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GULF TIMES

SPORT

TENNIS

Nadal reigns in clash
of former US Open
champs as Zverev exits

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PICTURE: Noushad Thekkayil

A

CUP

OF

INFINITE

DREAMS

From Arabic language influences to reflections of Middle Eastern culture, the Qatar 2022 emblem represents aspirations and potential of the region

Madrid

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QUALIFIERS

Contenders for fast start as Asia's road to Qatar 2022 resumes

Agencies
Hong Kong

Qatar will headline Group E of the Asian Qualifiers for the 2022 FIFA World Cup Qatar and AFC Asian Cup China 2023 with Bangladesh, Oman, India and Afghanistan determined to challenge the defending AFC Asian Cup champions.

Qatar are the overwhelming favourites to win the group and head coach Felix Sanchez will be expecting top quality performances from his team as they build up to the 2022 FIFA World

Cup on home soil.

The AFC Asian Cup UAE 2019 champions have continued working and played in the Copa America in June and will be ready for the challenges expected in Group E.

The top seeds in each of the eight groups – including World Cup regulars such as South Korea, Japan, Australia and Iran – do not commence their campaigns until next Tuesday.

Uzbekistan are among those hoping to mount a challenge for one of the four guaranteed berths at the finals in Qatar, with former Egypt coach Hector Cuper signed up to lead the country to a maiden qualification.

The Central Asian nation, who went close to sealing a place at the 2006 finals in Germany, start their latest attempt in Palestine and the Argentine believes a winning start will stand his team in good stead.

"It's always very important to start with three points, because a favourable result will lay the foundation for the next victories," Cuper told the Asian Football Confederation's official website.

"Talking about Palestine, I should state that they are a really tough and aggressive opponent who will be trying to take advantage of playing in front of their fans.

"Moreover, playing on an artificial pitch is always unpleasant for players who are not accustomed to playing on this kind of surface conditions. But we are going to do everything possible in order to get a good result."

The first place finishers in each group is guaranteed to advance to the next round of Asia's qualification campaign, with the four best runners-up across the eight groups also advancing.

The 12 teams will be drawn into two groups of six, with the top two teams certain of a place at the finals.

Uzbekistan share their group with five-time finalists Saudi

Arabia as well as Palestine, Yemen and Singapore, ensuring Cuper and his team will face a serious challenge in the attempt to progress to the next round.

"There is no team to be underestimated in our group," Cuper said. "In theory, Saudi Arabia may seem to be the main contender to win the group as they were in the first pot during the draw, but now they need to prove it on the pitch also."

The task facing the countries who are hoping to muscle in on Asia's established order is monumental.

South Korea have the continent's most impressive qualifi-

cation record and are aiming to secure an appearance at a 10th consecutive World Cup – and 11th in total – while Japan are also a dominant force, having played at every tournament since 1998.

Australia, too, are one of the powerhouses of the region, booking their place at each World Cup since their second qualification was sealed in Germany in 2006. Iran, meanwhile, are aiming to qualify for a third finals in a row and a fifth in total.

Group G features the United Arab Emirates, Thailand, Vietnam, Indonesia and Malaysia.

China should be strong enough to secure a way out of Group A,

where they are joined by Syria, the Philippines, Guam and the Maldives.

Jordan will present the biggest threat to Australia in Group B, which also includes Chinese Taipei, Nepal and Kuwait, with Iran's meeting with Iraq the highlight of a Group C that also features Hong Kong, Bahrain and Cambodia.

Japan being their campaign against Myanmar next week in Group F, where Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Mongolia will also play and South Korea will go head-to-head with North Korea in Group H along with Turkmenistan, Lebanon and Sri Lanka.

FOCUS

Nadal reigns in clash of former champs as Zverev exits

'The emotions I have when I play here are impossible to describe'



Rafael Nadal of Spain returns a shot during his fourth round match against Marin Cilic of Croatia at the US Open on Monday. (AFP)

AFP
New York

Rafael Nadal ramped up his quest for a fourth US Open title Monday with an impressive win over 2014 champion Marin Cilic to advance to the quarter-finals while Alexander Zverev slumped to a four-set defeat.

Second seed Nadal – the winner at Flushing Meadows in 2010, 2013 and 2017 – produced some electrifying moments of brilliance to end the challenge of Croatian 22nd seed Cilic 6-3, 3-6, 6-1, 6-2.

After barely breaking a sweat in reaching the last 16, a run that included a second-round walkover, Nadal stared down his stiffest test so far to surge into a quarter-final meeting with Argentine 20th seed Diego Schwartzman.

The Spaniard exchanged the first two sets with Cilic but

grasped control by breaking for 3-1 in the third, a series of dazzling winners drawing an animated fist-pump from golf legend Tiger Woods at Arthur Ashe Stadium.

Nadal reeled off nine games in succession across the third and fourth sets and 12 of the final 15 to nail down a 40th Grand Slam quarter-final appearance, nine of which have come at the US Open.

"The emotions I have when I play here are impossible to describe. I love the sport and feel very lucky to still be playing tennis here. Eight years ago I didn't think that would happen as my body was suffering badly," Nadal said.

"It's a huge honour playing in front of all of you and playing in front of Tiger is a very special thing. I always say I don't have big idols but one idol is him and I always try to follow him."

Nadal's path to the final sees him take on Schwartzman next

after the 5ft 7in (1.70m) Argentine chopped down sixth seed Zverev.

"He is playing amazing, nothing new, he's one of the players with best talent on tour," the 18-time Grand Slam champion said of his upcoming opponent.

"It will be a big challenge. I have to play my best. I'm happy for him. He's a close friend and I hope to play a great match."

BERRETTINI, MONFILS WIN

Zverev rolled through the opening set against Schwartzman under the roof on Ashe during a rainy afternoon session, but he lost his way to go down 3-6, 6-2, 6-4, 6-3.

The German was enjoying his deepest run in New York but committed 17 double faults and 65 unforced errors and received a point penalty for swearing as Schwartzman advanced to a second US Open quarter-final in three years.

"Generally my season so far has not been the best," said Zverev, who has reached just two quarter-finals in 18 Grand Slam appearances.

Zverev said he was hindered a "very swollen" back and right hip following a fall in his previous match.

"I had a lot of chances which I didn't use early in the match. He kind of ran away with it."

Zverev lost his serve three times during the second set but appeared to have steadied himself when he moved a break ahead at 3-2 in the third, only for Schwartzman to wrest the momentum back in his favour after a lengthy sixth game.

"It was tough because I was feeling I had the chance to win this and I had a few break points I could not take," Schwartzman said. "He was up a break and then I recovered really quickly and I felt great after that."

Matteo Berrettini became just the second Italian man to

progress to the US Open quarter-finals, 42 years after Corrado Barazzutti's run to the last four in New York.

Berrettini, the 24th seed, eased to a 6-1, 6-4, 7-6 (8/6) win over Russia's 43rd-ranked Andrey Rublev to reach the last eight at a Grand Slam for the first time.

"It's something really crazy. I cannot believe it right now. I need a few hours to understand what happened," said Berrettini, 23, who goes on to play French 13th seed Gael Monfils.

"I'm just happy. Seeing my team and family here and crying, for me it's unbelievable."

Berrettini went one step further than his run to the last 16 at Wimbledon in July, where he was beaten by Roger Federer.

Monfils, a 2016 US Open semi-finalist, crushed the 33-year-old Andujar's bid to become the oldest player in the Open era to reach his first Grand Slam singles quarter-final with a 6-1, 6-2, 6-2 rout.

COMMENT

Behave like Roger and Rafa, Zverev tells unruly tennis youngsters

DPA
New York

Alexander Zverev is not impressed by the behaviour of other youngsters at the US Open and tells them to look at veterans

Roger Federer and Rafael Nadal to learn how to conduct themselves on court.

"There's a lot of young guys that do things on the tennis court that maybe is not the best thing to do. I don't want the next generation to be known for that," Zverev said after going out in the fourth round of the US Open Monday in four sets against Diego Schwartzman.

Zverev mentioned antics by Greek Stefanos Tsitsipas and wondered about Russian Daniil Medvedev and his stirring up of a now hostile to him crowd.

"I think a lot of the times Tsitsipas gets over the line with changing his shoes 15 times in a tournament, going to the bathroom in the middle of a set. Stuff like that," he said. "Medvedev is obviously going over the line a little bit now."

Zverev was also bewildered a few days ago when Frances Tiafoe took a bathroom break that lasted more than 10 minutes during their second-round match.

And he will likely also not be pleased with the antics of Australia's Nick Kyrgios who faces

another suspension over multiple offences recently in Cincinnati and naming the men's ATP Tour "corrupt."

Zverev, 22, named the veterans and multiple grand slam champions Federer and Nadal role models in this respect, from whom the youngsters should learn.

"I hope some of the NextGen or the young guys will kind of learn from the older guys like Roger and Rafa who have been unbelievable over their career, really let their racket talk for them, not try to distract opponents, something like that," he said.

But, looking at Medvedev, he also said that success is the ultimate goal, regardless of behaviour.

"He's winning. He's in the quarter-finals. He's playing Stan [Wawrinka]. At the end of the day it all doesn't matter if you're winning," Zverev said.

The German himself has also not always been on his best behaviour and on Monday was docked a point for a verbal obscenity. He contested the call, stating he never heard that he was given a warning earlier in the match, in which he was supported by Schwartzman.

"Code violation is fine. I didn't even argue that. But neither of us heard me getting a warning in the first place," he said. "I didn't hear it. Diego didn't hear it. Most of the crowd didn't hear it. I think the umpires next time should let me know about it."



SPOTLIGHT

Svitlana downs Konta to reach US Open semis

Reuters
New York

Elina Svitolina continued her dominant run against Johanna Konta with a 6-4 6-4 win yesterday to reach the US Open semi-finals for the first time.

The fifth-seeded Ukrainian, who has won all of her meetings with the Briton, reached her second straight Grand Slam semi-final after also making the last four at Wimbledon in July.

Svitlana's sturdy baseline attack wore down the 16th-seeded Konta, who made 35 unforced errors, 22 more than her opponent, on a sun-soaked day at Arthur Ashe Stadium.

"It feels amazing," she said of being the first player to reach the semis at the tournament this year.

"It was a very, very tough match... I think we were both striking the ball. It was quite even," she said.

"I'm very happy with how I handled the pressure."

