

A bright space is always the right space
To advertise here, call: 444 11 300



FORMULA 1 | Page 3

Leclerc on pole in Monza after shambolic qualifying 'mess'



BASKETBALL | Page 5

Giannis unable to save Greece against US in World Cup

ALZAMAN EXCHANGE WLL
Your Global Remittance Partner

MAIN BRANCH	LULU HYPER	SANAYYA	ALKHOR
MATAR QADEEM	MANSOURA	ABU HAMOUR	BIN OMRAN

#zamanexchange | www.alzamanexchange.com | 44411448

Sunday, September 8, 2019
Muharram 9, 1441 AH

GULF TIMES SPORT



FOOTBALL

African great Eto'o hangs up his boots

Page 2

RACING

Sheikh Mohamed's Min'ha scores first Group win

A Correspondent
Toulouse, France

Bred and owned by His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Khalifa al-Thani, Min'ha won her first Group race, when she topped the French Arabian Breeders' Cup Challenge - Pouliches (Group 2 PA) in Toulouse, France, on Friday.

The three-year-old filly, who is trained by Francois Rohaut, jumped well from an inside draw although ran keen in the early stages. She then settled in behind the leaders on the rail, relaxing well before they began to accelerate coming out of the final turn. Despite showing some immaturity when under pressure, she went clear to win the 2,000m race for three-year-old fillies by three quarters of a length. She was ridden here by Francois-Xavier Bertras, who had also ridden her in her previous start when she broke her maiden at Dax on just the third time of asking.

Al Shaqab Racing-owned Meethag, trained by Thomas Fourcy, was the



Francois-Xavier Bertras (left) rides Min'ha to victory in the French Arabian Breeders' Cup Challenge - Pouliches (Group 2 PA) in Toulouse, France, on Friday. (Robert Polin)

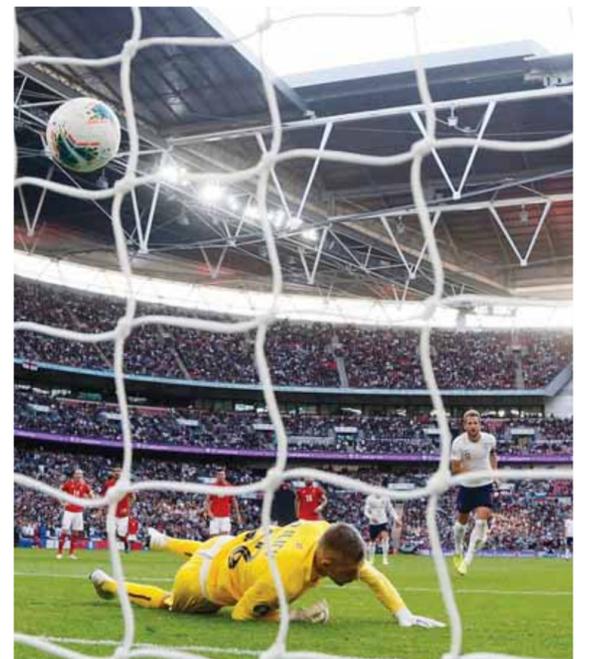
runner-up under Jerome Cabre. Salma Nour Grine, owned by Mohamed Karimine and trained by Mme JF Bernard, was a further length behind

under Fayos Martin Borja. Min'ha is by No Risk Al Maury and is out of one of Al Shahania Stud's most successful female families, be-

ing the daughter of Margouia, who is notably the dam of the champion Assy, winner of the His Highness The Amir Sword (G1 PA).

FOOTBALL

Kane nets hat-trick as England romp past Bulgaria



England's Harry Kane celebrates scoring their fourth goal to complete his hat-trick against Bulgaria yesterday.

Reuters
London

England's serene progress towards Euro 2020 continued as captain Harry Kane grabbed a hat-trick in a 4-0 demolition of Bulgaria in Group A at Wembley yesterday.

Kane opened the scoring after 24 minutes and struck home two penalties after the break as well as providing the assist for Raheem Sterling to get on the scoresheet.

The Tottenham Hotspur striker's second hat-trick for his country took his tally to 25 goals from 40 appearances and put him ahead of 1966 World Cup final hero Geoff Hurst on the list of all-time England scorers.

Gareth Southgate's side have now scored 14 goals in their opening three Group A games and lead the table with nine points from Kosovo (8) who beat the Czech Republic 2-1 earlier on.

