philippe Chatrier, fourth seed Thiem thumped a forehand winner past Djokovic to convert his third match point.

It snapped Djokovic's 26-match winning streak in Grand Slams and ended the Serbian's hopes of holding all four of the sport's major prizes simultaneously for the second time, having achieved it by winning his only French Open in 2016.

Djokovic, who had trailed 6-2 3-6 3-1 overnight after the semi-final had been curtailed on Friday



Serbia's Novak Djokovic hits a return into the net during the French Open semi-final against Austria's Dominic Thiem (right) at Roland Garros in Paris yesterday. (AFP)

of winning a first major title when he faces 11-times champion Nadal today.

"If you reach the final here it's always against Rafa," the 25-year-old said on court. "It was an amazing experience last year and I will try everything to be better this year."

The second stanza of the match produced some scintillating tennis despite the teasing winds.

Djokovic got straight into his groove, broke back in the third game of the day and was denied another break at 4-4 when Thiem failed to put away two smashes then got an outrageous net cord off an audacious half-volley.

Under pressure in the 12th game Djokovic was given a time violation and then saved three set points. But a sensational forehand pass by Thiem gave him a fourth set point which he converted when his dipping backhand forced a volley error.

Djokovic erupted furiously at the umpire and was given a warning for unsportsmanlike conduct.

The 15-times Grand Slam

champion regained his composure to break serve twice in the fourth set but on both occasions the attacking Thiem hit back immediately.

Thiem double-faulted at 5-5 to gift Djokovic another break of serve and this time the Serbian made it stick to take the match into a deciding set.

The fifth set was as wild as the weather.

Thiem broke to move into a 4-1 lead and then had a point to lead 5-1, which Djokovic saved with a forehand.

Seconds later a howling rain squall sent the players off court for more than an hour and when they returned Thiem looked poised to win when serving at 5-3 and 40-15.

He crumbled, however, losing four points in a row and his chance appeared to have gone.

Somehow he put that behind him though and when Djokovic served at 5-6 he was the one who buckled. Two forehands thumped into the net to give Thiem a third match point and this time the Austrian finally sealed victory.





## REPORT

# Roy ton sets up England's big win over Bangladesh

Despite Shakib's 121, the Tigers were never in the hunt for the 387-run target and were eventually dismissed for 280

AFP  
Cardiff, United Kingdom

Jason Roy hit the highest individual score of the World Cup so far as England got their campaign back on track with a 106-run win over Bangladesh in Cardiff yesterday.

Following a surprise defeat by Pakistan, which came after England's opening rout of South Africa, captain Eoin Morgan urged the hosts to "stick to what we do well".

Tournament favourites England, whose rise to the top of the one-day international rankings has been based on aggressive batting, clearly took those words to heart.

Roy's 153 took England to an imposing 386 for six, leaving Bangladesh needing to surpass Ireland's 329-7 against England in 2011, the highest score by any team batting second to win a World Cup match.

Despite Shakib Al Hasan's 121, the Tigers were never in the hunt and they were eventually dismissed for 280 with seven balls to spare.

"It was great to right those wrongs from the last game," said man-of-the-match Roy.

"Jonny and myself didn't quite know what the pitch was going to behave like so we knew with our line-up batting the whole 50 we were going to get enough.

"We've put in a well-rounded performance so I'm extremely happy with the boys."

Bangladesh's chase got off to a bad start when fast bowler Jofra Archer (3-29) dismissed Soumya Sarkar for two with a ball that clipped the top of the left-hander's off stump.

But Shakib anchored the innings, flicking Archer for six on his way to a 95-ball century that also included nine fours.

Shakib put on 106 with Mushfiqur Rahim (44), a partnership that ended when Roy held a good catch at point.

And 169-3 soon became 170-4 when Mohamed Mithun fell for a duck after edging leg-spinner Adil Rashid to wicket-keeper Jonny Bairstow.

The Test gloveman was behind the stumps after Jos Buttler suffered a hip injury during a typically dashing 64.

Shakib, who had hit fifties in a win over South Africa and a loss to New Zealand this World Cup, was eventually yorked by Ben



England's Jason Roy in action during the 2019 ICC Cricket World Cup match against Bangladesh in Cardiff, Wales, yesterday. (Reuters)

## Skipper Morgan hails 'intimidating' Roy after match-winning 153

Reuters  
Cardiff, United Kingdom

England captain Eoin Morgan hailed an "intimidating" Jason Roy after the opening batsman's 153 fired England to victory over Bangladesh in their third World Cup match in Cardiff yesterday. Roy failed to reach double figures as World Cup favourites England suffered a surprise defeat to Pakistan last time out, but the 28-year-old was in imperious form to put England on course for their highest ever

World Cup batting total and a 106-run victory over Bangladesh.

His 150 was brought up with three successive sixes as Roy upped the ante, and captain Morgan highlighted just how important Roy is in the England set-up.

"The boys at the top of the order set a really solid platform," Morgan said. "Jason managed to go on and get quite a significant score at a good clip again, which is great to see.

"He's very intimidating to play against when he does score runs so the impact that has on

their team is quite significant." Roy feels his partnership with fellow opener Jonny Bairstow, who alongside Roy put on the second century opening partnership of the World Cup, has been strong long before the World Cup began.

"Jonny and I have been doing pretty well together over the last few years so we've got too much to worry about," Roy said. "We'll go out there and get the job done."

Morgan was also full of praise for his side's bowling attack, with the hostile Jofra Archer, who took 3-30, in particular at-

tracting attention once more. "All of our bowling is (a dream to captain)," Morgan added. "He (Archer), (Chris) Woakes, (Mark) Wood, (Liam) Plunkett, (Adil) Rashid and Ben Stokes at the end are wonderful to captain. "All of the guys want to bowl at the crucial periods and today was no different. "The fielding is always an area where we are trying to put in a perfect performance so it's always going to be tough trying to move onto the next game but today was a significant improvement."

Stokes to leave Bangladesh on the brink of defeat. Pace bowling all-rounder Stokes followed up to finish with figures of 3-23.

### ROY, BAIRSTOW FOUNDATIONS

Earlier, Mortaza put England in on a green-tinged pitch, but Roy and Bairstow (51) seized the ini-

tiative during a rapid first-wicket stand of 128.

The in-form Roy was finally caught by Mashrafe off Mehidy Hasan Miraz, holing out after hitting three towering sixes in a row off the spinner.

The Surrey batsman faced 121 balls, hitting 14 fours and five sixes as he fell just short of An-

drew Strauss's England World Cup record of 158 against India in Bangalore in 2011.

Bangladesh captain Mashrafe Mortaza admitted the total was beyond his players.

He praised centurion Shakib: "From the first match he has been playing so well for us. His bowling also has been fantastic. He is per-

forming so well at the moment.

"There is a long way to go, hopefully the other players will step up. The next two or three matches will be very important for us."

The round-robin group stage sees Bangladesh next play Sri Lanka at Bristol on Tuesday, with England facing the West Indies at the Oval on Friday.

## Scorecard

ENGLAND		Shakib Al Hasan b Stokes 121	
J. Roy c Mortaza b Hasan	153	M. Rahim c Roy b Plunkett	44
J. Bairstow c Hasan b Mortaza	51	M. Mithun c Bairstow b Rashid	0
J. Root b Saifuddin	21	Mahmudullah c Bairstow b Wood	28
J. Buttler c Sarkar b Saifuddin	64	M. Hossain c Archer b Stokes	26
E. Morgan c Soumya b Hasan	35	M. Saifuddin b Stokes	5
B. Stokes c Mortaza b Rahman	6	M. Hasan c Bairstow b Archer	12
C. Woakes not out	18	M. Mortaza not out	4
L. Plunkett not out	27	M. Rahman c Bairstow b Archer	0
<b>Extras</b> (lb3, nb1, w7)	11	<b>Extras</b> (lb9 w10)	19
<b>Total</b> (six wickets, 50 overs)	386	<b>Total</b> (all out, 48.5 overs)	280
<b>Fall of wickets:</b> 1-128 (Bairstow), 2-205 (Root), 3-235 (Roy), 4-330 (Buttler), 5-340 (Morgan), 6-341 (Stokes)		<b>Fall of wickets:</b> 1-8 (Sarkar), 2-63 (Iqbal), 3-169 (Rahim), 4-170 (Mithun), 5-219 (Shakib), 6-254 (Hossain), 7-261 (Mahmudullah), 8-264 (Saifuddin), 9-280 (Hasan), 10-280 (Rahman)	
<b>Bowling:</b> Shakib 10-0-71-0 (2w); Mortaza 10-0-68-1; Saifuddin 9-0-78-2 (2w); Rahman 9-0-75-1 (1nb, 2w); Hasan 10-0-67-2 (1w); Hossain 2-0-24-0		<b>Bowling:</b> Woakes 8-0-67-0; Archer 8.5-2-29-3 (1w); Plunkett 8-0-36-1 (2w); Wood 8-0-52-2; Rashid 10-0-64-1 (2w); Stokes 6-1-23-3 (1w)	
<b>BANGLADESH</b>		<b>RESULT:</b> England won by 106 runs	
T. Iqbal c Morgan b Wood	19		
S. Sarkar b Archer	2		



Bangladesh's Shakib Al Hasan scored 121. (Reuters)

## FOCUS

# Williamson shines as New Zealand beat Afghanistan in stroll

AFP  
Taunton, United Kingdom

Kane Williamson led by example as the New Zealand captain's 79 not out guided his side to a seven-wicket win over Afghanistan that maintained their 100 percent start to the World Cup yesterday.