Svitlana rifled a backhand winner on break point for a 4-3 lead in the second set, celebrating with an emphatic fist pump in front of the crowd that included her boyfriend Gael Monfils, who plays his quarter-final today.

Konta continued to fight, however, saving two match points on her serve, but Svitolina ended the contest in the next game when the Briton fired long.

Svitlana said that Frenchman Monfils has been a big help to her during the tournament.

"Definitely we are pushing each other I think because we are trying to join each other in the quarter-final and now the semi-final... so now he has to step up his game," she said with a laugh.

Next up for Svitolina is a meeting with either eighth seed Serena Williams or 18th seed Wang Qiang, who play their quarter-final match later on Tuesday.

Inspired Nadal has 'idol' Tiger roaring at US Open

AFP
New York

Rafael Nadal called Tiger Woods an "amazing inspiration" as the Spaniard had the golf superstar roaring with approval during a majestic US Open performance on Monday.

The 18-time Grand Slam champion advanced to the quar-

ter-final of a major for the 40th time in his glittering career with a 6-3, 3-6, 6-1, 6-2 defeat of Croatia's Marin Cilic.

But it was the reaction of Woods, a winner of 15 golf majors, to an assortment of sensational Nadal winners during a crucial section of the match that caught the eye at Arthur Ashe Stadium.

A blistering cross-court backhand passing winner off a Cilic overhead elicited a fired-up fist-

pump from Woods, who was equally appreciate of an outrageous round-the-netpost forehand that brought up match point. "It means a lot to me to have him supporting. As I said, he's an amazing inspiration, all the things that he accomplish in the sport, the way that he managed to keep fighting that hard," Nadal said.

"Watching him on the golf course, has been an example, a real inspiration for me.

(To) have him supporting and be able to be in touch with him very often for me is something that I am super happy and I hope one day we can play golf and tennis together"

Nadal, who like Woods has endured more than his fair share of injury nightmares, looked healthy and hungry at Flushing Meadows, where he is chasing a fourth US Open title after 2010, 2013 and 2017.

"The emotions I have when I play here are impossible to describe. I love the sport and feel very lucky to still be playing tennis here. Eight to 10 years ago, I didn't think that would happen as my body was suffering badly," Nadal said. "It's a huge honour playing in front of all of you and playing in front of Tiger is a very special thing. I always say I don't have big idols but one idol is him and I always try to follow him."

BOTTOMLINE

Andreescu ends Townsend's run to reach US Open quarters

Reuters
New York

Canadian teenager Bianca Andreescu battled past a tenacious Taylor Townsend 6-1 4-6 6-2 in a late night thriller at the US Open on Monday to reach her first grand slam quarter-final and end the American's fairytale run at Flushing Meadows.

Ranked 116th in the world and having clawed her way into the US Open main draw via qualifying, Townsend was the clear underdog against the 15th seeded Andreescu, who arrived at the year's final grand slam hyped as the next big thing in women's tennis.

"I have been working and dreaming of this for a long time," said Andreescu. "So it feels pretty good to be in the quarters."

"Every tournament I am in I expect to win but I know I have a lot of tough opponents before reaching the finals." But Townsend, who had already knocked off Wimbledon champion Simona Halep in the second round, would not be intimidated even after being blown out in the opening set. The match was billed as a clash of styles with Townsend employing the serve-and-volley game that baffled the fourth seeded Halep going against the hard-hitting Canadian.

"She has a different game from many other people," said Andreescu. "It wasn't easy that's for

sure.

"I don't normally play people like this but I made sure to work on my passing shots yesterday and I think it worked in the first and third sets."

"I'm glad I kept my cool in the end."

But Andreescu has shown in winning hardcourt titles in Indian Wells and Toronto that she is much more than a big serve and ferocious forehand.

The teenager comes armed with an improving all court game and has shown a willingness and ability to come to net.

There were, however, a few glaring cracks in Andreescu's game, particularly her serve as she committed eight double faults, many at

critical moments.

As expected Townsend came out on the attack but Andreescu was ready countering the serve-and-volley with razor sharp passing shots and clever lobs to race to a 4-0 lead.

In command, Andreescu's serving troubles suddenly surfaced double faulting to gift Townsend a break at 4-1.

Andreescu's serving woes followed her into the second set helping Townsend to an early break and a 3-0 lead with another double fault on set point handing the American a break to extend the match. With a shaken Andreescu taking a washroom break Townsend skipped rope on court to keep loose to the amuse-

ment of the Arthur Ashe Stadium crowd squarely in her corner.

The support could not save Townsend as Andreescu opened the third set with a break and charged in front 5-1.

Townsend refused to go away quietly fighting off four match points to extend the contest before Andreescu served out the match.

Never before past the second round of any grand slam Andreescu has confidently navigated her way into the last eight where she will face Belgian 25th seed Elise Mertens, who blasted her way into the quarter-finals with a 6-1 6-1 demolition of another American surprise package wildcard Kristie Ahn.



Bianca Andreescu of Canada serves to Taylor Townsend of the US during their Round Four match at the US Open on Monday. (AFP)

PREVIEW

Top teams look to march on in Euro 2020 qualifiers

Portugal in tricky group with leaders Ukraine looking to pull further clear

DPA
Berlin

European champions Portugal are seeking their first win while seven teams enjoy perfect records as Euro 2020 qualifiers reach the half-way stage with six days of matches from tomorrow. Portugal, who have drawn their opening two games in Group B at home to Ukraine and Serbia in March, now visit Lithuania three days later. Since the last qualifiers, Portugal have shown they can win key games by capturing the inaugural Nations League played on home soil, defeating Switzerland 3-1 with a Cristiano Ronaldo hat-trick and the Netherlands 1-0 in the Nations League.

The group though still looks tricky for the Portuguese, with leaders Ukraine looking to pull further clear by winning at Lithuania on Saturday.

The Netherlands are meanwhile in action in one of the highlight matches when they visit Germany in Hamburg on Friday.

The Dutch will be out to avenge a 3-2 home defeat to the Germans in Amsterdam in March and can hardly afford another slip up in Group C, where Joachim Loew's German side has three wins out of three.

The Germans will then travel to Belfast for a key game against Northern Ireland, who top the group with four wins out of four.

"We will take a big step with two victories," said Loew, who missed the last two qualifiers following hospital treatment.

World champions France are neck and neck with Turkey and Iceland on nine points after four games in Group H and will be

seeking maximum points before home fans at the Stade de France – against Albania on Saturday and minnows Andorra three days later.

Turkey, who defeated France 2-0 at home in June before succumbing to a 2-1 defeat in Iceland, meanwhile greet Andorra before travelling to Moldova, and Iceland entertain Moldova and are then at Albania.

Italy have trips to Armenia and Finland after four wins out of four, with coach Roberto Mancini having to tweak his defence after both Juventus defenders Giorgio Chiellini and Mattia De Sciglio were injured last week.

"We have been trying to build a good team," Mancini said. "Let's see what happens in the next eight, nine months; maybe someone will improve, but with those I have called up we already have a team." Group F leaders Spain are another team with a perfect record after four matches ahead of Thursday's match in Bucharest against Romania, a side they have never beaten in a World Cup or European Championship qualifier, and a home game against Faroe Islands on Sunday.

After Nations League action in June, England have had just two games in Group A but have begun well with two victories and 10 goals against Czech Republic and Montenegro.

Gareth Southgate's side now welcome Bulgaria to Wembley on Saturday before playing Kosovo in Southampton. "We feel that, as a team, we're now rightly in the top 10 [of the FIFA rankings] and firmly embedded in that top 10 but, as we head into the Euros, we could beat any of those teams on any given day – and, as has been shown, they're capable of beating us," Southgate said.



Portugal's Cristiano Ronaldo during training in Lisbon yesterday.

SPOTLIGHT

Owen, Shearer in Twitter feud over comments in new autobiography

Reuters
London

Former England and Newcastle United strikers Michael Owen and Alan Shearer became involved in a war of words on social media yesterday over comments in Owen's new autobiography 'Reboot'.

In an extract from the book, which is being serialised in the Daily Mirror, former Liverpool and Real Madrid forward Owen blamed Shearer for their heated rivalry following Newcastle's relegation from the Premier League in the 2008-09 season.

Shearer was Newcastle's interim manager for the final eight games of their ill-fated campaign.

"He was brought in at St James' Park as the saviour... it could have been a great story. But he failed. Newcastle United were relegated... rather than examine his own shortcomings, it felt easier to blame

Michael Owen," Owen wrote.

"It wasn't until three months later, I discovered that Alan was apparently seething with me. Not only that, it transpired that he was telling anyone who'd listen what he thought of me."

Shearer responded with a post on Twitter that had a video of Owen saying he couldn't wait to retire during the last seven years of his career, adding the caption: "Yes Michael, we thought that also, whilst on £120k a week."

Owen responded suggesting he was not sure Shearer was "as loyal to Newcastle" as the 49-year-old made it out to be.

"I distinctly remember you being inches away from signing for Liverpool after Sir Bobby Robson put you on the bench. You tried everything to get out," Owen said.

"My new book has made plenty of headlines this morning but they need to be put into context. I've stayed quiet for years whilst receiving plenty of criticism... Once you've read the book you'll make your own decision."



Liverpool teenager Duncan joins Fiorentina

Reuters
London

Liverpool striker Bobby Duncan has moved to Fiorentina in a permanent transfer on the final day of the European window, the Premier League club said yesterday. Financial details of the deal were not disclosed but local media reported that the Serie A club would pay European champions Liverpool about 2m euros (\$2.2m) for the 18-year-old and that the contract included a 20% sell-on clause.

"Bobby Duncan has today completed a permanent transfer to Serie A side Fiorentina," Liverpool said on their website.

"The 18-year-old striker makes the move to Italy after one season with Liverpool, during which he scored 32 goals at Academy level.

"Everybody at the club wishes Bobby the best of luck in his future career."

The move follows criticism of Liverpool by the player's agent Saif Rubie, who alleged on social media last month that

the Anfield club were holding his client against his will after they rejected a loan offer from the Italian side.

In response to Rubie's comments, Liverpool said: "Liverpool Football Club is aware of and disappointed by the unattributed comments and unfounded allegations that have been made in the media regarding one of our players. "We will, however, continue our efforts to work privately with the player to find resolution in the best interests of all involved."

Liverpool winger Ryan Kent also left the club before the window closed, sealing a permanent move to Scottish side Rangers, with whom he spent last season on loan.