England host Kosovo for the first time on Tuesday when another victory will leave them looking virtually assured of reaching next year's tournament that culminates on home soil.

It was not a perfect display by England with Bulgaria having three good chances, one when the score was 0-0, but England proved far too strong as they left the visitors languishing at the bottom of the group with two points from five games.

"First half, we got caught on the counter a couple of times. We said at halftime we needed to try and come out and get an early goal and that's what we've done," Kane said.

"It's a good result we hope to take into Tuesday."
Bulgaria had never beaten England in 10 previous encounters, scor-

ing only twice, and despite starting reasonably solidly and having the game's first chance through naturalised Brazilian Wanderson, they were the architects of their own downfall.

The expected home onslaught had failed to materialise in the opening quarter but England were gifted the lead.

Southgate would have been concerned by some slackness in his defence and Galin Ivanov wasted a great chance to head his side level when he was picked out by Ivelin Popov's cross.

Shortly after the break Wanderson was played in and his fierce effort from a tight angle was saved by Jordan Pickford.

Stung, England immediately counter-attacked and Marcus Rashford was sent clear and as he turned back inside in the area he was tripped by the sliding Nikolay Bodurov.

Kane dispatched the penalty with ease and six minutes later he teed up Sterling to score off his thigh from close range.

With the points in the bag England sent on Chelsea youngster Mason Mount for his debut while Jadon Sancho also got some game time as he replaced Sterling with 20 minutes left.

Kane was also given a breather but not before he had earned and converted his second penalty in the 73rd minute after being hacked down by Bulgaria substitute Kristian Dimitrov.

Kosovo have emerged as the unlikely closest challengers to England in the group and will arrive at Wembley in good heart after goals from Vedat Muriqi and Mergim Vojvoda secured their victory over the Czechs in the day's other Group A game.

Patrik Schick had put the Czechs ahead.

TENNIS/US OPEN

Nadal to battle Medvedev for 19th Slam title

'It means a lot to be back where I am today after some tough moments at the beginning of the season'

AFP
New York

Rafael Nadal will play for his 19th Grand Slam title, one shy of Roger Federer's all-time men's record, after battling past Italy's Matteo Berrettini on Friday and into his fifth US Open final.

The 33-year-old Spaniard dispatched Berrettini 7-6 (8/6), 6-4, 6-1 at Arthur Ashe Stadium to reach today's showdown against Russian fifth seed Daniil Medvedev, who ousted Bulgarian Grigor Dimitrov 7-6 (7/5), 6-4, 6-3.

"Very happy to be back into the final of the US Open," Nadal said. "It means a lot to be back where I am today after some tough moments at the beginning of the season."

Nadal, who shook off an early season right hip injury to win a 12th French Open title, seeks his fourth US Open crown - one shy of the Open era record of five shared by Federer, Pete Sampras and Jimmy Connors - to reach the brink of Federer's mark.

"It's just another chance on Sunday," Nadal said. "I want to enjoy a day off, have a good practice and Sunday is the day to play my best."

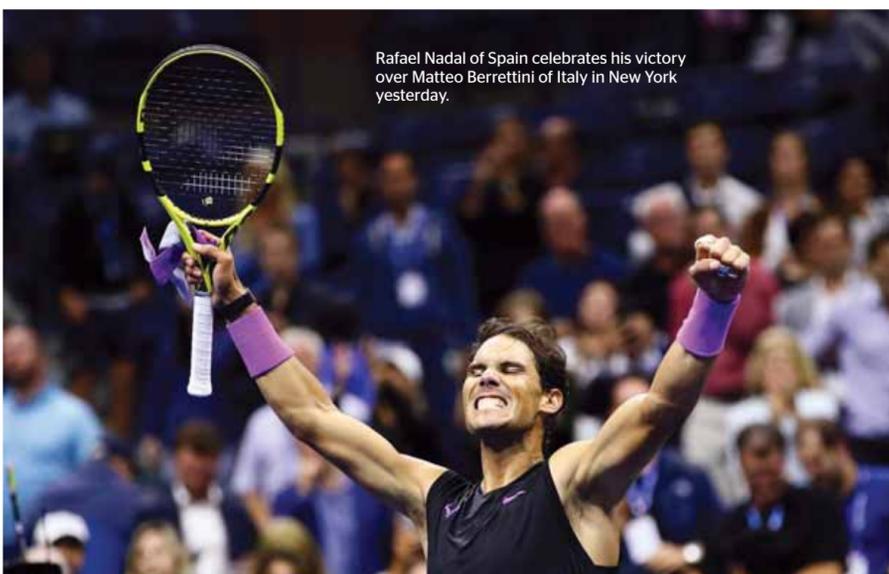
Nadal, into his 27th Grand Slam final, beat Medvedev in last month's Montreal final in their only prior meeting. But the world number two skipped Cincinnati, where Medvedev was champion the following week.