Williamson was New Zealand's top scorer with a 99-ball innings containing nine fours after Jimmy Neesham took career-best one-day figures of 5-31 to dismiss Afghanistan for 172 at Taunton.

New Zealand's third successive victory kept them on course to make the semi-finals in the 10-team tournament, while minnows Afghanistan have lost all three of their matches.

New Zealand, who saw off Sri Lanka and Bangladesh in their opening two games, have won 11 of their last 12 World Cup games, with their only defeat in that span coming against Australia in the 2015 final.

The Black Caps' run chase got off to the worst possible start when Aftab Alam had Martin Guptill caught off a thin inside edge with the first ball of the innings.

Guptill's 14th ODI duck was a dream start for Aftab in the pace bowler's first appearance in this



New Zealand's captain Kane Williamson plays a shot during the 2019 ICC Cricket World Cup match against Afghanistan in Taunton, England, yesterday. (AFP)

year's World Cup. Afghanistan took the field without leg-spinner Rashid Khan, who was hit on the head

when he was dismissed by Lockie Ferguson's bouncer in the first innings.

He looked dazed as he walked

off the field and later failed his first concussion test, ruling him out for the rest of the match and depriving Afghanistan of their

best bowler.

But it was Aftab who was leading the Afghan attack to good effect and he removed Colin Munro to leave New Zealand on 41-2.

It was a nervous start from the Black Caps and Williamson had to survive a review of a caught behind appeal.

Afghanistan kept the pressure on and Williamson rode his luck again when he just made his ground to beat a run-out review.

### EXPERIENCED PAIR STEADY THE SHIP

Together with Ross Taylor, Williamson steadied the ship in a 89-run partnership for the third wicket.

It was hardly flashy stuff as they nudged singles and picked off the occasional four until Taylor was bowled by Aftab for 48 from 52 balls.

Fittingly, it was Williamson who clinched the win with a routine single as New Zealand reached 173-3 in 32.1 overs.

Earlier, Neesham turned the game in New Zealand's favour with his impressive spell after Afghanistan briefly threatened to rock the Black Caps.

Put in to bat, Afghanistan openers Hazratullah Zazai and Noor Ali Zadran blasted a quick-fire 66 for the first wicket.

But pace bowler Neesham, who had struggled in New Zealand's first two matches, finally

## Scorecard

AFGHANISTAN		Bowling: Henry 8-0-50-0, Boulton 10-0-34-0, Ferguson 9-1-37-4, Neesham 10-1-31-5 (2w), De Grandhomme 4-1-14-1	
H. Zazai c Munro b Neesham	34		
NA Zadran c Latham b Ferguson	31		
R. Shah c Guptill b Neesham	0		
H. Shahidi c Henry b Ferguson	59		
G. Naib c Latham b Neesham	4		
M. Nabi c Latham b Neesham	9		
N. Zadran c Latham b Neesham	4		
I. Alikhil c Guptill b De Grandhomme	2		
R. Khan b Ferguson	0		
A. Alam c Latham b Ferguson	14		
H. Hassan not out	7		
<b>Extras</b> (lb6, w2)	8		
<b>Total</b> (all out, 41.1 overs)	172		
<b>Fall of wickets:</b> 1-66 (Zazai), 2-66 (NA Zadran), 3-66 (Shah), 4-70 (Naib), 5-105 (Nabi), 6-109 (N Zadran), 7-130 (Alikhil), 8-131 (Khan), 9-147 (Alam), 10-172 (Shahidi)			
		<b>NEW ZEALAND</b>	
		M. Guptill c N Zadran b Alam	0
		C. Munro c Hassan b Alam	22
		K. Williamson not out	79
		R. Taylor b Alam	48
		T. Latham not out	13
		<b>Extras</b> (lb4, nb1, w6)	11
		<b>Total</b> (three wickets, 32.1 overs)	173
		<b>Fall of Wickets:</b> 1-0 (Guptill), 2-41 (Munro), 3-130 (Taylor)	
		<b>Bowling:</b> Alam 8.1-0-45-3 (wl), Hassan 7-0-30-0 (w3), Naib 9-1-55-0 (wl, nb1), Nabi 3-0-18-0 (wl), Shah 5-0-21-0	
		<b>RESULT:</b> New Zealand won by 7 wickets	

found his rhythm despite two rain interruptions.

Neesham made the crucial breakthrough when Hazratullah went for one big shot too many, the left-hander hitting to Colin Munro at deep cover to depart for 34.

Afghanistan lost their third wicket with the score still on 66 when Rahmat Shah was dismissed for a duck after a leading

edge off Neesham was held by Guptill.

When Gulbadin Naib failed with a review attempt to overturn his edge behind off Neesham, Afghanistan had lost four wickets for four runs in 21 deliveries.

Hashmatullah Shahidi (59) top-scored for Afghanistan, but Neesham and Ferguson, who finished with 4-37, were too hot to handle.



FOCUS

# Rivalry will add spice to Australia contest: Rohit

After Kohli & Co won a Test series Down Under, Finch's Australia defeated India in their own backyard in an ODI series in March



India's Rohit Sharma (left) and teammate Shikhar Dhawan bat in the nets during a training session at The Oval in London yesterday. (AFP)

AFP  
London

India opener Rohit Sharma says his team's intense rivalry with Australia will spur them on against the defending champions in today's much-anticipated World Cup clash.

Virat Kohli led India to their first-ever Test series win in Australia earlier this year to consolidate their position as the world's top side in the five-day format.

But the Aaron Finch-led Australia team came back to defeat India in their own backyard in a limited-overs series in March, setting up them up for the World Cup in England and Wales.

Sharma, who made a match-winning unbeaten 122 in India's opening game against South Africa on Wednesday, said the fierce competition between the sides promised another good contest.

"Yes, we've had a good rivalry between the two teams in the last few months that we played, with good competition between bat and ball," the Indian vice-captain said at the Oval yesterday.

"We played really good cricket in Australia, they played really good cricket in India. So it's going to be a great contest," added Sharma.

The usually fluent batsman, who averages more than 60 in one-day-internationals against Australia, has recently learned to control his innings and bat

more responsibly.

His measured knock against a South African attack led by paceman Kagiso Rabada won him praise from Kohli, who called the innings the batsman's "best" knock.

"At times you have to go against your natural instinct and try and bat the conditions rather than batting your own batting," said Sharma, who has scored 8,132 runs, including 23 centuries, in 207 ODIs.

"I think I have played more than 200-odd ODIs. If I don't do it now, then when? Experience teaches you a lot of things, and that is something that has come into my game of late," Sharma, 32, said of his more mature batting.

Former Australia captain and assistant coach Ricky Ponting has suggested the Indian seamers will take a cue from the West Indies pacemen, who troubled the Australian batsmen with a barrage of bouncers.

But Sharma said India's bowlers would have to keep the batsmen guessing.

"See, short ball for any batsman is not easy, even the best guy who can pull the ball, who can hook the ball will find it difficult," said Sharma.

"Probably we have the bowling attack to do that... but you don't want to be carried away with that. We've got to understand the conditions and make sure that you keep the batsmen guessing all the time?"

SPOTLIGHT

# Smith hailed as 'world's best' by captain Finch

AFP  
London

Australia captain Aaron Finch has hailed Steve Smith as the world's best batsman, saying having him and David Warner back in the fold is a huge boost for the team.

Smith and Warner played their first official international matches at the World Cup in England and Wales after serving year-long ball-tampering bans.

Smith made a gritty 73 in Australia's win over West Indies after Warner smashed an unbeaten 89 not out in his team's opening win against Afghanistan, meaning both are in good form as they prepare to face Virat Kohli's India today.

"Well, when you've got world-class players coming back into your side, it's unfortunate for the guys who have missed out and the guys that have played some really good one-day cricket in the past," Finch said at the Oval yesterday.

"Steve is the best batter in the world in my opinion over all three forms of the game," he said.

"I think that when you have David who's so destructive at the top of the order, his record shows how destructive he is.

"To have them to come back, yes, it's great for the side and our batting line-up and for experience



Steve Smith of Australia in action during the ICC Cricket World Cup match against West Indies in Nottingham, Britain, on Friday. (Reuters)

in World Cups and a great help for me as a leader, as well, in terms of tactics and stuff out on the field."

Smith, the former Australia captain, registered his 20th one-day-international fifty against an inspired West Indian pace attack

in Nottingham to play a crucial part in his team's 15-run win over the two-time champions.

The Australians had a tough 2018 but peaked before the World Cup with an ODI series win in India and a 5-0 humbling of Pakistan in the United Arab Emirates.

Australia, without Smith and Warner, edged out India in their own backyard after being 2-0 down in a five-match ODI series in March and Finch takes that confidence into today's game.

"I think winning the last three games is really important for us in India, to one, get some self-belief that we can beat this Indian side in their home conditions," said Finch.