Rangers said that Kent had signed a four-year deal and British media reported that the club, who are managed by former Liverpool midfielder Steven Gerrard, paid 7m pounds (\$8.59m) for him.

"Rangers are delighted to confirm the return of Ryan Kent," the club said on its website.

"The 22-year-old will join up with Steven Gerrard's squad when the team return from the international break."

Eight member associations in race to host 2023 women's WC

Reuters
London

Eight member associations will continue their bid to host the expanded women's World Cup in 2023, soccer's world governing body FIFA confirmed yesterday.

FIFA agreed to increase the number of participating teams for the 2023 event from 24 to 32 following this year's edition in France, and it subsequently reopened the bidding process.

Bidding member associations include Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Colombia, Japan,

New Zealand, South Africa and South Korea, which is interested in a joint bid together with North Korea.

Belgium, which registered its interest last month, as well as Bolivia were not on the latest list. "FIFA has dispatched updated bidding and hosting documents to all eight member associations, which will have until Dec 13 to submit their bid book, the signed hosting agreement and all other hosting and bidding documents," FIFA said in a statement.

"Up until the deadline for bid submissions, any member association wishing to join an existing bid will be permitted to

do so provided it also submits a bidding registration to FIFA."

The tournament's expansion was pledged by FIFA president Gianni Infantino at the end of this year's World Cup, which was won for a record-extending fourth time by the United States.

Interest in the women's game has arguably never been higher, with broadcast records broken all over the world in the June-July showpiece.

Almost 59m people watched France beat potential 2023 hosts Brazil in the last 16, becoming the most viewed women's soccer match of all time.

Football League plays down Bury hopes of quick return to action

The Football League played down Bury's hopes of gaining re-admission next season into League Two, the fourth tier of English football, saying yesterday that the established procedure for all clubs is to win promotion from the lower leagues.

Bury, one of English football's oldest clubs, were expelled from the EFL last month after failing to resolve their financial problems or find a new buyer. The side, which joined

the Football League in 1894, became the first team to be expelled since Maidstone in 1992 when a takeover bid fell through before an EFL deadline.

The EFL said in a statement that it recognised the efforts of local authorities and supporter groups to have the club reinstated and admitted into League Two for the 2020-21 campaign. It also said it would discuss these efforts with its member clubs in the coming weeks.

But it added that there was no precedent for such a move.

BOTTOMLINE

Indonesia face familiar foes in WC qualifying

Reuters
Hong Kong

After a seven-year hiatus, Indonesia return to World Cup qualifying tomorrow against regional rivals Malaysia in Jakarta's imposing Gelora Bung Karno Stadium hoping for a change in fortunes and frustrated by a parochial draw.

Double-digit thrashings and lengthy bans have marred the country's qualifying bids over much of the last decade and current coach Simon McMenemy is slightly deflated by the challenge handed to his team for the campaign for Qatar 2022.

In addition to Malaysia, Indonesia will take on Thailand and Vietnam – as well as top seeds United Arab Emirates – over the next 10 months in a group that has stoked

huge interest in the football-mad region but which has dissatisfied the Scotsman.

"It's not really the draw I wanted, not from a performance perspective but more from the point of view that we play these teams all the time and it limits the experience that Indonesian players get," McMenemy told Reuters.

"I want these guys to be able to go and compete in Asia and we keep going and playing the same teams in South East Asia. We don't get to compete against Turkmenistan and those sorts of countries, the difficult opponents we're going to come across at the Asian Cup."

"I wanted to try to expose the players more to Asian opposition rather than South East Asian opposition, so when I saw the draw it was double-edged for me."

Indonesia regularly face off against the likes of Vietnam, Ma-



Tough times lie ahead for Indonesia.

laysia and Thailand in the Asean Football Federation Championship but McMenemy, who was appointed head coach after the team's exit from the AFF Champi-

onship, is keen to broaden his players' horizons.

Despite the huge popularity of the sport in a nation where the representative team can pull in crowds

of 90,000 and league games are often played in front of 40,000 or more, Indonesia is ranked 160th in the world and 33rd in Asia.

That's a far cry from the country's football heyday. In 1938 they became the first nation from Asia to qualify for the World Cup when, known as the Dutch East Indies, they represented the continent at the finals in France.

But Indonesia has had a tumultuous relationship with the sport in recent years and the meeting with Malaysia will be the first played by the national team in World Cup qualifying since February 2012, when they were on the end of a controversial 10-0 thrashing by Bahrain.

That match was played during the height of a damaging period for the sport that saw rival professional leagues facing off and the PSSI, the governing body of Indonesian

football, suspended by FIFA for governmental interference during a long-running saga.

The ban came into effect midway through 2015 and ruled the country out of the qualifiers for the finals in Russia in 2018 while also preventing the country's club sides from participating in continental competition. It was not lifted until a year later.

As a result, Indonesia's exposure to leading Asian nations such as Japan, South Korea and Saudi Arabia has been limited, allowing the gap to the grow at a time when other South East Asian nations have been showing promise, especially at youth level.

McMenemy, however, remains confident his team can make an impact on the competition, despite his misgivings.

"There is a positive because it inspires optimism," he said of the

draw. The supporters believe we have a good chance against these guys, and rightly so, but from a coach's perspective when you play derby games passion and mentality become a big part of the performance and that can get to be too much sometimes.

"And that has happened with Indonesian players in the past because they lose their discipline because their passion takes over a little bit. In these games they're going to be tested home and away and for a coach it makes predictable players become unpredictable and that's what I don't like in terms of planning for games."

"But it's quite a positive draw with the opposition we face and their standing. There's a lot of confidence we can do well, it's just I would have liked to have stepped a bit further out of South East Asia."

BASKETBALL

US survive scare, edge Turkey 93-92 in World Cup OT

'I have to give a shout-out to everybody on team, we stuck together and grinded this thing out'



US players celebrate after their FIBA World Cup Group E match against Turkey at the Shanghai Oriental Sports Centre, Shanghai, yesterday. (Reuters)

Reuters
Beijing

Reigning champions the United States were given a huge scare in a nail-biting 93-92 overtime victory over Turkey at the Basketball World Cup yesterday to labour into the second round.

Khris Middleton was the overtime hero for Gregg Popovich's young team, who are chasing a third straight title, but are missing their stellar names and are yet to really gel.

Following Sunday's comfortable but unspectacular 88-67 win over the Czech Republic in their opener, Popovich said the team "got a ways to go".

There was more evidence of that in Shanghai as they made

hard work of dismissing Turkey, beaten by Team USA in the 2010 final.

"I have to give a shout-out to everybody on the team, we stuck together and grinded this thing out," said Myles Turner, of the Indiana Pacers, calling it one of the best games he had played in.

"We know we are going to get every team's best shot. We are Team USA, teams are gunning for us and want to beat us."

The US led at half-time only for Turkey - ranked 17th in the world to America's number one - to tie at 59-59 with less than two minutes left of the third quarter.

That brought a huge roar from much of the crowd.

After taking the lead with 12 seconds to play, the Turks looked all set for a famous victory, only

for Jayson Tatum to rescue the Americans by making two of three free throws at the death to make it 81-81.

The Americans were trailing in overtime and headed for a rare loss, before Milwaukee Bucks forward Middleton - who was to lead the US scoring with 15 points - held his nerve to nail two free throws to snatch a dramatic win.

In contrast, Turkey missed a succession of free throws down the stretch. Popovich's team, one of the youngest at the 32-team competition, look vulnerable and, on current form, Serbia look the more potent.

Team USA lost 98-94 to Australia in a warm-up ahead of the World Cup, ending a run of 78 consecutive wins in major competitions and exhibition games.

Turner admitted that they had plenty of room for improvement. "The chemistry is unbelievable right now and it can only go up from here," he added.

"A game where we can say we were battle-tested and we know we have to keep on building from."

Australia, another team touted as a threat to the US, reached the second round with a Joe Ingles-inspired 81-68 victory over Senegal in Group H.

They recovered from an indifferent start to grind down Senegal with Utah Jazz forward Ingles one assist away from World Cup history.

Australia led 36-33 at half-time after narrowly trailing a determined Senegal at the end of the first quarter.

Ingles, who said the Austral-

ians were "rattled" by Senegal in the first half, was instrumental in the victory with 17 points, 10 rebounds and nine assists - just one assist short of the first triple-double in World Cup history.

Patty Mills, the 31-year-old San Antonio Spurs guard, drilled 22 points. Coach Andrej Lemanis called Senegal the tallest team he had faced and admitted his side had been "a little clunky at times" offensively.

Also in Group H, Lithuania are into the last 16 after beating Canada 92-69. France and the Dominican Republic also ensured they would progress from Group G. However Greece, led by their NBA MVP Giannis Antetokounmpo, are in danger after they were squeezed out 79-78 by Brazil.

SPOTLIGHT

Britain select 72 athletes for Doha 2019

IAAF
London

British Athletics has announced a team of 72 athletes for the IAAF World Athletics Championships - Doha 2019, which will be held from September 27 to October 6.

Sprinter Dina Asher-Smith heads to Doha as a triple European champion from 2018 and IAAF Diamond League runner-up this year over 200m while heptathlete Katarina Johnson-Thompson has earned medals at every major championships she has attended since the last World Championships on home soil in London two years ago.

Three of the four men on Britain's gold-medal-winning 4x100m quartet from the 2017 World Championships - Adam

Gemili, CJ Ujah and Nethaneel Mitchell-Blake - are on the team for Doha.

European champions Laura Muir, Zharnel Hughes and Matthew Hudson-Smith are also on the team, alongside world indoor champion Andrew Pozzi and European indoor champion Shelayna Oskan-Clarke. British Athletics will consider any invites for the IAAF World Athletics Championships Doha 2019 in line with their selection policy.

"In the 72 athletes, I truly believe we have selected the strongest team possible to compete for medals on the global stage," said BA's performance director Neil Black.

"The team is full of world-class athletes who, over the past two years since we were hosts in London, have proven that they belong on the global stage."