"He's one of the more solid players on tour," Nadal said of Medvedev. "He's making steps forward every single week."

"I need to be playing at my best."

Medvedev, in his first Grand Slam final at 23, has gone 20-2 in the past six weeks with runner-up efforts in Washington and Canada, a title in Cincinnati and a breakthrough US Open run.

"I'm just happy to be in the final," Medvedev said. "When I was going to



Rafael Nadal of Spain celebrates his victory over Matteo Berrettini of Italy in New York yesterday.

USA, I didn't know it was going to be this good. So I have to say I love USA."

Medvedev is the first Russian in a men's Grand Slam final since Marat Safin won the 2005 Australian Open title and the first Russian to reach the US Open final since Safin won the 2000 crown.

Nadal has dropped only one set at the Open but was severely tested by 24th seed Berrettini, the first Italian man in the US Open semi-finals since Corrado Barazzutti in 1977.

Berrettini denied Nadal on six break points in the first set, jumped ahead 4-0 in the tie-break and seized two set points at 6-4 as the Ashe crowd roared with delight.

But the Italian netted two backhand volleys, a baseline backhand and then

hit a forehand long to hand Nadal the set.

"I was lucky to win that first set," Nadal said. "First set had been a little bit frustrating. You don't want to be in a tie-breaker against a player like Matteo after you have missed all those opportunities."

Nadal, who never faced a break point, took his first break for a 4-3 lead in the second set, held twice to take the set, then rolled to victory in two hours, 35 minutes.

"I survived at the moment and finally I had the break in the second set and the match changed," Nadal said. "I played calm more and super aggressive."

US Open fans gave solid applause to Medvedev after earlier-round boos for

flashing an obscene gesture and taunts saying he thrived on their jeers for energy to win. He later apologised.

Medvedev took the first-set tie-break after Dimitrov netted a forehand and sent another long on the last two points.

"The confidence means a lot in this case because I do think he was better player in first set. I do think I was kind of lucky to win it," Medvedev said. "Then the momentum changed completely. I was playing better than him in the next two sets. We had some amazing level."

Dimitrov netted a backhand to surrender a break and the second set in the 10th game. Medvedev broke for a 3-1 lead in the third set and held to the finish.



FRIENDLY

Neymar snags Brazil equaliser against Colombia

AFP
Miami

Neymar didn't disappoint in his much anticipated return on Friday, grabbing a second-half equaliser for Brazil in a 2-2 friendly draw with Colombia.

The Paris Saint-Germain star was playing for the first time for club or country since suffering an ankle injury in a friendly against Qatar in June, which ruled him out of the Copa America.

He had been embroiled in a long-running transfer saga that ended this week with the Brazilian staying at PSG — a return to Barcelona finally ruled out.

Before a sell-out crowd of 65,232 at Hard Rock Stadium, home of the NFL's Miami Dol-



phins, Neymar delivered for Brazil, scoring the equalizer in the 58th after setting up Casemiro for the game's opening goal

in the 20th minute.

Colombia were lacking top stars James Rodriguez and Radamel Falcao, but thanks to Luis Muriel's brace they gave Copa America champions Brazil a fright before Neymar rode to the rescue and Tite's men extended their unbeaten run.

Although Neymar made a quiet start, it was his cross from a corner that found a soaring Casemiro, who nodded past helpless Colombian keeper David Ospina to open the scoring.

The lead didn't last long as Luis Muriel converted from the spot in the 25th after taking a high kick from Alex Sandro.

Less than 10 minutes later Muriel fired Colombia ahead 2-1. Roger Martinez launched the counter-attack and Duvan Zapata played a ball out wide to Muriel, who blasted past Eder-

Brazil almost pulled level seven minutes into the second half but Philippe Coutinho's attempt went wide. Coutinho was key to Brazil's 58th-minute equalizer, finding Dani Alvez from the halfway line. Alvez's cross found Neymar, who was in the right place to slot a side-footed shot into an empty net.