Five-time champions Australia, one of the favourites to win the World Cup alongside India and hosts England, have their pacemen to thank for their two victories in the round-robin phase of the competition.

Australia's new ball pair of Mitchell Starc and Pat Cummins have taken 11 wickets between them.

Finch's team will face a tough challenge against an Indian side that boasts a potent pace battery led by the world's top-ranked ODI bowler, Jasprit Bumrah.

Finch rates Bumrah and the other Indian bowlers as "world-class" but said the result would hinge on who used the conditions better and on "early wickets".

## Warner 'shaken up' after injuring net bowler

AFP  
London

Australia skipper Aaron Finch said David Warner was "shaken up" after he hit a net bowler on the head with a powerful drive during a practice session yesterday.

Warner was midding the ball in the nets at the Oval ahead of the World Cup match against India today and one of his drives felled the paceman.

The batsman rushed to the aid of the bowler, who lay flat on the practice pitch as Australia stopped their session.

"Dave was obviously pretty shaken up. The young guy seems to be in pretty good spirits at the moment," Finch said after the session finished.

"He's obviously been taken off to hospital and will continue to be assessed just to make sure that everything is OK... Yeah, it was tough to watch."

The Australian physio attended to the bowler, identified as Jaykishan Plaha, who was taken off on a stretcher to a medical room at the ground.

One of Plaha's fellow net bowlers told AFP the injured player was conscious and the session subsequently resumed.

International Cricket Council



Australia's David Warner (centre) looks on as an injured net bowler, Jaykishan Plaha, receives medical attention during nets at The Oval in London yesterday. (AFP)

venue manager Michael Gibson told reporters: "The net bowler has been taken to hospital as a precautionary measure because it was a head injury."

"He was conscious and smiling as he was taken off." Five-champions Australia have won both their games at the World Cup as they seek to defend their crown.

On the issue of more protection on grounds around the world for net bowlers, Finch said,

"It's quite rare that somebody gets hit, it's really unfortunate. Our own medical staff and the paramedics on the ground did a great job."

Australian cricket was plunged into mourning in 2014 when Test batsman Phillip Hughes died after being hit on the base of the skull during a domestic match.

Warner was playing in that match, between New South Wales and South Australia.

COMMENT

## Lloyd tells WI to play 'smart'

AFP  
London

Clive Lloyd has warned the West Indies to play "smart cricket" if they want to make an impact at the World Cup.

Lloyd, who captained the West Indies to victory at the 1975 and 1979 tournaments, saw the side impress with a rout of Pakistan in their opening match, but then let Australia off the hook as the holders beat them by 15 runs.

The Windies had Australia in trouble, but some wayward bowling allowed Nathan Coulter-Nile to score 92 from 60 balls before Mitchell Starc's five-wicket haul clinched the win at Trent Bridge.

Lloyd believes the West Indies have the weapons to make a strong run at the tournament, but the 74-year-old called on them to show more cunning at key moments.

"The West Indies must start to play smart cricket because they have two real big games coming up against South Africa and England. Therefore they have to be on top of their game as I'm sure they'd want to qualify," he said.

"They should have players who are able to win games, es-



pecially when the pitch was quite placid and devoid of bounce and movement during that stage of the (Australia) game."

"I think on another day, with a better analysis of the situation they could have won that game and this would have given them the impetus to realise that they were serious contenders to

qualify for the latter stages of this competition."

Lloyd was especially frustrated that the West Indies batting folded when they were apparently on course for victory.

Accusing them on playing too carelessly, Lloyd said: "There is no reason why they should be almost bowled out on a pitch like that at Trent Bridge, but they tried to hit the aerial shots and started throwing wickets away."

"The players have to realise that this is not Twenty20. The batsmen need to turn those scores of 30 and 40 into bigger scores and they must be aware that all these teams have world-class bowlers at their disposal."

Lloyd's former side can get back on track on Monday when they face South Africa, who are in turmoil after losing all three of their matches.

"South Africa are up next and while they haven't performed to their ability, Windies have to be aware of the job at hand as South Africa is in danger of missing out on the top four if they lose," Lloyd said.

"They now have to re-group, look at the mistakes they made and rectify them so that they can return to their winning ways. I'm still feeling positive about the West Indies overall."

BOTTOMLINE

## De Villiers must live with retirement decision, says Proteas coach Gibson

Reuters  
Southampton, England

Coach Otis Gibson says AB de Villiers will have to "live with the decision he has made" after the batsman attempted to come out of international retirement on the eve of South Africa's squad announcement for the World Cup.

Cricket South Africa confirmed this week that De Villiers, regarded as one of the world's leading batsmen, had approached captain Faf du Plessis and Gibson about a return to the side following his self-imposed exit from the team last May, after which he took part in a number of Twenty20 tournaments.

The approach was rebuffed by the national selectors but has been revealed in the media at a difficult time for the team after they lost their opening three matches of the World Cup to England, Bangladesh and India.

"I don't think you should have to beg a guy to play for his country but I did make it clear to him that I thought he was making a bad decision (by retiring



last year) and that he could help us win the World Cup," a clearly irritated Gibson told reporters on Saturday.

"Since he has retired we have won every series we've played, and I haven't had many AB questions. Suddenly we've

come to the World Cup and we've had one bad week, and AB is the saviour."

"But AB has retired. He's made his decision. We have to live with the decision he has made. He has to live with the decision he has made."

Gibson says he found the whole episode "strange", especially as De Villiers has repeatedly claimed he was happy in international retirement.

"He made his decision and he has said continuously that he is happy with his decision."

"There are lot more people wanting AB to be here than AB himself. If AB wanted to be here, he would be here."

Gibson added that there was disappointment within the South African squad that the issue had become public as the team battles for form and for survival in the tournament.

"The guys are disappointed that it's come out at the time that it's come out. When we got together in camp, we spoke about managing distractions, that was one of the things that we said could come up."

South Africa play West Indies in Southampton tomorrow in desperate need of a victory to keep their slim World Cup hopes alive.

"Are we going to talk about this all the time? Or are we going to prepare for the West Indies game. Because it feels like it's a court case here," Gibson said.



## FORMULA 1

# Vettel grabs pole for Canadian GP

*'Very, very happy for the team. The last few weeks have been tough for us. The car felt good. I hope we can carry that into the race'*



Sebastian Vettel of Germany driving the (5) Scuderia Ferrari SF90 during final practice for the F1 Grand Prix of Canada at Circuit Gilles Villeneuve in Montreal, Canada.

DPA  
Montreal

Ferrari's Sebastian Vettel secured his first pole position of the season yesterday for today's Canadian Formula One Grand Prix.

The German, who won from pole in Montreal last year, edged out world champion Lewis Hamilton into second by just 0.206 seconds with Ferrari's Charles Leclerc third fastest in qualifying.

Ferrari made a series of mistakes so far this season but finally have a sliver of light.

"Very, very happy for the team. The last few weeks have been tough for us. The car felt good. I hope we can carry that into the race," said Vettel, who was also quickest in final practice.

Championship leaders Mercedes, who have won all six races so far this season, were worried before heading to Canada that the track may suit their rivals better.

"I don't feel disappointment, we gave it everything I had got. They were faster and in the last

## Drivers better prepared than ever, say F1 bosses

**Montreal:** Drivers are fitter and more prepared than ever Formula One team bosses said yesterday, denying Lewis Hamilton's claims that F1 had become so easy physically that youngsters could step into the cockpit without doing any hard work.

Hamilton, who is looking to match Michael Schumacher's Canada Grand Prix record with a seventh win on Sunday, told reporters that drivers should feel like they have run a marathon at the end of race and recalled earlier drivers who were so exhausted they could not get out of their cars.

"You cannot compare this time with 20 or 30 years ago when Nelson Piquet and Nigel Mansell or whoever collapsed after a race," Toro Rosso team principal Franz Tost said on Friday.

"They never saw a fitness centre from the inside and some of them were smoking as well. "This is the reality and nowadays we have really good drivers in Formula One.

"In my opinion, the current level of the drivers from the fitness side is the highest I've ever seen in Formula One."

Hamilton's comments on appeared to have been directed at Formula One's younger drivers like

Williams' George Russell, Toro Rosso's Alexander Albon and McLaren's 19-year-old rookie Lando Norris.

Norris, in particular, took exception to Hamilton's concern over a trend towards young drivers.

"I don't know why he would say it now, and not when he first started," Norris told the Telegraph. "It must be targeted at me, George and Alex, because we're the youngest in F1 and I'm not suffering perhaps as much as he thinks I should."

Haas team chief Guenther Steiner said that Hamilton may have forgotten that many of the Formula One drivers he was idolising could not run across the street.

"We could ban the drivers from going to the fitness studios so they will be tired at the end of the race," Steiner said sarcastically. "And to eat fast foods all the time.

"Without joking, the fitness level is just so high and the cars are so sophisticated so it's just getting better and it's evolution."

Formula One drivers, like athletes in every sport, have evolved said Tost, adding their fitness levels contributed to reducing crashes with drivers able to maintain their focus and reaction for longer stints.

nault's Daniel Ricciardo and Red Bull's Pierre Gasly ahead of the Finn.

Nico Hulkenberg was seventh quickest in his Renault, followed by McLaren duo Lando Norris and Carlos Sainz.