BRITISH TEAM

MEN

100m: Ojie Edooburun, Adam Gemili, Zharnel Hughes
200m: Miguel Francis, Adam Gemili, Zharnel Hughes
400m: Matthew Hudson-Smith, Rabah Yousef
800m: Elliot Giles, Kyle Langford, Jamie Webb
1500m: Neil Gourley, Josh Kerr, Jake Wightman
5000m: Andrew Butchart, Ben Connor, Marc Scott
3000m steeplechase: Zak Seddon
110m hurdles: Andrew Pozzi
400m hurdles: C. McAlister
Pole vault: Harry Coppel
Triple jump: Ben Williams
Hammer: Nick Miller
Decathlon: Tim Duckworth
Marathon: Callum Hawkins
20km race walk: Tom Bosworth, Callum Wilkinson
50km race walk: Cameron Corbishley, Dominic King
4x100m: Ojie Edooburun, Miguel Francis, Adam Gemili, Zharnel Hughes, Richard Kilty, Nethaneel Mitchell-Blake, CJ Ujah
4x400m: Cameron Chalmers, Dwayne Cowan, Toby Harries, Matthew Hudson-Smith, Martyn Rooney, Lee Thompson, Rabah Yousef

WOMEN

100m: Dina Asher-Smith,

Daryll Neita, Asha Philip
200m: Dina Asher-Smith, Beth Dobbin, Jodie Williams
400m: Emily Diamond, Laviai Nielsen
800m: Alexandra Bell, Shelayna Oskan-Clarke, Lynsey Sharp
1500m: Sarah McDonald, Laura Muir, Jemma Reekie
5000m: Jessica Judd, Eilish McColgan, Laura Weightman
10,000m: Eilish McColgan, Steph Twell
3000m steeplechase: Elizabeth Bird, Rosie Clarke, Aimee Pratt
100m hurdles: Cindy Ofili
400m hurdles: Meghan Beesley, Jessica Turner
High jump: Morgan Lake
Pole vault: Holly Bradshaw
Long jump: Abigail Irozuru, Shara Proctor
Shot put: Sophie McKinna
Heptathlon: Katarina Johnson-Thompson
Marathon: Tish Jones, Charlotte Purdue
4x100m: Dina Asher-Smith, Kristal Awuah, Imani-Lara Lansiquot, Daryll Neita, Ashleigh Nelson, Asha Philip
4x400m: Finette Agyapong, Amy Allcock, Zoey Clark, Emily Diamond, Beth Dobbin, Laviai Nielsen, Jessica Turner, Jodie Williams.

CYCLING

Roglic boosts Vuelta hopes with individual time-trial triumph

Reuters
Barcelona

Primoz Roglic eased to victory in Stage 10 of the Vuelta a Espana, taking the red jersey after excelling in the individual time trial yesterday, putting himself in a commanding position to win the race.

Jumbo-Visma rider Roglic was firm favourite for the complex, winding 36.2km route between Jurancon and Pau in southern France, and he duly delivered.

Roglic's time of 47 minutes six seconds shot him to the top of the general classification and put him three minutes ahead of Nairo Quintana, with the Colombian climber now needing to make back time in the mountains.

Quintana, the 2016 champion, was in red going into the stage but had to drag himself over the line, losing three

minutes six seconds on Roglic.

The Slovenian hit the first checkpoint of 11.9km 21 seconds quicker than the previous fastest time, set by his compatriot Tadej Pogacar, riding for UAE Team Emirates. Pogacar finished one minute 29 seconds behind Roglic.

"You try to go as fast as possible and I'm happy with the performance for sure," Roglic told Spanish television channel tdp. I just tried to go as fast as possible. We'll have to wait until Madrid (to see if I win), for sure I won today but we'll have to go day by day."

Second in the stage was CCC Team rider Patrick Bevin, with a time of 47 minutes 30 seconds, followed by Remi Cavagna of Deceuninck-QuickStep who took two seconds longer. The race continues today with stage 11, stretching 180km from Saint-Palais to Urdax through picturesque Basque Country greenery.



Team Jumbo rider Slovenia's Primoz Roglic celebrates on the podium with the leader's red jersey after the tenth stage of the 2019 La Vuelta in Pau, France, yesterday. (AFP)

ATHLETICS

Sprinter Coleman set for Doha 2019 after USADA charge withdrawn

Reuters
New York

World 100m favourite Christian Coleman is eligible to compete in this month's IAAF World Athletics Championships Doha 2019 and the 2020 Olympics after a whereabouts charge against the American sprinter was withdrawn by the US Anti-Doping Agency (USADA) yesterday.

USADA had charged Coleman with three failures to properly file whereabouts information in a 12-month period, a potential anti-doping violation, and the case had been scheduled to go to arbitration on Wednesday.

But USADA, after receiving guidance from the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) on how to calculate the 12-month window, withdrew the charge.

"Every athlete is entitled to a presumption of innocence until their case is concluded through the established legal process,"



Christian Coleman wins 100m semi-final in 9.96s during the USAF Championships at Drake Stadium in Des Moines on July 26, 2019.

PICTURE: USA TODAY Sports/File Photo

USADA CEO Travis Tygart said in a statement. "This is certainly the case for Mr. Coleman, who has been found by USADA not to

have committed a whereabouts violation and is fully eligible to compete under the rules." USADA added that in 2018

and 2019 Coleman has provided his whereabouts information by the start of each quarter and has been tested on 20 separate occasions by the US agency.

Coleman said he now looked forward to representing the United States in the 100 and 200 metres at the September 27-Oct 6 World Championships in Doha.

While this ordeal has been frustrating and I have missed some competitions that I should not have had to miss, I know that I have never taken any banned substances, and that I have never violated any anti-doping rule," the year's fastest man and 2017 world 100 metres silver medallist said in a statement. Coleman had been charged because athletes are required to notify anti-doping officials where they can be reached for a certain period daily.

If testers are unable to contact the athlete at the designated location three times within a 12-month period, he is considered to have committed an anti-doping violation and subject to a ban of up to two years. Coleman

MLB

Minor, Rangers end Yankees' 220-game scoring streak

'Anytime we don't score or have a good offensive showing, it's always a little bit surprising'

Reuters
New York

Mike Minor pitched 7 1/3 outstanding innings as the Texas Rangers withstood a lengthy rain delay on Monday at Yankee Stadium and recorded a 7-0 victory over the New York Yankees, who did not score a run for the first time in 221 games.

After a delay of 2 hours, 52 minutes before the first pitch, the Rangers won for the fourth time in six games thanks to Minor (12-8).

The lefty bounced back nicely from a pair of rocky outings against the Los Angeles Angels and allowed five hits Monday. He struck out five and walked one while throwing 111 pitches.

Minor completed at least seven innings for the 13th time and produced his seventh scoreless outing this season.

After consecutive walk-off wins over Oakland, the Yankees were blanked for the first time since June 30, 2018, against Boston. It was the second-longest streak of scoring a run since 1900, only behind a 308-game run by the Yankees from August 3, 1931, to August 2, 1933.

"Anytime we don't score or have a good offensive showing, it's always a little bit surprising just because our guys are so good, but it happens," Yankees manager Aaron Boone said. "When a good pitcher's on top of his game, he can make it tough on you, credit to him."

RESULTS		
Rangers	7-0	Yankees
Astros	3-2	Brewers
Dodgers	16-9	Rockies
Cubs	5-1	Mariners
Braves	6-3	Blue Jays
Cardinals	3-1	Giants
Twins	4-3	Tigers
Mets	7-3	Nationals
Indians	11-3	White Sox
D'backs	14-7	Padres
Phillies	7-1	Reds
Rays	5-4	Orioles

In the first seven innings, Minor allowed multiple baserunners only in the first inning when he walked Gleyber Torres with two outs and Gary Sanchez doubled, but he retired Mike Ford on a soft comebacker.

He got Clint Frazier to ground into a double play in the second after Mike Tauchman singled, and he retired nine straight after Luke Voit opened the fifth with a double.

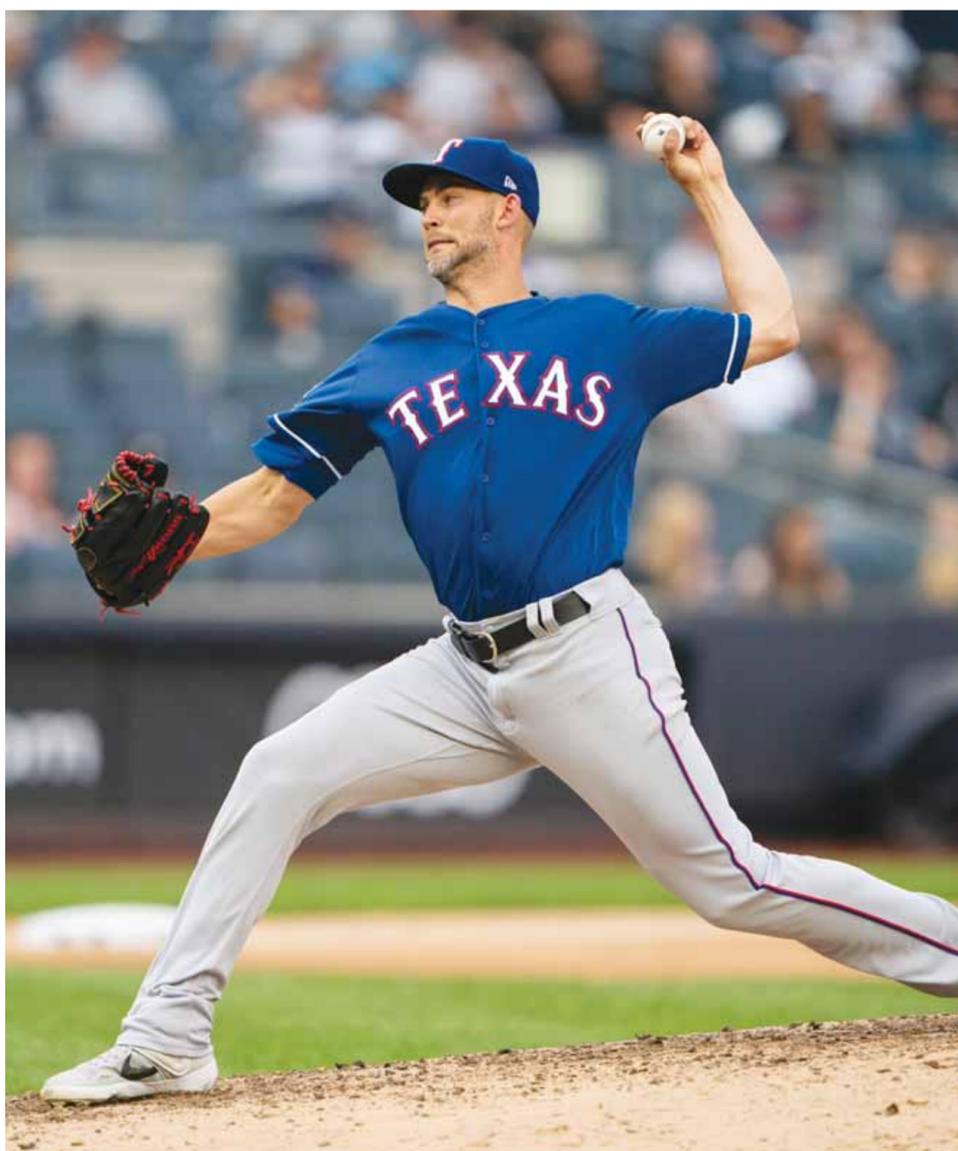
The left-hander was lifted after allowing two singles in the eighth, and Shawn Kelley quickly ended the inning. Emmanuel Clase finished up in the ninth.