The draw extended Brazil's unbeaten run to 17 matches, a streak that dates back to their 2018 World Cup elimination by Belgium.

Neymar notched his 61st international goal, put him one behind Ronaldo, who sits second on Brazil's all-time list headed by Pele's 77.

Both countries will be back in action on Wednesday, with Brazil hosting Peru in a Copa America final rematch in Los Angeles and Colombia taking on Venezuela in Tampa, Florida.

SPOTLIGHT

African great Eto'o hangs up his boots



In this file photo taken on August 14, 2018, Cameroonian forward Samuel Eto'o attends his presentation after signing a one year contract to play for Qatar Sports Club.

AFP
Paris

Cameroon's four-time African Player of the Year Samuel Eto'o announced his retirement yesterday at the age of 38, declaring "I need a rest".

"The end, towards a new challenge," the former Barcelona, Inter Milan and Chelsea striker posted on Instagram.

"Thank you all, big love, adrenaline."

"In a few months you'll see me doing something new," Eto'o, who has campaigned relentlessly against racism during his playing days, later said on the margins of an economic forum in DR Congo. "I need a rest, I've been running for 19-years," he added light-heartedly in Kinshasa.

He stands alongside Liberia's current president George Weah and Ivory Coast's Didier Drogba as a great of African sport, and cuts a mythical figure in his homeland where he is close to national president Paul Biya.

He is slated for a major role in the Confederation of African Football where he has vowed to fight corruption to ensure funds go into infrastructure.

CAF president Ahmed Ahmed said Eto'o would take up a key role in the African game.

"Samuel Eto'o will take charge of relations between the federations and CAF," the Madagascar said last month.

The most memorable period of his club career includes five huge-

ly successful seasons with Barcelona from 2004-2009.

Despite an unfortunate knack for ruffling feathers, a return of 108 league goals from just 145 matches in five stunning seasons with Barcelona pays testament to his talent.

At his peak he enjoyed electric pace, impeccable touch and instinctive shooting to make him one of the most feared centre-forwards in the world.

He won a pair of Champions League titles and three La Liga crowns before departing under a cloud for Inter Milan after rowing with Ronaldinho leading to Pep Guardiola showing him the dressing room door.

He then spearheaded Jose Mourinho's charge to a never to be forgotten treble with Inter of Champions League, Serie A and Coppa Italia titles in his first season in Italy. He led Cameroon to an impressive four World Cups in 1998, 2002, 2010 and 2014 and enjoyed huge success at the Africa Cup of Nations as the Indomitable Lions won in 2000 and 2002.

He was part of a golden generation that featured Rigobert Song, the late Marc-Vivien Foe and Geremi as Cameroon also won the gold medal at the Sydney Olympics in 2000, with the emerging Eto'o both scoring and converting a penalty in the shoot-out win over Spain in front of a blockbuster 114,000 crowd.

His pace left him as his career slowed down with low stints at Russia's Anzhi Makhachkala, Chelsea and Everton in the Premier League.

EURO 2020 QUALIFIER

Dutch delight as 'tired' Germany fall 4-2 in qualifier

A goal down for much of the game, the Dutch fought back in an explosive second half, as they renewed their rivalry in their fourth meeting in the 11 months

AFP
Hamburg

Germany coach Joachim Loew said his team played below their best after goals from Frenkie de Jong and Georginio Wijnaldum saw the Netherlands inflict a 4-2 defeat on their old rivals in Hamburg yesterday.

A goal down for much of the game, the Dutch fought back in an explosive second half, as the two neighbours renewed their rivalry again in their fourth meeting in the last 11 months.

"We are disappointed with the result but the Netherlands were the better side," said Loew.

"We played below our technical level and lost possession a lot. That allowed them to apply pressure."

Dutch coach Ronald Koeman said the Germans had looked "tired", and had only taken the lead because his side had made errors.

Koeman's side came into the game under pressure. Three points from their opening two games meant that defeat would see them slip nine points adrift of the automatic qualification spots in Group C.

Germany, by contrast, were in good spirits. A 3-2 win over the Dutch in Amsterdam last March had dispelled the last of their World Cup blues, and Joachim Loew's new-look young side arrived in Hamburg brimming with confidence.

Serge Gnabry, a key player in the team's revival whom Loew had declared undroppable ahead



Netherlands' Midfielder Frenkie De Jong (2nd L) celebrates with teammates after scoring against Germany during their UEFA Euro 2020 Group C qualifying game in Hamburg.

of the game, gave his side the lead with a poacher's finish on nine minutes.