Haas driver Kevin Magnussen clipped the wall and smashed into the barrier opposite right at the end of Q2, causing considerable damage to his car and leaving Max Verstappen stranded by the red flag with no chance of sneaking into Q3. Magnussen was placed 10th but may end up with grid penalties so Red Bull's Verstappen - in 11th - could yet get into the top 10 on the grid, but it was a clear miscalculation from his team to leave him so exposed.

It is the first time team-mate Gasly has out-qualified the Dutchman this season.

Daniil Kvyat (Toro Rosso), Antonio Giovinazzi (Alfa Romeo), Alexander Albon (Toro Rosso) and Romain Grosjean (Haas) also bowed out in Q2 on the Circuit Gilles Villeneuve, which sits on an artificial island in the Saint Lawrence river overlooking the Montreal cityscape.

nal having shocked world number one Djokovic in a five-set semi-final yesterday.

"Yes, it's incredible to be here again to be honest," said Nadal, who has never lost a Roland Garros final and boasts a 92-2 record at the tournament since his 2005 debut.

"It is very special and difficult to explain, but here we are. And the day that we start thinking about if it's incredible or not probably will be the day to do another thing."

Nadal has hardly broken sweat at the French Open this year, making the final for the loss of just one set, against David Goffin in the third round.

Against Roger Federer in the semi-

finals, he conceded just five games, handing the Swiss his worst Slam loss in 11 years.

"There is nobody who even plays remotely close to Rafa," admitted Federer.

"I don't even know who I need to go search for to go practice with somebody who plays like him?"

Victory today will move Nadal on to 18 majors, just two behind Federer on the all-time list.

He is also the best part of five years younger than his old rival.

"This is something I never dreamed about five, six, eight years ago, but it's happening today," said Nadal who has been written off numerous times in his career. His battles with knee and wrist

problems have seen him miss eight Grand Slam tournaments.

A wrist injury forced a withdrawal from Roland Garros after two rounds in 2016 which in turn forced him to sit out Wimbledon.

"My goal is to keep going," a defiant Nadal added.

The world number two allowed Thiem just nine games when they met in the 2018 final in Paris.

However, the Austrian won their most recent meeting on clay in the semi-finals in Barcelona in April in straight sets.

Nadal also needed five sets to see off Thiem in the quarter-finals at the US Open last year.

## TENNIS

## Like a 'hurricane': Djokovic blasts conditions after French Open defeat



Serbia's Novak Djokovic reacts after losing to Austria's Dominic Thiem.

AFP  
Paris

**N**ovak Djokovic said his shock Roland Garros defeat to Dominic Thiem, which ended his dream of becoming just the second man in history to hold all Grand Slam titles at the same time twice, was played out in "hurricane conditions".

Thiem downed the world number one 6-2, 3-6, 7-5, 5-7, 7-5 to set up a repeat of last year's final against 11-time winner and defending champion Rafael Nadal.

Djokovic, who was second best to Thiem when it came to mastering the gloom, wind and damp of Paris, was bidding to join Rod Laver in the Grand Slam history books.

"When you're playing in hurricane kind of conditions, it's hard to perform your best," said an angry Djokovic.

"It's really just kind of surviving in these kind of conditions and trying to hold your serve and play one ball more than your opponent in the court.

"That's what it felt like playing yesterday. I don't want to point out some reasons or find excuses for this loss. I mean, he took it, he won it, and well done to him."

The match had been controversially suspended on Friday

night with the match at one set each but with Thiem up 3-1 in the third and with all the momentum on his side.

Winds of 80km/h were forecast for the evening.

Asked to describe the conditions, Djokovic added: "One of the worst conditions I have ever been part of. That's all I can tell you." Thiem's coach Nicolas Massu said he would prefer the final to be shifted to tomorrow but the Austrian insisted he was happy to play today.

That would mean he will have played four days in succession after his quarter-final against Karen Khachanov was put back a day to Thursday after a washout on Wednesday.

Nadal played his last-eight match against Kei Nishikori on Tuesday and completed his straight sets semi-final win over Roger Federer by the middle of Friday afternoon.

"I think it's fine. I mean, it's not the first time that that happens in tennis, and it's not going to be the last time. That's our sport," said Thiem.

Thiem, bidding to become just Austria's second Roland Garros men's champion after Thomas Muster in 1995, said he had no problems stopping for the night on Friday.

"I was not unhappy yesterday, because I went to the locker room with 3-1 lead in the third set.

## IAAF set to maintain ban on doping-tainted Russia

**Monaco:** Russia's participation at the Doha world championships remains on tenterhooks after the IAAF voted yesterday to maintain its ban on the track and field giants over doping.

A source said the International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF) voted at a council meeting in Monaco for the 11th time to uphold a ban first introduced in November 2015 after evidence of mass state-sponsored doping appeared.

The latest report by the IAAF's Task Force, charged with investigating the scandal, noted some "positive developments", the source said.

Those included the repayment of the 2.8 million euros it has cost the Task Force to do its work as well as access granted to the Moscow laboratory at the heart of the doping scandal between 2011-15.

But the Task Force, the source added, was "troubled" by reports that Russian coaches who had been suspended for doping were continuing to train athletes.

Also worrying was a Sunday

Times story on June 2 alleging that Russian athletics federation (RUSAF) officials fabricated documents to show that Daniil Lyсенko, the 2017 world silver high jump medalist, was too ill to provide his whereabouts after failing to make himself available for out-of-competition drug testing.

The last global event Russia appeared in was the 2015 Beijing world championships, but dozens of Russian athletes cleared by the IAAF have gone on to compete as neutrals.

While US-based long jumper Darya Klishina was the sole Russian athlete cleared to participate at the 2016 Rio Olympics, 74 Russian athletes competed as neutrals last year and 68 have been cleared since the start of 2019.

The next chance Russia has of seeing the ban overturned will be at an IAAF Council meeting in Doha just days before the September 27-October 6 world championships in the Qatari capital, leaving a hypothetical window open for its reintegration almost four years on from the initial ban.

## PREVIEW

## 'Incredible' dream: Nadal faces Thiem for 12th Roland Garros title



AFP  
Paris

**R**afael Nadal admits winning a 12th Roland Garros title and 18th major would once have seemed like an "incredible" dream in a career so often at the mercy of a succession of morale-sapping injuries. However, Nadal, the second seed, knows he cannot under-estimate Austria's Dominic Thiem when they meet again in the Roland Garros final today.

Thiem has four wins on clay over the 33-year-old Spaniard - only Novak Djokovic has more.

The 25-year-old arrives in the fi-

SET FOR FINAL: Rafael Nadal (L) and Dominic Thiem

SPOTLIGHT

# Toronto Raptors reach brink of first NBA title

Warriors must sweep three games in a row to win a third consecutive title and fourth in five seasons

AFP  
Oakland, United States

**T**oronto advanced to the brink of a first NBA title as Kawhi Leonard scored 36 points and the Raptors ripped defending champions Golden State 105-92 on Friday night in the NBA Finals. Serge Ibaka netted 20 points off the bench and Pascal Siakam added 19 for the Raptors, who grabbed a commanding 3-1 edge in the best-of-seven series, which could end with game five tomorrow in Toronto.

"We're going to get back there and they are going to be going crazy in Toronto," Raptors coach Nick Nurse said. "We have never really talked about the series score and we know this is a great team and we know how hard we have to play to beat them."

The Raptors are one victory shy of the first crown in their 24-season history but Leonard kept his emotions on a level keel. "Just got to be patient," Leonard said. "It doesn't matter until you get that fourth win. We have to stay confident in ourselves, be patient, don't rush things and see how it works out."

The Warriors must sweep three games in a row to win a third consecutive title and fourth in five seasons. "It's not over," Golden State guard Stephen Curry said. "We're still fighting and trying to get over the hump. We still have life and have an opportunity to win."

Only once in 34 chances in NBA Finals history has a team rallied from 3-1 down to win the title, that being in 2016 when LeBron James led Cleveland back to defeat the Warriors. "I don't think it's daunting at all," Warriors coach Steve Kerr said. "We look at it as a challenge. We've got to lick our wounds tonight, a tough loss, but the game's a few days away. We'll have plenty of energy and we'll be ready to go."

Leonard scored 17 points in the third quarter when Toronto seized command, while Ibaka and Siakam's second-half surge helped ensure Golden State did not overtake them late. "We played really tough," Nurse said. "We were taking a lot of punches early and we just kept standing in there and playing. Then we were able to exert our will in the second half."

Klay Thompson, who missed game three with a left hamstring strain, led Golden State with 28 points while Curry added 27. "It didn't affect me," Thompson said of his injury. "You're going to be banged up. You just got to dig deep."

But the Warriors remained without



Toronto Raptors' Kawhi Leonard (right) in action during the Game Four of the NBA Finals against Golden State Warriors in Oakland, California. (AFP)

playoff scoring leader Kevin Durant, out the past month with a right calf injury, and lacking him they were no match for the fast-moving Raptors. "We played pretty well for 26 minutes and then they took control," Curry said.

"It's one of those nights where you play a lot of energy, you start to build momentum and then the wheels fall off a little bit. They played another great game and we got to do something about it if we want to extend this series."