In the first meeting of the season against the Yankees, Texas scratched out two runs against Masahiro Tanaka (10-8) and added five runs in the last two innings.

Nomar Mazara lifted a sacrifice fly in the first inning, and Jose Trevino homered on the first pitch of the fifth.

Texas nearly scored another run in the fifth, but Frazier made a perfect throw from left field to the plate to get Elvis Andrus after fielding a single by Danny Santana.

Frazier overran Mazara's one-out single in the eighth, and following a walk to Rongned Odor, Ronald Guzman's single made it 3-0. Delino DeShields then upped



Texas Rangers pitcher Mike Minor delivers a pitch during the fifth inning against the New York Yankees at the Yankee Stadium. PICTURE: USA TODAY Sports

the lead to 6-0 by hammering Nestor Cortes Jr's full-count pitch into the left field seats for his fourth homer of the season. Shin-Soo Choo made it 7-0 by connecting in the ninth off Tyler Lyons.

Tanaka gutted out six innings, allowing two runs on seven hits. He struck out five and walked two in a 103-pitch outing. It was the 14th time this year that he pitched at least six innings and allowed two runs or fewer.

SPRINGER'S 10TH-INNING HOMER HAULS ASTROS PAST BREWERS

George Springer led off the 10th inning with his 30th home run of the season, and Alex Bregman matched his career high with four hits to lead the visiting Houston Astros to a 3-2 victory over the Milwaukee Brewers on Monday afternoon.

Springer drove a 2-1 pitch by Junior Guerra (8-5) over the centre field fence to hit

the 30-homer mark for the second time in his career.

Bregman went 4-for-5 with an RBI, and Yordan Alvarez homered for the Astros, who won for the ninth time in 11 games and walked even with the New York Yankees (90-49) for the best record in the American League.

Roberto Osuna (4-3), despite blowing a save chance for the sixth time this season, picked up the win. Christian Yelich hit a game-tying home run off Osuna leading off the bottom of the ninth.

Josh James walked two batters in the bottom of the 10th but still earned his second save. He struck out three of the five batters he faced, including Yelich and Hernan Perez back-to-back to end the game.

Gerrit Cole fanned 14 batters for the second straight game but was denied his 16th victory of the season when Yelich

sent the game into extra innings with his 43rd home run of the season.

Cole gave up just one run on three hits and two walks over six innings. It marked the 16th time this year that he struck out 10 or more batters in a game, tops in the majors.

Yasmani Grandal also homered for Milwaukee, which had a two-game winning streak snapped.

Grandal gave Milwaukee a 1-0 lead in the first inning when he lined a Cole fast-ball 400 feet into the second deck in left-centre for his 22nd homer of the season.

Houston tied it in the third on Bregman's line single to centre off Milwaukee starter Adrian Houser.

The hit drove in Springer, who opened the inning with a walk, advanced to second on a single by Jose Altuve and went to third on a fielder's choice by Michael Brantley.

FOCUS

Texans coach O'Brien addresses Clowney trade fallout

Reuters
New York

Two days after trading away Jadeveon Clowney and adding Laremy Tunsil and Kenny Stills in a pair of trades that included numerous other players and draft picks - and garnered plenty of outside criticism - Houston Texans head coach Bill O'Brien on Monday explained the team's logic behind the moves.

In the simplest of terms, O'Brien said, "in the end, we just could not come to an agreement on a long-term deal" with Clowney, the three-time Pro Bowl pass rusher. The club put the franchise tag on Clowney in March, but he did not sign his franchise tender before the July 15 deadline, meaning the Texans could no longer negotiate a contract with him until after the season. O'Brien insisted there were discussions within the organization and with Clowney and his agent Bus Cook, but "we just couldn't come to an agreement."

After discussing a Clowney trade with multiple teams - most notably highly publicized talks with Miami regarding Tunsil, their offensive tackle - the Texans on Saturday morning sent the 2014 No. 1 overall pick to Seattle. In return, the Texans got a 2020 third-round pick and linebackers Barkevious Mingo and Jacob Martin. The Texans also reportedly paid Clowney a \$7 million signing bonus while the Seahawks pick up his \$8 million salary.

"I understand everybody's going to dissect how we did it and what we received back and what we gave Seattle," O'Brien told reporters Monday. "In the end, we did what

we felt was in the best interest of our organization and of our team moving forward."

Later Saturday, the Texans did get the lineman they wanted in Tunsil - and added a vertical threat in wide receiver Kenny Stills - but that, too, came at a price.

Houston gave Miami first-round picks in 2020 and '21, as well as a second-round pick in 2021, plus offensive tackle Julie'n Davenport and cornerback Johnson Bademosi. The Texans got a 2020 fourth-round pick and 2021 sixth-round pick in return.

"We feel really good about being able to get a proven left tackle to protect Deshaun Watson," O'Brien said in defending the ransom they paid for Tunsil. "Laremy Tunsil is an excellent player."

O'Brien would not talk about whether the Texans talked about a contract extension with Tunsil before making the trade.

Drafted 13th overall out of Ole Miss in 2016, Tunsil has played in 44 of a possible 48 games with Miami, starting all of them. He has two years and roughly \$13.5 million remaining on his contract, after the Dolphins exercised his fifth-year option this offseason.

He now will protect the blind side of Houston quarterback Deshaun Watson, who missed the second half of his rookie season in 2017 with a torn ACL, then suffered a bruised lung and injured ribs severe enough that the team bussed him to Jacksonville for a game last season rather than have him fly with the team over concerns of what changes in air pressure could have on his lungs.

Despite the injuries, and though he was sacked an NFL-high 65 times last season, Watson did not miss a game in 2018.



49ers Bosa expects to play season opener

San Francisco 49ers rookie defensive end Nick Bosa plans to play on Sunday in the regular-season opener against the Tampa Bay Buccaneers. Bosa, the No 2 pick in the 2019 NFL Draft, has been off the field for a month dealing with an ankle injury suffered Aug 7 in practice. General manager John Lynch said Saturday that Bosa's week of practice would determine his Week 1 status. All signs Monday pointed to the 21-year-old being ready, and he punted any previous hesitation shown over playing in the opener. "I don't think I've ever been as motivated in my life to get back," Bosa said.

"I've had my sights set on playing my first NFL season. Every waking hour was spent getting my ankle right." Bosa has had three significant injuries in one year and hasn't played in a game since Sept. 15 in Ohio State's win over TCU. He sustained a core muscle injury in that game and shut it down for the entire 2018 college football season. He missed a chunk of offseason workouts with a hamstring strain and had only 12 NFL practices under his belt as of Monday. Head coach Kyle Shanahan snapped back at questions about Bosa's durability this summer.

NFL

Chiefs' Reid on McCoy: He still has the great feet

Reuters
New York

Andy Reid coached the younger version of LeSean McCoy over four seasons with the Philadelphia Eagles, but the Kansas City Chiefs coach likes what he sees of the older version, too.

"There are not a lot of 31-year-old running backs running around out there," Reid told reporters on Monday. "But he still has the great feet and the vision."

The Buffalo Bills released the six-time Pro Bowl back on Saturday, and Kansas City quickly snapped him up. McCoy agreed

to a one-year deal for \$3 million guaranteed, according to multiple reports. The Chiefs open the season on Sunday at Jacksonville, and Reid said he expects McCoy to see action behind starter Damien Williams.

"He knows what to expect," Reid said of McCoy.

"I've been very honest with him about Damien and how good of a football player he is. I think it's a great situation for both of them and for the team. For where he's at in his career, you're talking about potentially a future Hall of Famer with the numbers and stats he's put together here. Here he has an opportunity to come to what potentially is a

good football team as we go forward and be a part of that."

Reid said McCoy's only limitation will be how long it takes him to become familiar with the Chiefs' playbook. "This is different than what we did in Philadelphia. There will be some familiar things but it's quite a bit different," Reid said.

McCoy gained the fewest yards of his 10-year career in 2018, rushing for 514 yards and averaging 3.2 yards per carry. He spent the past four seasons in Buffalo after six with the Eagles. For his career, he has 10,606 yards and 69 rushing touchdowns in 147 games. He led the NFL with a career-high 1,607

rushing yards in 2013, one of his six 1,000-yard seasons.

COWBOYS, COLLINS AGREE TO FIVE-YEAR DEAL

Right tackle La'el Collins agreed to a five-year contract extension with the Dallas Cowboys.

The deal includes \$50 million in new money, with the first two years and \$20mm fully guaranteed and \$35mm guaranteed against injury, according to Albert Breer of The MMQB.

With skill-position stars Dak Prescott, Ezekiel Elliott and Amari Cooper pining for a payday of their own, the Cowboys locked up another young starter by extending Collins' deal and solidi-

fying their offensive line. Collins, 26, signed as an undrafted free agent out of LSU after NFL teams passed on him in the draft days after he was questioned in the murder of a former girlfriend. By the time the investigation showed Collins wasn't involved, he was already a member of the Cowboys' roster, signing a three-year, \$1.5 million contract.

Owner Jerry Jones promised to redo that initial deal, and followed through with a two-year, \$15.4 million contract in 2017.

Collins began his NFL career at guard but has solidified the right side of the line as a bookend to All-Pro Tyron Smith on the left side.



Cornelius McCoy (No 83) of the Georgia State Panthers celebrates in the end-zone with his teammates after scoring a touchdown against the Tennessee Volunteers during the second quarter of the season opener at Neyland Stadium on August 31 in Knoxville, Tennessee. (AFP)

RUGBY WORLD CUP

McInally to captain Scotland as Jones, Hutchinson miss out

'Stuart has done a really good job in the opportunities he's had to captain Scotland'

AFP
Edinburgh

Stuart McInally will captain Scotland at the Rugby World Cup as coach Gregor Townsend axed centres Huw Jones and Rory Hutchinson from his 31-man squad for the tournament in Japan yesterday.