The Bayern Munich winger pounced on the rebound after Jasper Cillessen beat away a close-range shot from Lukas Klostermann.

The goal, Gnabry's fifth in six games for Germany, remained the only highlight in a cagey first half.

The game opened up as Germany probed for a second just after the break, but it was the Dutch who took advantage, gratefully exploiting the new-found gaps in the hosts' back line.

De Jong grabbed the equaliser just before the hour mark, picking up a Ryan Babel cross and dancing away from Nico Schulz before wrongfooting Neuer

from point-blank range.

Minutes later, the Dutch were ahead, after some penalty-box pinball at a corner ended with Jonathan Tah bundling the ball into his own net.

Briefly stunned, the Germans were given a lifeline when a disoriented De Ligt accidentally brought down a high ball with his outstretched hand in the box. Toni Kroos smashed home

the resulting penalty to level the scores, but Koeman's side were irresistible in attack.

Pouncing on a mistake from Matthias Ginter, they carved through Germany in the 79th minute, and Donyell Malen slotted home at the end of a sumptuous move.

Wijnaldum and Depay linked up on the counter-attack to add a fourth in injury-time.

BOTTOMLINE

Bale late show rescues Wales

AFP
Cardiff, United Kingdom

Gareth Bale spared Wales' blushes as the Real Madrid star headed a late winner to clinch their vital 2-1 victory against Azerbaijan in Friday's Euro 2020 qualifier.

With just six minutes left at the Cardiff City Stadium, Ryan Giggs' side were on the brink of an embarrassing draw that would have severely damaged their hopes of reaching next year's European Championships.

Despite taking the lead through Pavlo Pashayev's far-

cical own goal in the first half, Wales had surrendered a sloppy equaliser to Mahir Emreli after the interval.

Already in trouble in Group E after successive defeats to Hungary and Croatia, Wales were saved by their captain as Bale headed home from close range.

Wales now sit third in the group, three points behind Hungary and Croatia after four matches.

Bale's crucial contribution was another welcome boost for the former Tottenham forward in what could be a season of vindication. As his country's all-time leading goalscorer, Bale is always guaranteed a warm welcome in Wales — a feeling he hasn't of-

ten enjoyed in Madrid during his turbulent spell with Real. Having survived Real manager Zinedine Zidane's latest attempts to freeze him out after a proposed move to China collapsed, the 30-year-old has battled back into the Madrid line-up.

Bale, who scored his first goals since March 16 in the weekend draw at Villarreal, this week dismissed the suggestion that it has been the worst time of his career and insisted the problems have only made him stronger.

Bale was out-of-sorts in Wales' summer qualifying defeats, but — handed the captain's armband in the absence of Ashley Williams — he was quickly into his stride, bursting down

the right wing and crossing towards Tom Lawrence, who volleyed wide at the near post.

Meanwhile, Scotland's hopes of automatic qualification for next year's European championships suffered a huge blow as Russia came from behind to win 2-1 at Hampden on Friday.

John McGinn's early opener was just reward for Scotland's bright start, but Artem Dzyuba's equaliser five minutes before half-time sapped the hosts' energy and belief.

Russia controlled the second period and could have won by more than a solitary goal when Stephen O'Donnell turned Aleksandr Golovin's dangerous cross into his own net on the

FOCUS

Record crowd watch City women win Manchester derby

Reuters
Manchester

Aspectacular 25-yard strike by Caroline Weir gave Manchester City a 1-0 win over Manchester United in front of a record attendance for a Women's Super League game of 31,213 at the Etihad Stadium yesterday.

Weir capitalised on a mistake by United captain Katie Zelem as City emerged victorious on the opening day of the season in the first professional meeting between the two neighbours.

"I just remember getting the ball on the edge of the box and having a shot, luckily enough it went in," said Weir.

United, who were the better side in the first half, hit the post late on via an attempted clearance from Aoife Mannion which struck Jackie Groenen.

"It was a big occasion for us

at the Etihad and the support we have had is unbelievable. It was a huge game for us to kick-off the season, so we are obviously delighted to get the win," Weir told BT Sport.

"We are delighted with the result, it was a really tough game, Manchester United played really well especially in the first-half."

Women's football has seen a surge of interest in England since this year's World Cup in France and Saturday's game was only the second City have played at the stadium where the men's team play.

The previous record attendance for a WSL game was 5,265 for Arsenal's title-winning clash at Brighton & Hove Albion's Amex Stadium in April.