It could have been the final game at 53-year-old Oracle Arena for the Warriors, who move into a new arena next season in San Francisco. Oakland has been the club's home since 1971. Leonard, who grabbed 12 rebounds in the game, scored 14 points in the first quarter but the rest of the Raptors shot 1-for-13 and the Warriors jumped ahead 23-12. Leonard opened the second half with back-to-back 3-pointers, giving the Raptors their first lead at 48-46.

"Kawhi hits two straight threes to give them the lead and there was a surge of energy for them at that point," Kerr said. "That was a really key moment."

Toronto closed the third quarter with a 20-6 run to seize a 79-67 lead entering the fourth quarter, Leonard scoring 11 and Ibaka adding seven in the pivotal span. "They just took it to us right from the beginning of the quarter," Kerr said. "They turned up their defense and they just got on a run. And we just sort of lost

that defensive tenacity we had in the first half."

Fred VanVleet opened fourth quarter with a 3-pointer for Toronto but was taken to the locker room moments later for seven stitches after a bloody gash was opened under his right eye when he was struck by the left elbow of Golden State's Shaun Livingston under the basket. The Warriors got within 97-89 on a Curry 3-pointer with 2:56 remaining but came no closer.

## Facing 3-1 deficit, Warriors hope to reverse history

**Oakland, California:** A defiant Golden State Warriors team are adamant they can overturn a 3-1 deficit to the Toronto Raptors and erase memories of becoming the first team to fail to win the NBA title after holding the same advantage.

The memory of the LeBron James-led Cleveland Cavaliers recovering from a 3-1 deficit to snatch the championship in 2016 is still fresh in their minds and gives them faith that their goal of a third successive title is not dead.

"We just got to win one game and then build on that," Warriors forward Draymond Green told reporters after Friday's 105-92 Game Four loss in Oakland. "But I've been on the wrong side of 3-1 before, so why not make our own history?"

The Warriors battled back from a 3-1 deficit of their own in the 2016 Western Conference Finals against the Oklahoma City Thunder, so they know what it takes to come back from the brink. That Thunder team was led by Kevin Durant, who joined the Warriors the following season and went on to win back-to-back Finals MVP awards with the team in 2017 and 2018.

Durant has been sidelined with a calf strain since May 8, however, and it is unclear if he will be able to play in Game Five in Toronto tomorrow. The Warriors said they will be prepared to go with or without their sharpshooting forward.

"It's not over," a defiant Stephen Curry said. "It's not a good feeling right now, obviously, but we have been on both sides of it. And for us it's an opportunity for us to just flip this whole series on its head."

Coach Steve Kerr said his team's desire to win is their most important asset going forward. "We've got a lot of talent and we got a lot of pride," he said. "These guys have been to the Finals five straight years for a reason. They're unbelievably competitive. And they're together and they're going to fight. So we'll go try to get one win and, if we can do that, come back here and see what happens."

Only once in 34 chances in NBA Finals history has a team rallied from 3-1 down to win the title, that being in 2016 when LeBron James led Cleveland back to defeat the Warriors.

MLB

# Astros' Chirinos delivers game-winning double against Orioles

Reuters  
Houston

**R**obinson Chirinos delivered a walk-off double with two outs in the 11th inning, as the Houston Astros rallied for a 4-3 victory over the Baltimore Orioles in the opener of this three-game series Friday at Minute Maid Park.

Chirinos drilled a 3-2 fastball from Brandon Kline (1-3) into the left field corner, scoring Yuli Gurriel from first base to complete the comeback from an early three-run deficit. Josh Reddick and Tony Kemp socked home runs in the fifth inning for the Astros, with Kemp's two-run shot tying the game at 3-3.

Left-hander Cionel Perez (1-0), recalled from Triple-A Round Rock earlier Friday, worked three perfect innings of relief for Houston. Starter Gerrit Cole, who leads the majors with 130 strikeouts, recorded a season-high 14 in throwing 113 pitches.

Orioles right-hander Gabriel Ynoa allowed three runs on three hits and three walks with two strikeouts in his third start of the season. Catcher Chance Sisco hit his first home run of the season for Baltimore.

### RAYS 5, RED SOX 1

Yonny Chirinos threw a career-high eight shutout innings, while Kevin Kiermaier homered and had four RBIs as Tampa Bay beat host Boston. Chirinos (7-2) was perfect through the first five innings before escaping a bases-loaded jam in the sixth on his way to the win. He gave up two hits, walked two, struck out six and threw 101 pitches, another career high. Ji-Man Choi drove in the other Rays run on a solo homer as Tampa Bay won its third straight while ending Boston's winning streak at four games.

### INDIANS 5, YANKEES 2

Carlos Santana belted a two-run homer in the sixth inning, and Zach Plesac recorded his first major league win as host Cleveland beat New York. Tyler Naquin launched a solo homer, and Jason Kipnis answered an 0-for-20 skid with an RBI single among his two hits and a sacrifice fly in the eighth inning for the Indians.

New York's Domingo German (9-2), who was denied in his bid to become the majors' first 10-game winner, allowed four runs on six hits in six innings. Aaron Hicks homered for the second time in as many days for the Yankees, who welcomed the return of Didi Gregorius following Tommy John surgery in October.

### ROCKIES 5, METS 1

Antonio Senzateza tossed six solid innings, and Daniel Murphy continued tormenting his former team by homering during an eventful eighth inning of Colorado's win over host New York. The Rockies have won two straight and 10 of 12. The Mets, who began on Friday a stretch of 28 consecutive games against teams that currently possess winning records, had their two-game winning streak snapped and have lost seven of 11. Murphy homered deep into the upper deck in right in the eighth inning. Murphy, who played with the Mets from 2008 through 2015, finished 2-for-4 and is now batting .386 with 12 homers and 44 RBIs in 47 games against the Mets.

### PADRES 5, NATIONALS 4

Light-hitting Austin Hedges singled home Josh Naylor with two out in the bottom of the ninth to give host San Diego a win over Washington. Washington had taken a 4-3 lead in the top of the ninth when Brian Dozier doubled and scored on a wild pitch by Padres re-



Houston Astros' Robinson Chirinos hits an RBI double against the Baltimore Orioles on Friday night. (USA TODAY Sports)

liever Adam Warren.

Eric Hosmer tripled off Washington closer Sean Doolittle with one out in the bottom of the ninth and scored on a two-out single by the left-handed-hitting Naylor off the left-handed Doolittle. Naylor then stole his first base in the walk-off hit of Hedges' career.

### GIANTS 2, DODGERS 1

Kevin Pillar and Brandon Crawford drove in runs, and left-hander Drew Pomeranz delivered five scoreless in-

nings as San Francisco beat visiting Los Angeles to become the first team to hand Clayton Kershaw a loss in nearly 11 months.

In what might have been one last chance to remain in the starting rotation, Pomeranz gave up just three hits with seven strikeouts and just one walk as he lowered his ERA to 7.16 for the season. Kershaw (5-1) gave up two runs on six hits over seven innings in taking the loss for the first time since July 21 of last season.

The Dodgers lost consecutive games

for the first time since April 23-24 at Chicago against the Cubs. The Giants have defeated the Dodgers three times in their last four meetings.

### CUBS 3, CARDINALS 1

Cole Hamels allowed three hits over eight shutout innings, and Javier Baez hit a two-run homer to lead Chicago over visiting St. Louis. Hamels (5-2) walked one and struck out 10, including the side in the eighth, to end a stretch of three winless starts. He has allowed only an unearned run and five hits

over 15 innings in back-to-back starts against St. Louis while striking out 14. Victor Caratini went 2-for-2 with a walk and an RBI double, and Jason Heyward doubled and scored for Chicago, which won for the fourth time in five games.

### BREWERS 10, PIRATES 4

Ryan Braun hit a three-run homer, Brandon Woodruff won his seventh straight decision and Milwaukee beat visiting Pittsburgh. Braun hit his first homer since May 14 for his 10th homer of the season, making this the 12th season in which he has reached double-digits in homers — breaking a tie with Hall of Famer of Robin Yount for the most in team history.

### TWINS 6, TIGERS 3

Nelson Cruz hit a go-ahead homer, Mitch Garver homered and drove in three runs, and Minnesota topped host Detroit. Cruz has 18 career homers against the Tigers. Garver hit his 10th homer, and CJ Cron blasted his 14th this season for the Twins.

### A'S 5, RANGERS 3

Marcus Semien hit a two-run homer in the ninth inning, his second of the game, to lift Oakland over Texas in the opener of a four-game series in Arlington, Texas. Semien also matched his career high with four hits.

He drove in four runs and scored three. Oakland left-hander Brett Anderson allowed three runs and eight hits in 6 1/3 innings, striking out five and walking one.

Rangers right-hander Lance Lynn limited the A's to two runs and six hits over six innings, striking out eight and walking one. Delino DeShields had three hits, Elvis Andrus and Nomar Mazara had two hits apiece and Hunter Pence hit a solo home run for Texas.



## Open champ Lee6 back on top at Shoprite LPGA

AFP  
New York

Newly crowned US Women's Open champion **Lee Jeong-eun** blazed into a share of the lead at the Shoprite LPGA Classic on Friday, reproducing the form which secured her maiden major to shoot an eight-under-par 63.