Edinburgh hooker McInally has been chosen ahead of John Barclay and Greig Laidlaw to lead the Scots, who begin their campaign against Ireland in Yokohama on September 22.

"Stuart has done a really good job in the opportunities he's had to captain Scotland," said Townsend. "He captained Edinburgh last season and is a real lead-by-example player, both in training and in games. He's a calming influence and is very good at bringing the best out of others."

The omission of Jones and Hutchinson, who scored two tries on his first Test start in a 44-10 win over Georgia on Saturday, caught the eye.

Jones burst onto the Test scene with 10 tries in his first 14 appearances for the Dark Blues, but in the 18 months since he scored a sensational double in the 2018 Calcutta Cup win over England his form for club and country has dropped off considerably.

"There were a number of tough calls given the quality of our wider training squad, and on the close decisions we've looked to select players that have strong defensive attributes and are willing to out-work their opposite number," added Townsend.

"Some very good players have missed out on selection this time, but they know they'll have to keep working hard because, in a World Cup, an opportunity can come around very quickly."

With fit-again Saracens centre Duncan Taylor and Sam Johnson of Warriors the leading duo to start in midfield, Townsend has opted to take Peter Horne - who can also fill in at 10 - and Chris Harris as cover.

Adam Hastings has also been given the nod as back-up to star man Finn Russell at stand-off, despite a poor display in a 32-3 thrashing at the hands of France three weeks ago.



Scotland's Stuart McInally runs in a try against England during their Six Nations Championship match at Twickenham Stadium in London on March 16, 2019. (Reuters)

Georgia's Gorgodze to come out of retirement for World Cup

Former captain Mamuka Gorgodze was named in Georgia's 31-man squad for the World Cup in Japan, more than two years after he announced his international retirement.

Gorgodze, 35, won the last of his 71 caps in March 2017 but returns to play in his fourth World Cup as coach Milton Haig turned to the flanker, who can also play as a lock and number eight, following a run of injuries to his players. Georgia begin their Pool D campaign against Wales on September 23 before matches against Uruguay, Fiji and Australia.

Squad: Forwards (17): Mikheil Nariashvili, Guram

Gogichashvili, Shalva Mamukashvili, Jaba Bregvadze, Vano Karkadze, Levan Chilachava, Giorgi Melikidze, Beka Gigashvili, Giorgi Nemsadze, Shalva Sutiashvili, Mamuka Gorgodze, Kote Mikautadze, Giorgi Tkhalishvili, Lasha Lomidze, Otar Giorgadze, Beka Gorgadze, Beka Saghinadze. Backs: Sandro Todua, Soso Matiashvili, Mirian Modebadze, Zurab Dzeladze, Davit Katcharava, Merab Sharikadze, Tamaz Mtchedlidze, Giorgi Kveseladze, Lasha Malaguradze, Lasha Khmaladze, Tedo Abzhandadze, Giorgi Begadze, Vasil Lobzhanidze, Gela Aprasidze.

Prop Jamie Bhatti has paid the price for his failure to impress during that mauling in Nice,

with Townsend deciding to take looseheads Allan Dell and Gordon Reid, plus the tighthead pair

of Willem Nel and Zander Fagerson. After facing the Irish, Scotland take on Samoa, Russia and

hosts Japan in Pool A.

SQUAD

Forwards (17): John Barclay, Simon Berghan, Fraser Brown, Scott Cummings, Allan Dell, Zander Fagerson, Grant Gilchrist, Jonny Gray, Stuart McInally (capt), Willem Nel, Gordon Reid, Jamie Ritchie, Blade Thomson, Ben Toolis, George Turner, Hamish Watson, Ryan Wilson
Backs (14): Darcy Graham, Stuart Harris, Adam Hastings, Stuart Hogg, George Horne, Pete Horne, Sam Johnson, Blair Kinghorn, Greig Laidlaw, Sean Maitland, Ali Price, Finn Russell, Tommy Seymour, Duncan Taylor
Coach: Gregor Townsend (SCO).

SPOTLIGHT

New Zealand Olympic Committee chief open for collaboration with Aspire Academy

During his current stay in Qatar, Michael Rowland Stanley, who has been serving as president of the New Zealand Olympic Committee for 10 years, used the chance to visit Aspire Academy on last Sunday to discuss opportunities for future collaboration with the academy's Director General Ivan Bravo.

After a comprehensive tour, that was led by Aspire Academy Director of Sport, Markus Egger and included AZF Business Development Executive, Fahad Abdulla al-Suwaidi and Mohamed Khalifa al-Mosalam, AZF Business Development and Intelligence Senior Specialist, Stanley expressed his admiration of Qatar's national sport academy.

"I have travelled a lot and seen many places but Aspire is truly unique. The philosophy of combining sport and education under one roof combined with exceptional facilities and international know-how is really impressive and is definitely enabling these young Qatari athletes to thrive," Stanley said.

Born on November 6, 1957, in Lower Hutt, New Zealand, Michael Rowland Stanley took up the sport of rowing and represented New Zealand from 1976 until 1984.

He was a member of the rowing eight which came fourth at the 1984 Los Angeles Olympic Games. He was also part of the rowing eight which won back-to-back world championship gold medals, in 1982 and 1985.

He was selected for the New Zealand men's coxed four to race at the 1980 Moscow Olympic Games but did not get to compete because of the boycott. He was inducted into the New Zealand Sports Hall of Fame in 1995.

From 1994 to 2003 Mike was Chief Executive of Rowing New Zealand (RNZ). In 2003, he became Chief Executive of the Millennium Institute of Sport and Health, but he kept his links to Rowing NZ as a member of its board; a role he held until 2009. He was elected to the Board of the New Zealand Olympic Committee in 2005 and took over the position of President in 2009.



Kolisi back in strong SA squad for warm-up

South Africa named a strong side yesterday for their final World Cup warm-up match against hosts Japan, with head coach Rassie Erasmus viewing Friday's contest as the perfect preparation for their tournament opener against New Zealand. Erasmus made wholesale changes to the squad from the victory over Argentina last month with captain Siya Kolisi returning at flank for Friday's clash in Kumagaya.

Kolisi's inclusion is the only difference from Erasmus' 23-man squad for the draw with New Zealand in July which means Japan can expect to face the full might of the Sp-

ingboks. Fellow flanker Pieter-Steph du Toit will make his 50th test appearance for the Springboks in a formidable back row that also includes Duane Vermeulen at eight. Erasmus said he picked a strong squad partially to prepare for the Sept 21 World Cup opener but also because of the respect the Springboks still hold for Japan, who famously beat them in the pool stages in Brighton four years ago.

"We respect Japan a lot and we think they are a very good team, who are ranked number nine in the world," Erasmus told reporters in the central Japanese city of Gifu.

FOCUS

FIFA, China delegations impressed with Aspire

Yesterday Aspire Academy hosted two high powered delegations from FIFA's Digital Transformation and Innovation Division and the Chengdu Football Association from China who toured Aspire during their visit to Qatar.

The FIFA delegation included Carlo Torniai, Director Strategy, Planning & Digital Ventures House at FIFA, Benjamin Stoll, Director Business Technology & Innovation House and Michael Broughton, Senior Adviser - Business Technology, Innovation & Investment Strategy at FIFA while GU Jianming, Executive Committee Member of Chinese Football Association and President of Chengdu Football Association led the delegation that included, XIIONG Yan, Director of Chengdu Sports Bureau, CAO Xu, the Deputy Director of General Affairs Department of Chengdu Sports Bureau and FAN Fangyuan, Deputy General Secretary and Director of International Relations Department of Chengdu Football Association.

Aspire Academy Director of Sport and Strategy, Markus Egger, welcomed both delegations before going on to lead the tour of the Academy complex. The FIFA team showed huge interest with the state-of-the-art technology



that was presented to them in the Football Performance Center and further explained in a video call with Valter di Salvo, Director of Football Performance & Science at Aspire Academy.

"I am really impressed. I am coming from a strong background in data and artificial intelligence. Besides the impressive facilities that you have here, I was really struck by the way you are using data and technology. Not only by how you shape and make sense of training data, but also by the way you build the

learning context that is required for you to succeed," said Carlo Torniai, who joined FIFA from Pirelli where he was the Director for Digital Product Development, as well as the Director for Data Science and Analytics.

Talking about the influence of the digital transformation in sports, he stressed the importance of this movement in many areas. "Using data and using advanced technology forces a cultural change that I think is very much needed, not only in sports. In my experience in dif-

ferent industries - I have done digital transformation at Pirelli and I used to work at Tesla before joining FIFA - I think that the real power for what we call digital transformation is not only in technology, but in the interaction of technology and the way of thinking - if you want the tension of the forces of cultural change, which I think is very much needed, particularly in sports."

Torniai also mentioned the importance that digital transformation and innovation are going



to have for the 2022 FIFA World Cup. "The aim is to make a very technology driven event that serves our fan-base and I think it's going to be crucial how we can leverage technology and data to do this better," Torniai said.

Meanwhile, GU Jianming, Executive Committee Member of Chinese Football Association and President of Chengdu Football Association, congratulated Qatar on winning the 2019 AFC Asian Cup and described the victory as sensational and confirmation of the astute long term

planning and a successful football development programmes that are well defined by the work done at Aspire Academy.

"First let me congratulate Qatar on your victory in the 2019 Asian Cup as well as winning the bid to host 2022 FIFA World Cup. Our visit to Qatar has left us with great impressions of the country and the good work been done in youth sport development and coaching. We want to enhance our cooperation and partnership with Qatar Football Association, Aspire Academy and Aspetar in

football development," Jianming said.

"We look forward to welcoming Qatar youth team next year to the 7th edition of the Panda Cup, the international youth association football competition that we run in annually in Chengdu. Chinese teams have held their winter break training camps at Aspire in the past and we look forward to more teams from China continuing with this trend and when it's too hot in Qatar, we would like Qatari teams to come to train in Chengdu too?"

CRICKET / INDIA'S TOUR OF WEST INDIES

Kohli calls Bumrah 'the most complete bowler' around

Indian bowler was the leading wicket-taker in the series with 13 at an average of 9.23

Reuters
Bengaluru, India

India captain Virat Kohli has declared Jasprit Bumrah as "the most complete bowler in world cricket" after the quick's stellar performance in their 2-0 series sweep against West Indies.