The weary South Korean rookie, who has spent this week fielding calls of congratulations after her Open triumph in Charleston on Sunday, surged to the top of the leaderboard alongside Thailand's Pornanong Phatlum.

A wild opening round at the Seaview Golf Club in Galloway, New Jersey saw Lee6 notch an eagle and nine birdies. Three bogeys prevented her from going even lower.

Lee6 said she was still riding the

momentum which carried her to the US Women's Open last week.

"I did pretty good in last week's tournament, and so I feel pretty confident," she said. "Now I feel like I want to play well in the rest of the tournaments. I felt really pretty relaxed on the course. I just played it just like how I played it last week."

The highlight of Lee's round was a sensational eagle three at the par five third hole, her 12th hole of the day, which took her to six under. Back-to-back birdies on the closing two holes handed her a share of the lead.

Pornanong meanwhile was at the top of the leaderboard after producing an equally dramatic finale, picking up three shots in the final two holes with a birdie followed by an eagle on the last. "Putting was so good today," Pornanong said. "My short game was very, very good," added the 29-year-old, who like Lee6, said she had been

infused with confidence following a solid showing at the US Women's Open, where she finished 16th.

"I feel like I get more confident after last week," she said. "I tried to be like playing my game and not put pressure on myself, so it makes me more relaxed on the course."

A low-scoring opening day of the three-round event left three women a shot off the lead, with Kristen Gillman, Lexi Thompson and Chinese rookie He Muni all posting seven-under-par 64s. Teenager He, who was born in Chengdu before moving to Vancouver and then San Diego at an early age, produced a flawless round with seven birdies and 11 pars en route to the lowest score of her debut season.

The 19-year-old missed the cut in six of the eight previous tournaments she has played this year, and said a more relaxed approach on Friday had led to her low round.

## US OPEN

# Woods, McIlroy yearn for old-school challenge

AFP  
Los Angeles

**T**iger Woods would love to see a classic US Open test next week at Pebble Beach, where the US Golf Association will be under heavy scrutiny after wind-whipped Shinnecock Hills teetered toward unfairness last year.

Woods, whose 15 major titles include three US Open triumphs starting with a record-setting 2000 victory at Pebble Beach, said the USGA has gotten away from what it does best with the introduction of graduated rough and flexible teeing grounds.

"I thought it was just narrow fairways, hit it in the fairway or hack it out, move on," he said of the old-school approach. "Now there's chipping areas around the greens. There's less rough. They try to make the Open different, and strategically different. I just like it when there's high rough and narrow fairways and it's 'Go get it, boys!'"

Woods traced the introduction of graduated rough to Winged Foot in 2006 and the trend of flexible teeing grounds to Torrey Pines in 2008 — where he won his most recent US Open crown.

"I didn't agree with the set up at 14 in '08," he said of the hole shortened to 277 yards in the final round.

"It was a great par-four, but why move it all the way up there and make it driveable?" said Woods, who noted that tee ground options were a notable factor at Chambers Bay in 2015 — when the first hole played as a par-four and the 18th a par-five for three rounds but swapped those pars for one round.

Northern Ireland's Rory McIlroy, who won the 2011 US Open on a rain-softened Congressional course, agreed he'd like to see a more traditional US Open set up.

"In my head, growing up watching the US Open, that was what my perception of the US Open was," McIlroy said. "It

was tight fairways. It was thick rough. It was a premium on accuracy and precision. I think some of the golf courses we've played and some of the set ups over the past couple of years went a little bit away from that."

USGA officials were also pilloried last year at Shinnecock Hills, when chief executive Mike Davis admitted their zeal to make the US Open the "ultimate" test in golf backfired as higher than expected winds dried out the sloping greens in Saturday's third round.

Davis admitted that by the end of the day, some well executed shots not only weren't rewarded but were penalised.

The round recalled the 2004 US Open at Shinnecock, where the greens dried out over the weekend to the extent that some were virtually unplayable.

"It's going to be really hard to screw up Pebble Beach," American Rickie Fowler said. "But you didn't think Shinnecock 2.0 would happen, either?"

Pebble Beach, with its breathtaking Pacific Ocean vistas, has evolved into an iconic US Open course since Jack Nicklaus won the first Open held there in 1972.

Tom Watson won there 10 years later and Tom Kite in 1992 before Woods marched to a stunning 15-stroke victory in 2000 and Graeme McDowell triumphed in 2010.

But not everyone is certain that a return to Pebble will see the USGA, as McIlroy put it, "redeem themselves."

"One hundred percent of the time they have messed it up if it doesn't rain," said Phil Mickelson, a six-time US Open runner-up who lacks only his national championship to complete a career Grand Slam. "Rain is the governor. That's the only governor they have. If they don't have a governor, they don't know how to control themselves."

Two-time defending champion Brooks Koepka, however, is unconcerned.

"Whatever they're doing, it's working for me," Koepka said.

## GOLF

# Sizzling 60 leaves Snedeker one back of Kuchar

'MADE A COUPLE OF PUTTS EARLY TO KIND OF GET THE MOMENTUM GOING'



Brandt Snedeker of the United States chips on to the seventh green during the second round of the RBC Canadian Open at Hamilton Golf and Country Club in Hamilton, Canada.

AFP  
Ottawa

**B**randt Snedeker, already in golf's exclusive "59" club, lit up Hamilton Golf and Country Club on Friday, but his scintillating 60 wasn't even enough to give him the 36-hole lead in the US PGA Tour Canadian Open.

Snedeker had eight birdies and an eagle in his 10-under round but was overtaken for the halfway lead by Matt Kuchar and Scott Brown, who both carded seven-under 63s to top

the leaderboard at 12-under 128.

"I drove the ball fantastic," said Snedeker, whose sparkling round came nine months after he became just the ninth golfer in US PGA Tour history to fire a 59. "I think I missed two fairways today, you do that around here you set yourself up for success."

"Made a couple of putts early to kind of get the momentum going. I just gave myself a lot of opportunities."

Snedeker really shone on the greens, rolling in a total of 136 feet of putts on the course near Toronto, falling just shy of join-

ing Jim Furyk as the only players to break 60 twice on the PGA Tour.

The affable 38-year-old from Tennessee opened with a birdie at the par-four 10th, and added birdies at 12, 16 and 17.

Playing alongside four-time major winner Brooks Koepka and big-hitting Justin Thomas, Snedeker, kept things rolling coming in, his birdie at the second followed by a 20-footer for eagle at the par-five fourth. He drained another long one — 21 feet — for birdie at the fifth, watched a 14-footer drop at the sixth and capped his round with

a six-footer at the ninth.

"When I get hot the hole is like a beach ball to me," Snedeker said of his performance on the greens. "Today I felt like that."

Although he couldn't claim a second 59, Snedeker became the fourth player to card multiple rounds of 60 or lower. He now has a 59 a 60 and a 61 on his PGA Tour resume.

"You don't get these days very often on tour," he added. "More often you're getting beat up, so when you have these days you've got to take advantage of them."

Snedeker shared third place with Nick Taylor, who carded a

65 for 129 and led a group of four Canadians within four shots of the lead trying to post the first home win in the tournament since 1954.

But it was Kuchar and Brown leading the way into the weekend in the last tune-up event before next week's US Open.

Brown teed off on 10 and eagled the par-five 17th before reeling off five straight birdies from the second through the sixth.

Kuchar had eight birdies, including three in a row from the third through fifth and another three straight to end his round.

## CYCLING

# Froome targets record fourth Criterium in build-up to Tour de France

AFP  
Paris

**C**hris Froome embarks today on the mountainous eight-day stage race of the Criterium du Dauphine, the race traditionally seen as a litmus test for July's Tour de France.

The four-time 'Grande Boucle' winner Froome can test his prowess against most of the Tour's pretenders in Adam Yates, Richie Porte, Tom Dumoulin and



Romain Bardet in a highly competitive field attracted by a tough route.

"It's difficult to say exactly where I am with my form because I haven't raced recently," Froome said this week. "But I'd like to be fighting for the win here. It's a good, balanced route," he said of the course considered averagely mountainous, but tightly packed with challenges.

The race has two summit finishes on the final two days, it traverses relentlessly through rolling terrain and features what promises to be a hotly-con-

tested 26km time-trial on Wednesday.

"There are a few lumpy days, a time trial and then some big mountain days. We'll definitely get a good gauge of where we are after doing this Dauphine as there's a bit of everything there," Froome added.

Should Froome actually emerge as the winner at the Swiss ski resort of Champéry next Sunday he will claim the record as the only man to have won the title four times.

He will have to do so without the help of reigning Tour de France champion

Geraint Thomas, who is set to race the Tour de Suisse, starting next weekend.

Froome will also need to show some real form for the first time this season.

"I went a bit too far in Colombia in the early season and I should have been more patient."

Dutch 2017 Giro d'Italia champion Dumoulin will be trying out the knee he hurt in a fall early on at this year's race but will also try out his new slimline frame on the summits.

Ireland's Dan Martin also expects to be in the mix.

"Racing on the French roads against a high-level competition is the perfect preparation for the Tour de France," Martin said this week.