Set an improbable target of 468 late on day three, West Indies lost their final six wickets for 51 runs and were bowled out of 210 to hand India a 257-run win in the second Test at Sabina Park on Monday.

Bumrah finished as the leading wicket-taker in the series with 13 dismissals at an exceptional average of 9.23, which follows his impressive performance at this year's World Cup.

"There is not much you can say about Jasprit, the way he has been bowling," Kohli told a news conference. "All we can say is we are really lucky to have him on our team."

"He confuses you with angles, with swing, he'll set up for the outswinger, then bowl the inswinger, and it's coming at pace, and then he can hit you with bouncers as well. So, I think he is the most complete bowler in world cricket right now."

Bowling at a sustained pace and moving the ball through the air and off the seam, Bumrah ripped through the Windies batting order twice in the series, including a hat-trick in the first innings spell of 6-27 in the second Test.

His devastating spell of 5-7 in the first Test made him the first bowler from Asia to take five-wicket hauls in Australia, England, South Africa and the West Indies - in only his 11th Test.

"He has absolute control of what he is doing. So when he steps out on the field, he knows how much he can contribute for the team," Kohli said.

"It is really pleasing to see a guy who was tagged as a T20 specialist, he came in and took over the one-day scene, and now he is taking over Test cricket."

Kohli was also impressed with Hanuma Vihari's assuring presence at the crease as the middle-order batsman enjoyed a breakthrough series in the Caribbean.

The 25-year-old finished as the top run-scorer with 289 runs that included a century and two half-centuries. "I think the find of the series has to be Hanuma Vihari," Kohli added. "The way he has batted under pressure... his skills are outstanding, his temperament was top notch."

India's series sweep helped them claim the top spot in the inaugural World Test Championship with 120 points ahead of their home series against South Africa.

New Zealand and Sri Lanka, who shared their series 1-1, follow with 60 points each.



West Indies' batting limitations exposed by classy India

Reuters
Kingston, Jamaica

West Indies' batting limitations were ruthlessly exposed by a relentless and classy India bowling attack in the two-Test series swept by the visitors in Jamaica on Monday.

India won the second Test by 257 runs, a week after a 318-run victory in the first Test in Antigua.

While West Indies' pace bowlers Kemar Roach and Jason Holder performed particularly well, the batsmen did not keep their side of the bargain.

West Indies made only 327 runs over two innings in Kingston, and produced an even more meagre grand total of 322 runs in the opening encounter.

Captain Holder acknowledged the frailties of his batsmen, though he could not offer a solution.

"Lots of problems with the batting," he said. "Tough question (is) how to fix the batting. It's an individual thing."

The problems were most acute at the very top of the order, where openers Kraigg Brathwaite and John Campbell



Kraigg Brathwaite (left) of West Indies is dismissed by India's Ishant Sharma on third day of the second Test on Sunday. (AFP)

averaged only seven and 12 runs respectively. Below them, a maiden Test half-century by Shamarh Brooks on Monday, the highest score by a West Indies' batsman in the series, came after he had scored only 13 runs in his previous three innings.

Darren Bravo also went cheaply, with 24 runs in his first three innings before retiring hurt with concussion on 23 on Monday after being struck in the helmet by Jasprit Bumrah. Dynamic middle-order batsman Shimron Hetmyer showed flashes of his rich talent without posting a big score. He twice scored in the 30s, but was also out cheaply on two occasions, including on Monday when he made just one before giving his wicket away cheaply,

caught at cover. As so often has been the case, the tireless Holder had to rescue his team, and his average of 26 was the best of a disappointing bunch.

The all-rounder also enjoyed a good series with the ball, taking eight wickets at an average of 22.25.

Roach showed he would be an asset to any team, picking up nine wickets at 22.22 and passing Wes Hall to become the ninth most prolific West Indies bowler with 193 career scalps.

"We have been on the field in every single day of this Test series, and every single time our bowlers have delivered," Holder said.

"India are a quality side. They wore us down. They knew our bowling was good, so they made us work hard for the wickets. And when we got the chance to bat, we didn't bat well enough."

The series was a reality check for West Indies, who beat England 2-1 in a three-Test series early this year.

Their next Test is against Bangladesh in India starting Nov 27.

"Quite a bit of time till we play the next Test match so time for players to take some ownership," Holder said.

SPOTLIGHT

India's Mithali Raj retires from T20

AFP
New Delhi

Indian women's cricket star Mithali Raj yesterday announced her retirement from Twenty20 internationals to focus on the one-day World Cup in 2021.

The 36-year-old Raj, the highest run-scorer in the women's international game, made a surprise exit after she had made herself available for selection for the home series against South Africa starting on September 24.

"After representing India in T20 internationals since 2006, I wish to retire from T20s to focus my energies on readying myself for the 2021 One Day World Cup," Raj was quoted as saying in a release by the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI).

"It remains my dream to win a World Cup for my country and I want to give it my best."

"I thank the BCCI for their

continuous support and wish the Indian T20 team good luck as they prepare for the home series against South Africa Women."

Raj, who led India in 32 T20 matches including three World Cups, has scored 2,364 runs in 89 matches since 2006 and is the first Indian to reach the landmark of 2,000 runs in the shortest format.

The top-order batswoman has amassed 6,720 runs in 203 ODI matches since her international debut in 1999.

Raj led India to the finals of the 2017 women's World Cup only to lose the title to hosts England. New Zealand will host the 2021 50-over showpiece edition.

Her place in the T20 team remained in doubt after she was left out of the squad in last year's T20 World Cup semi-final loss to England, triggering a high-profile row with team staff.

Raj hit an unbeaten 30 off 32 balls in her last T20 outing against England in March.



QCA to hold under-16 boys selection trials

The Qatar Cricket Association (QCA) will conduct trials to select under-16 boys for an upcoming international tournament. The Qatar national under-16 team, after the camp, will travel to Oman to take part in the ACC tournament, to be held in October. According to Amin-ul Islam, the schools cricket co-ordinator at the QCA, the trials will be held at the Asian Town Stadium, Industrial Area, on September 5 (Thursday) and September 7 (Saturday). The players must report at 4pm at the venue. Those born on and after September 1, 2003 will only be considered eligible for the trials. Interested players may call +974 5550 9708 for details.

CYCLING

Team Ineos boosted by Carapaz capture



AFP
Paris

Giro d'Italia champion Richard Carapaz will race alongside three Tour de France winners next year after the Ecuadorian signed a three-year deal with Team Ineos on Monday.

The recruitment is a major coup for Ineos principal Dave Brailsford, who is the mastermind behind Tour de France wins for Chris Froome, Geraint Thomas and current champion Egan Bernal, clinching six of the last seven titles.

The 26-year-old emerged victorious at the Giro when favourites Vincenzo Nibali and Primoz Roglic ignored a mountain-top break and Carapaz, then with Movistar, capitalised to take the race lead, which he held all the way to the Rome finish line.

Carapaz and Brailsford both spoke of his progress in a star-studded line up.

"I feel this is a great opportunity for me to continue my development and growth as a rider," said Carapaz.

"(I'll be) working with a team that continues to go from strength-to-strength, year after year."

Brailsford said Carapaz had been a target for a while.

"We have been long time admirers of his talents as a bike rider and have followed his development closely over a number of years, as we have always marked him out as a potential member of our Team," said the Briton.

BOTTOMLINE

Bangladesh coach confident of beating Afghanistan



AFP
Dhaka, Bangladesh

Bangladesh's new head coach Russell Domingo yesterday backed his charges to beat Afghanistan in the one-off Test starting tomorrow, provided they could build enough pressure on the opposition.

"We have to focus on our processes and on being patient. We have to build pressure against Afghanistan. If we can do those things, results will come our way," Domingo told reporters in the port city of Chittagong yesterday.

The one-off Test series against Afghanistan at the Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium in Chittagong will be the first assignment for Domingo, who was appointed as Bang-

ladesh head coach in August replacing Englishman Steve Rhodes.

The 45-year-old South African said he did not intend to bring any change to the system that already worked for Bangladesh.

"It is going to be my first Test for Bangladesh. I want to see how they perform. And it is difficult to make wholesale changes to a system that has worked really well for them in the last couple of Tests," he said.

"I am sitting back to see how things pan out for the first Test. The selectors and Shakib (Al Hasan) have led me to thinking in a certain way, and I am pretty comfortable with it before I imprint my way on to the team," he added.

This will be Afghanistan's first meeting against Bangla-

desh in Test cricket and only third overall after they were granted Test status last year.

Bangladesh coach Domingo found the spin attack of the visiting side "threatening" for his charges.

"We know how dangerous their bowling attack can be in limited overs cricket. Look, it is a different format but they will definitely pose us threats in the next few days," he said.

"They have some match winners in Nabi (Mohamed) and Rashid Khan. They are fantastic bowlers. We have to make sure we respect them while also looking to score some runs against them," he added.

Afghanistan will also play a tri-nation Twenty20 tournament from September 13 with Zimbabwe and hosts Bangladesh.

CRICKET / ASHES

Stokes threat keeps Aussie skipper Paine awake at night

Paine believes spinner Lyon has troubled Stokes, urges fielders to provide support



Former Australia wicketkeeper Ian Healy (left) chats with Australia captain Tim Paine in the nets during a training session at Old Trafford in Manchester, United Kingdom, yesterday. (AFP)

Agencies
Manchester, United Kingdom

It is nine days since Ben Stokes hit a remarkable 135 not out to win the third Test of the Ashes series at Headingley, and as he prepares for the next instalment, Australia captain Tim Paine said thoughts of how to outwit the England batsman keep him awake at night.

England were nine wickets down with 73 runs required before Stokes' swashbuckling innings almost single-handedly kept England in the series and denied Australia a win that would have ensured the tourists retained the Ashes.

Questions have been asked of Paine's decisions in the decisive final hours of that Test. But asked whether he fears Stokes' feat may hang over his captaincy in the way that all-rounders Ian Botham and Andrew Flintoff impacted previous Aussie skipper, Paine said his concern was more basic.

"Nah, I haven't lost a hell of a lot of sleep thinking about my captaincy. But I have lost a bit of sleep thinking how we're going to get him out, that's for sure," he said.

"He's a class player, and he's really confident at the moment. He's going well. Like I said, we've got some plans for him — but we've just got to execute them a bit better," he said.

Paine believed spinner Nathan Lyon has troubled Stokes at various times, but he has urged his fielders to provide better support than they did at Headingley.

"I think Nathan has actually bowled really well to him. He's created a number of chances each time he's bowled to him.

"But the other side of it is we hold our chances when Nathan is bowling to him. If we can do that, I think he can open the game up for us through that middle order. The last two Tests in particular, we've let Nathan down a bit with our fielding," he said.

PAIN DISMISSES ARCHER'S 'PANIC' JIBE

Paine also hit back at suggestions from England fast bowler Jofra Archer that the tourists "panicked" during their extraordinary loss at Headingley.

Speaking to reporters on Tuesday — the eve of the fourth Test at Old Trafford — Paine insisted Australia had not lost their nerve at Leeds and bristled at talk they had "choked".

"No. Jofra is entitled to his opinion — he's had plenty of those that's for sure — but as I said, we made some mistakes," Paine said.

"It happens. We have addressed it as a team.

"I was certainly one of those people who made mistakes. We move on and we are here ready for another great Test match," added Paine, who worked with former Australia wicketkeeper Ian Healy during training yesterday.

"I would do some things differently with my field placings. As I said, the mistakes have been made. It happens in cricket and we have moved on, learnt from it, and we are ready for another great Test match."

England call up Overton for fourth Ashes Test

AFP
Manchester, United Kingdom

England have made one change in personnel to their side for the fourth Test against Australia at Old Trafford, with fast bowler Craig Overton replacing the dropped Chris Woakes. Somerset quick Overton was only drafted into the squad after it was confirmed James Anderson, England's all-time leading wicket-taker, was ruled out with a calf injury. The same injury has prevented Anderson from bowling in the series since his four-over spell in the first innings of Australia's 251-run win in the first Test at Edgbaston.

Overton comes into the side on the back of England's stunning one-wicket win in the third Test at Headingley, inspired by Ben Stokes's superb 135 not out, that saw them square the five-match Ashes series at 1-1.

The 25-year-old Overton has played three Tests and bowled Australia star batsman Steve Smith on debut at Adelaide in December 2017.

England captain Joe Root, explaining why Overton had been included, told reporters at Old Trafford during his pre-match press conference on Tuesday: "This ground does perform

slightly differently with an extra bit of bounce and a taller bowler will give us an extra option to go to. "I feel like that balances out our attack really well in these conditions."

Root added: "Craig is a competitor. You saw him come into Ashes cricket on debut and straight away he looked very much at home.

"He got himself in a battle and I expect him to do that this week. I expect him to cause some issues for the Aussie batters."

'HIGH-QUALITY ROY'

Root also confirmed the switch of positions between Jason Roy and Joe Denly, with World Cup winner Roy dropping down to number four after struggling as a Test opener.

"Jason is a high-quality player, we all know that, and he might be better suited at four," Root said.

"I think to play in an Ashes series is very exciting and he was extremely excited to get the chance to open the batting, but I think that he might be better suited for the middle order on the evidence we have seen over the last three games.

"It's a great opportunity for him to make it his own and we have seen him play enough international cricket to know what he

can do when he gets himself in, so hopefully batting lower down allows him to do that. "Joe (Denly) has played some good cricket throughout the summer, he has got himself in and he was very good in that second innings (at Headingley when he made a fifty).

"It's a great opportunity for him to get us off to a good start with Rory (Burns)."

Smith, now back on top of the latest world Test batting rankings published yesterday, will be returning to Ashes action this match after he missed the Headingley Test with concussion.

This is former Australia captain Smith's first Test series since completing a 12-month ban for ball-tampering.

He marked his return to the format with scores of 144 and 142 at Edgbaston before making 92 in the drawn second Test at Lord's — where he was felled by a 92mph Jofra Archer bouncer. Root said he was looking forward to seeing Archer bowl to Smith again.

"For everyone watching I'm sure it will be an exciting contest between two world-class players," Root added.

"What that Headingley win has done is make this a very special week this week and a great opportunity for us to build on what was a great win and carry that forward."



England's Joe Denly (second from left), Craig Overton (right) and teammates play football before nets at Old Trafford in Manchester, United Kingdom, yesterday. (Reuters)

SPOTLIGHT

Smith overtakes Kohli to reclaim No.1 spot in Test rankings



Australia's Steve Smith takes part in a nets session at Old Trafford in Manchester, United Kingdom, yesterday. (Reuters)

Reuters
Bengaluru, India

Australia's run-machine Steve Smith has edged past Indian captain Virat Kohli to become the best Test batsman in the world, based on the International Cricket Council's (ICC) rankings.

Kohli's side moved to the top of the new ICC World Test Championship table with a 2-0 series sweep against West Indies. But his own first-ball duck in the second innings at Sabina Park meant he slipped to second spot in the men's individual ranking with 903 points.

Smith leads Kohli by one point but will have a chance to consolidate his position in the fourth Ashes Test against England starting today at Old Trafford, where he returns after recovering from concussion.

Former captain Smith has not held top spot in the rankings since December 2015. In August last year, while Smith was serving a 12-month ban over a ball-tampering scandal, Kohli overtook him in the standings.

The Australian number four has since made a remarkable return to the longest format, with twin hundreds in the first Ashes Test in Birmingham.

He followed that up with a 92 at Lord's before being felled by a short ball from England fast bowler Jofra Archer.

Australia now boast both the

number one Test batsman and bowler in the world, with Pat Cummins leading the bowling charts since February.

It is the first time the Australians have topped the charts with both bat and ball since March 2006, when Ricky Ponting and Glenn McGrath topped the respective rankings.

Kohli's next opportunity to respond will be in a home Test series against South Africa starting on Oct. 2.

New Zealand skipper Kane Williamson retains third spot, while India's Ajinkya Rahane returned to the top 10, rising four places to seventh.

After finishing the Caribbean series with 13 wickets at an impressive average of 9.23, Indian pacer Jasprit Bumrah rose four places to number three in the Test rankings for bowlers, with a career-best 835 rating points.

The 25-year-old is now only behind Cummins and South Africa's Kagiso Rabada.

Already occupying top spot in the Test rankings of all-rounders, West Indies captain Jason Holder rose seven places in the bowling list to join England's James Anderson in fourth position.

England's Ben Stokes remained in second place in the all-rounder ranking after his match-winning second-innings performance in the third Ashes Test at Headingley, behind Holder and ahead of Bangladesh's Shakib Al Hasan in third.

All arrangements finalised for Doha 2019 athletics Worlds: Anti-Doping Commission chief

QNA

Doha

Nasser Saad Aman al-Saad, Head of Anti-Doping Commission at IAAF World Athletics Championships Doha 2019, has confirmed that the commission finalised all technical and managerial arrangements to perform its challenging task at the global athletics event, which will run from September 27 to October 6 in Doha amid international participation. "Preparations are underway; we have around 200 staff members in the committee working in all time, ready to use top doping testing electronic techniques to serve the event" said al-Saad.

"As local national anti-doping committee, we are keen to provide ideal environment for athletes during testing processes by using regular testing procedures" added Saad. He also underscored that Qatar Anti-Doping Commission (QADC) always works diligently behind the scenes in different international and local championships hosted by State of Qatar. Al-Saad also expressed his gratitude and thanks to HE Sheikh Joaan bin Hamad al-Thani, the President of Qatar Olympic Committee (QOC) and Chairman of Higher Organising Committee of IAAF World Athletics Championships Doha 2019, for his confidence in and support of Qatari young sport officials.

Team Qatar to participate in GCC Aquatics Games in Kuwait

QNA

Doha

Team Qatar is preparing to participate in the 27th edition of GCC Aquatics Games 2019, which will get underway in Kuwait tomorrow. Team Qatar delegation is chaired by Ahmed al-Nimah,

Assistant Secretary General of Qatar Swimming Association; Ibraheem al-Rumaihi, team director; Nasser al-Suqairi, Administrator, alongside technical staff members and 29 swimmers. Team Qatar had performed international training camp from August 12-30 in Romania in preparation for the GCC Aquatics Games 2019.

CRICKET / ASHES

De Grandhomme, Bruce help NZ clinch T20 series

AFP
Kandy, Sri Lanka

A century partnership between Colin de Grandhomme and Tom Bruce helped New Zealand to a series-clinching four-wicket win over Sri Lanka in the second Twenty20 international yesterday.

De Grandhomme and Bruce put on 109 runs for the fourth wicket as the Kiwis chased down their target of 162 with two balls to spare in Kandy and take an unassailable 2-0 lead in the three-match series.

De Grandhomme, who was dropped on 36, completed his fifty before falling to Isuru Udana for 59. He hit two fours and three



New Zealand's Colin de Grandhomme (right) and teammate Tom Bruce run between the wickets during the second T20I yesterday. (AFP)

sixes in his 46-ball blitz.

Bruce, who made the XI in place of injured Ross Taylor, made the most of the opportunity, scoring 53, but was run out at the start of the final over with the team needing seven.

Daryl Mitchell was out next ball and Mitchell Santner was nearly caught near the boundary by Shehan Jayasuriya on the third delivery but the fielder tripped after a collision with his teammate and hit the rope with

the ball in hand.

Jayasuriya and Kusal Mendis were injured in the clash that cost Sri Lanka six runs and ended the final-over drama as Santner hit the winning boundary on the fourth ball off Wanindu Hasaranga.

Skipper Lasith Malinga said the two fielders "are alright and will play the next game hopefully".

Earlier New Zealand bowlers led by pacemen Seth Rance and skipper Tim Southee restricted Sri Lanka to 161 for nine.

Sri Lankan spinner Akila Dananjaya hurt the opposition chase with his three wickets including two in over as the Black Caps slipped to 38 for three.

New Zealand were also hurt by the absence of opener Martin Guptill who was not available

to bat after being injured while fielding.

For Sri Lanka, Avishka Fernando and Niroshan Dickwella put on 68 runs for a crucial third-wicket stand but the rest of the batting did not make an impression.

Rance claimed three wickets while fellow paceman Southee returned impressive figures of 2-18 from his four overs.

The third match will be played in Kandy on Friday.

BRIEF SCORES: Sri Lanka 161 for 9 (N Dickwella 39, A Fernando 37; S Rance 3-33, T Southee 2-18, S Kuggeleijn 2-38) **lost to New Zealand 165 for 6** (C de Grandhomme 59, T Bruce 53; A Dananjaya 3-36) **by four wickets.**