"I've performed well in the last few years at the race, so I am just aiming to enjoy the race and hope the legs are there to be aggressive at some point in the week," said the UAE Team Emirates captain.

Liege-Bastogne-Liege winner Jakob Fuglsang won here in 2017 and his Astana team has major ambitions for the Tour de France.



Rory McIlroy of Northern Ireland.

WOMEN'S WORLD CUP

# Gwinn strike helps Germany beat China in tight tussle

Hermoso penalties help Spain avoid South Africa upset



Germany's Giulia Gwinn is ecstatic after scoring against China in a Group B match at the Women's World Cup in Rennes, France, yesterday. (Reuters)

AFP  
Rennes, France

Teenage midfielder Giulia Gwinn scored the only goal yesterday as Germany opened their World Cup campaign with a hard-fought 1-0 victory over China in Group B. On a day for German youth, Gwinn, who is just 19, scored, and Lena Oberdorf came on at half time to become her country's youngest World Cup player at 17 years and 171 days.

The Germans complained after the game that the Chinese had aimed for their ankles. "They were often late in the tackles and kept catching our feet," said German captain Alexandra Popp. "We had to really grit our teeth."

Coach Martina Voss-Tecklenburg said she had not been sure at one stage if star Dzsenifer Marozsan would finish the match. "A lot of our players were caught on the ankle today, and it doesn't look good for some of them. What Dzseni

Marozsan suffered today was brutal. Her ankle doesn't look great. We were a little surprised by the assertive approach of the Chinese, but it's a competitive game, not a friendly," she said.

The Germans took the lead after 66 minutes. The Chinese cleared a corner to the top of the penalty area where Freiburg's Gwinn had time to take a touch before smacking a shot that curled between the on-rushing Yang Li's legs and into the corner of goalkeeper Peng Shimeng's net.

"I am very happy to have scored a goal at the World Cup," said Gwinn, who also struck the opening goal when Germany beat China in the group stage of the under-20 World Cup down the road in Saint-Malo last August. "The most important thing is that we have started with three points."

On a sunny but breezy early summer's day perfect for football, in front of a noisy crowd of 15,283 in Rennes, Germany, twice winners of this competition, dominated possession and territory.

"There was a lot of pressure on our de-

fence, but in our attack we created opportunities," said Jia Xiuquan, China's coach. "Compared to Germany we are not at the same level, but it does not mean we cannot fight."

After Gwinn's goal, China, World Cup finalists in 1999, generated sporadic pressure but Germany, now able to play on the counter attack, created the better chances only to shoot repeatedly straight at Peng. The Germans finished the match with 18 goal attempts to four by China.

Later, Jenni Hermoso converted a pair of second-half penalties as Spain recovered from a goal down to beat Women's World Cup newcomers South Africa 3-1 in their opening game Saturday.

Thembi Kgatlana put South Africa ahead on 25 minutes with a curling strike from the edge of the box, but Atletico Madrid forward Hermoso twice scored from the spot as Spain fought back. Nothando Vilakazi was sent off for a raised boot as she conceded the second penalty, awarded after a VAR review, with Lucia Garcia sealing victory a minute from time.

## FRANCE SAVOUR PERFECT START TO WOMEN'S WORLD CUP

On Friday, France players savoured a 'dream' opening to the women's World Cup after the hosts set the ball rolling in style with a 4-0 win over South Korea before a sell-out crowd in Paris.

More than 45,000 supporters filled the Parc des Princes to watch Les Bleues cruise to a one-sided victory, with giant defender Wendie Renard scoring twice in between goals from Eugénie Le Sommer and captain Amandine Henry. France took the lead in the ninth minute and were 3-0 in front at half-time, having another goal disallowed for offside after a VAR review. France next face Norway in Nice on Wednesday.

Almost a million tickets have been sold for this World Cup amid hopes that the month-long tournament will be a springboard to helping the women's game really take off. In France, broadcaster TF1 reported that almost 10mn viewers had tuned in to watch the game, a figure it said was a record in the country for a women's World Cup match.

EURO 2020 QUALIFIERS

## Croatia, Hungary win to pull away

Reuters  
Osijek, Croatia

Croatia and Hungary pulled away at the top of Euro 2020 qualifying Group E after victories yesterday in what is shaping up to be a fiercely competitive pool. Both teams have six points from three games after a goal and an assist by Ivan Perisic gave Croatia a 2-1 home win over Wales while a Willi Orban brace helped the Hungarians to a 3-1 win in Azerbaijan. Wales and Slovakia have three points each from two games and Azerbaijan none. Croatia dominated but were forced to hang on in the closing stages against Wales. Gareth Bale twice came close for the Welsh before substitute David Brooks pulled a goal back in the 77th minute, beating Croatia keeper Dominik Livakovic with

a deflected shot from 20 metres.

On Friday, three-time former champions Spain strolled past the Faroe Islands 4-1 and Ukraine hammered struggling Serbia 5-0. Republic of Ireland's James McClean said pre-match criticism of his team-mates by Denmark players served as motivation as they claimed a 1-1 draw in Copenhagen.

Spain captain Sergio Ramos opened the scoring after six minutes before Jesus Navas doubled the lead just before the 20-minute mark. Klaemint Olsen headed in from a corner after half an hour but the 102nd ranked side in the world's hopes of a surprise comeback were diminished four minutes later by a Teitur Gestsson own goal.

The Spaniards made sure of the three points and remained unbeaten at the top of Group F with defender Jose Gaya's first international goal with 14 minutes to play. Sweden beat Malta 3-0 to retain second spot.

SPOTLIGHT

## Messi leads Argentina rout over Nicaragua



Argentina's Lionel Messi dribbles past Nicaragua players during an International Friendly in San Juan, Argentina, on Friday. (Reuters)

AFP  
Los Angeles

Lionel Messi scored a first-half double as Argentina warmed up for the Copa America with a comprehensive 5-1 win over Nicaragua on Friday night in San Juan. The Central Americans, who will participate in this month's Gold Cup tournament while Argentina battle it out in Brazil, frustrated the home side initially.

But it was left to captain Messi to spark his side into action in their only warm-up match ahead of the tournament, expertly opening the scoring on 37 minutes before grabbing another just 96 seconds later.

Lautaro Martinez, the Inter Milan forward, also scored twice, coming off the substitutes bench at half-time to give coach Lionel Scaloni food for thought ahead of the opening match with Colombia on June 15. Scaloni, brought in after Jorge Sampaoli was sacked following a disastrous showing at the World Cup last summer, is aiming to build a younger team and end Argentina's 26-year wait for a trophy.

Indeed, in Scaloni's Copa America squad only Messi, Sergio Aguero and Angel Di Maria remain from the one that was beaten by Germany in the World Cup final in Rio five years ago.

An on-song Messi, however, is needed for the South Americans to prosper over the next few weeks. Messi has lost three Copa finals - 2007, 2015 and 2016 - and the last time Argentina won an international title was in the same competition back in 1993, when the diminutive forward was just six years old.

They have reached four of the last five finals. With Brazil missing the injured Neymar for the showpiece event, which starts on June 14, Argentina are one of the favourites.

Scaloni withdrew key men Messi and Aguero at half-time, which allowed Martinez, 21, to impress with a well taken effort on 63 and 72 minutes. Watford's Roberto Pereyra made it five with nine minutes remaining while Nicaragua's deserved consolation came through Juan Barrera's late penalty. Argentina play Colombia in Salvador before taking on Paraguay and Asian champions Qatar in Group B.

FOCUS

## beIN Sports signs PSG superstar Nadia Nadim to host Women's World Cup show

beIN Media Group, the global sports and entertainment group, has announced that **Nadia Nadim**, one of the world's leading female football players, will host an innovative and inspiring Women's World Cup show across beIN's digital platforms during this year's tournament in France.

In addition to Nadia's behind-the-scenes digital shows, beIN is exclusively broadcasting every second of action at the Women's World Cup across 31 countries worldwide.

Nadim, who plays for Paris Saint-Germain and the Danish national team, has one of the most uplifting and inspirational stories of personal triumph through adversity - all thanks to the power of sport. For beIN, she will shine a light on her journey and search for other inspirational sporting stories during the World Cup, as she interviews and interacts with teammates, players, managers, staff and supporters throughout the tournament in France, which kicked-off on Friday and will go on till July 7.

The 'World Cup Show with Nadia Nadim' will be available on beIN's YouTube and Facebook channels, whilst fans can also follow her journey on Instagram and Twitter using the hashtag #beINSPIRED19.



Nadia was born in Afghanistan in 1988, and was raised by her mother and father along with four sisters. When she was young, she received the heartbreaking news that the Taliban had murdered her father. With Afghanistan being an unsafe place for six women to live together, they were forced to flee the country for England. However, the truck that was supposed to take them to London - where Nadia had relatives - took them to Denmark instead, where they received refugee status.

Having settled in a refugee camp, Nadia discovered a nearby training ground of local football team Gug Boldklub. After some time, Nadia - with her sisters in tow - plucked up the courage to ask the team's coach if they

could join in the session. The answer was yes, and so began the budding career of Nadia Nadim, which has taken her to the USA, UK and now France. She has represented Portland Thorns, Manchester City and Paris Saint-Germain, as well as winning more than 80 caps for the Danish national team. Incredibly, outside of football, Nadia has graduated from medical school and is a trained surgeon, and speaks 11 languages.

Nadim, who has also represented Manchester City and Portland Thorns, has overcome the most astonishing challenges to compete at the top of the world game. While her national team, Denmark, did not qualify for the World Cup, Denmark's loss is beIN's gain as Nadia will be joining the global sports broadcaster for the carnival of football in France this summer.

Nadia said: "I am incredibly excited to launch the new Women's World Cup show with beIN SPORTS and I encourage everybody - from the biggest football fans to those who have never watched a women's match before - to follow my journey across France. I will shine a light on truly inspirational stories of the World Cup and give a unique insider's view of the tournament that you will not see with any other broadcaster."

## Qatar finish Toulon tournament winless



Qatar Under-23 team lost to Brazil 0-5 at the Toulon Tournament in Southern France yesterday. Qatar ended their campaign bottom of the group, failing to score or collect a point from their matches. Matheus Cunha and Paulinho scored a brace, while Mateus Vital found the net once for the South Americans. Brazilians made it 13 goals in three games in Group B as they qualified for the knockout phase. Brazil are chasing a ninth title in Toulon.

## QATAR PLAYERS RETURN TO TRAINING



After a day's rest, Qatar players returned to training on Friday in Rio de Janeiro as they prepare for the Copa America, to be held in Brazil from June 14 to July 7. Felix Sanchez's men had lost to five-time world champions Brazil 0-2 in an international friendly on Wednesday. Tomorrow, Qatar will play a closed-doors match against a Brazilian club side. At the Copa America, Qatar who are in Group B, will open their campaign against Paraguay on June 16 at the prestigious Maracana stadium in Rio de Janeiro. They then face Colombia on June 19, before taking on Lionel Messi's Argentina on June 23. Qatar has never played in the Copa America before and will be using the experience of the tournament to get used to a higher standard of football ahead of their hosting of the 2022 World Cup. Chile are the two-time defending champions, having won the 2015 and 2016 editions of the tournament, though host nation Brazil will be eager to win their first major title since 2013 on home turf.

## NATIONS LEAGUE

# Portugal rely on Ronaldo to get better of Van Dijk

'It's the preparation - my work ethic. I still feel good despite being 34 years of age'

AFP

Porto, Portugal

Portugal's meeting with the Netherlands to decide the first ever winners of the Nations League today sees the unstoppable force of Cristiano Ronaldo face the immovable object in Virgil van Dijk. Ronaldo sat out the early stages of UEFA's new competition to save his 34-year-old legs for his first season at Juventus, but returned in time to ride to the host nation's rescue once more in Wednesday's semi-final against Switzerland.

The Swiss enjoyed the better of the game in Porto, but the five-time world player of the year was lethal in scoring his 53rd career hat-trick with three exquisite finishes. "It's the preparation - my work ethic. I still feel good despite being 34 years of age," Ronaldo said.

"The most important thing is your head, to feel motivated and happy, and to follow my path as a player, because I think I still have a lot to give."

Portugal's run to the last four without their all-time record top goalscorer showed why hopes are high the European champions will remain a force even when Ronaldo does eventually depart the international scene. The talent of Bernardo Silva, Joao Felix, Ruben Neves and Bruno Fernandes among others promises much, but Ronaldo remains Portugal's X-factor.

"We know sometimes it is impossible to have good defending against Cristiano Ronaldo," said the Netherlands coach Ronald Koeman. "I think the best that we can do is keeping the ball, to have good ball possession because when we have the ball he can do nothing in attack."

However, Koeman is blessed with the man most capable of keeping Ronaldo quiet in world football at the moment in Van Dijk. The world's most expensive defender has more than justified his £75 million (\$95 million) price tag since swapping Southampton for Liverpool 18 months ago. His transformative effect has brought back the glory days at Anfield, capped by winning the Champions League last weekend. And now Van Dijk is also leading his country back to where they belong as a European powerhouse after failing to even qualify for the last two major tournaments.

Koeman boasted about having the best central defensive partnership in Europe even before the tournament with Ajax captain Matthijs de Ligt lining up alongside Van Dijk. Yet, while the 19-year-old may well succeed his skipper as the world's most expensive defender in the coming weeks, Holland's 3-1 semi-final victory over England showed why he is



The Netherlands' Virgil van Dijk (left) and Portugal's Cristiano Ronaldo train on the eve of the UEFA Nations League final at the Estadio do Dragao in Porto, Portugal, yesterday. (Reuters)

not yet the finished article.

De Ligt's error in conceding a first half penalty could have cost his side a place in the final. Van Dijk was first to console his young teammate and that assurance helped De Ligt to atone in perfect fashion as he scored the Dutch's equaliser before easing past an error-strewn England in extra-time.

Ronaldo may be keen for revenge against De Ligt as he also scored the winner when Ajax shocked Juventus in the Champions League quarter-finals this

season. Despite the Italian champions' elimination, Ronaldo scored his side's two goals in that tie. But he is yet to net when faced with the more imposing and composed figure of Van Dijk.

In their only two previous meetings, Real Madrid beat Liverpool in last season's Champions League final thanks to two calamitous goalkeeping errors from Loris Karius and a wonder goal from Gareth Bale in what proved to be Ronaldo's last ever game for the Spanish giants.

The last time the two nations met,

it was Van Dijk who was on target in a 3-0 friendly win for the Netherlands last March. A five-time Ballon d'Or and Champions League winner, who has also won league titles in England, Spain and Italy, there is little left for Ronaldo to prove. Yet, the chance to win an international tournament on home soil and avenge the pain of defeat in the Euro 2004 final as hosts will not come round again. Fifteen years on, Portugal's hopes still rely Ronaldo rising to the challenge of overcoming the world's best defender.

## SPOTLIGHT

## England's Southgate determined to deliver in third-place playoff against Swiss

AFP

Guimaraes, Portugal

England manager Gareth Southgate insisted he cannot treat today's Nations League third-place playoff against Switzerland as a "practice match" with tens of thousands of fans having travelled to Portugal to support his side.

Southgate labelled those fans that caused trouble in Porto on Wednesday night ahead of Thursday's 3-1 semi-final defeat to the Netherlands an "embarrassment". However, the England boss said he had a duty to those that have travelled without causing problems to put on a performance against the Swiss.

"We lost an important game on Thursday. We've got thousands of fans here and we have to make sure our performance is one that gives them something back," said Southgate yesterday. "Every time we take the field, we are learning. No England international is a practice match."

Defeat to the Dutch was the second time in a year England have lost a semi-final after losing out in the last four of the World Cup in similar circumstances to Croatia as they let an early lead slip away. However, Southgate rejected comparisons between the two games and believes Eng-

land's determination to stick to their gameplan of playing out from the back is a sign of progress, even if it did cost his side dearly.

John Stones and Ross Barkley gifted away possession on the edge of their own box for both the Netherlands' goals in extra-time. Yet, Southgate pointed to England's best move of the game in Guimaraes that led to Jesse Lingard's goal being ruled out by the finest of margins for offside after a VAR review, which started with Stones' pass from deep inside his own box.

"We certainly did not stop trying to play out the other night, whether we did it effectively is another case in point," added Southgate. "The errors we made were not because we were trying to play out from the back, they were errors in decision making. When we played out and played well, the move for the disallowed goal started on our byline, the move for the (Marcus) Rashford chance in the first half, we played right through the thirds of the pitch."

Southgate is expected to be without Ben Chilwell, Jordan Henderson and Marcus Rashford due to injury and could make many more changes. Harry Kane is likely to return as captain in place of Rashford after starting on the bench on Thursday.

## FIFA bans ex-Afghan football boss for life over sexual assault

Geneva: FIFA yesterday found the former head of the Afghanistan Football Federation, Keramuddin Karim, guilty of sexually abusing female players and banned him from the sport for life. Karim had been provisionally banned by FIFA's ethics committee following allegations made by five female Afghan players concerning acts of sexual assault committed between 2013 and 2018. The investigation by world football's governing body found Karim "guilty of having abused his position and sexually abused various female players, in violation of the FIFA Code of Ethics."

Afghan footballer Khalida Popal - who reportedly had collected accounts from former teammates that included sexual violence, death threats and rapes - applauded FIFA's decision but said it was only a "first step." "We are not done yet," she said on Twitter. "Football is not a place for abuse... Women should be protected," she added.

Karim has previously denied the accusations, denouncing them as part of a "conspiracy"

and "without evidence." Effective immediately, Karim is banned from all football-related activity at both the national and international level. FIFA also fined him 1mn Swiss francs (\$1mn, 893,000 euros). Karim can appeal the FIFA decision, including at the Court of Arbitration for Sport in Lausanne.

The AFF could not immediately be reached for comment. Afghanistan President Ashraf Ghani ordered an investigation after Britain's *Guardian* newspaper reported in November that senior figures linked to the Afghan women's team had alleged that some players had been molested by officials from the federation.

According to the *Guardian*, the alleged abuse took place inside the federation's headquarters in Afghanistan as well as at a training camp in Jordan last February.

The national women's team was formed in 2010. Some conservative-minded Afghans oppose women playing sports. The allegations left the women's team in tatters and prompted a loss of sponsorship.