Saturday's record is expected to be broken on Sunday when free tickets should ensure a near-capacity 41,000 crowd to watch Chelsea play Tottenham Hotspur at Stamford Bridge.

GOLF

Ritthammer, MacIntyre on top at European Open

Hamburg: Home favourite Bernd Ritthammer carded five birdies yesterday to catch overnight leader Robert MacIntyre at the top of the leaderboard and set up a nailbiting final day at the European Open in Hamburg.

Rookie MacIntyre, 23, had taken a four-shot lead to grab the lead from Englishman Paul Casey on Friday but could not

hold his advantage in a finely poised battle at the Green Eagle Golf Course. As the young Scot notched up three bogeys, Germany's Ritthammer, ranked just 924th in the world and fighting for his European Tour card for next season, reeled him in with a two-under-par 70 yesterday.

"It was definitely quite an experience for me. I am not used

to being ahead on the European Tour," said Ritthammer.

"It would mean the world to me to win tomorrow, and it would change my situation," he added. Scottish youngster MacIntyre said he was pleased with the fight he had shown on a difficult day.

"Obviously I was hoping for another round under par but

things didn't go my way today. I am going to fight until the end," said MacIntyre.

The two men are now level at the top of the standings ahead of the final day today.

Casey, who has been struggling with illness in the last few days, remains a shot behind the leaders after recovering a little with a three-under 69 and five

birdies yesterday.

"I still feel rubbish from the neck-up," admitted the Englishman with regard to his health.

He in turn is just one shot ahead of both Austria's Matthias Schwab and Spain's Pablo Larrazabal, who was one of the standout performers of the third round with seven birdies and a four-under 68.

FORMULA 1

Leclerc on pole after shambolic qualifying 'mess'

'I am happy with pole, but disappointed at the end'

AFP
Monza, Italy

Charles Leclerc secured pole for Ferrari in the Italian Grand Prix in shambolic circumstances yesterday when only two cars participated in the final qualifying show-down laps.

An unprecedented 'cat-and-mouse' procession as the teams crawled round the circuit, backing each other up to claim good slipstreaming positions, resulted in a farce that saw eight cars timed out by the chequered flag.

"A big mess," said Leclerc, who took pole ahead of defending five-time champion Lewis Hamilton.

The Monegasque and Carlos Sainz of McLaren were the only drivers to produce final qualifying runs after clocking lap-times on their first runs in Q3.

The stewards immediately declared that the shambolic failure at the end of the session was under investigation, the teams having failed to deliver a contest for the paying public.

"Today, to see so many people here feels amazing," said a happy Leclerc, who claimed his maiden victory at last week's tragic Belgian Grand Prix where he dedicated his win to the memory of his late friend Anthoine Hubert, who was killed in the previous day's F2 race.

"I am happy with pole, but disappointed at the end.

"Honestly, I have to be grateful we're on the front row to have a fight with the Ferraris," said Hamilton.

"It's a bit of an anti-climax, but we just timed out."

Valtteri Bottas qualified third in the second Mercedes ahead of Sebastian Vettel in the second Ferrari, the two Renaults of Daniel Ricciardo and Nico Hulkenberg and Sainz, who was seventh.

Red Bull new boy Alex Albon was eighth ahead of Lance Stroll of Racing Point and Kimi Raikkonen of Alfa Romeo, both of whom failed to clock a time in Q3 when Raikkonen crashed. He was uninjured. Bottas said he and Mercedes had been unlucky to be trapped in the bunched traffic.

"The yellow flag in the last corner meant we probably missed the pole."

The Q1 session started in dry conditions and warm late-summer sunshine with a welcome air temperature of 23 degrees Celsius and the track at 38, a near-perfect invitation for Ferrari to delight a big red crowd in the old Autodromo Na-



Pole position winner Ferrari's Monegasque driver Charles Leclerc (L) celebrates with South African former racing driver Jody Scheckter after the qualifying session at the Autodromo Nazionale circuit in Monza yesterday.

zionale.

As expected, the top teams made a cautious start as they looked for enough room to launch a tag-team slipstreaming show. When they did, Leclerc soon went top to be passed promptly by both Renaults, led by Hulkenberg.

Leclerc rose again to wild cheering from the tifosi after a brief red-flagged suspension when Sergio Perez pulled up at Curva Grande.

That cost him a spot in Q2 as he went out along with Romain Grosjean of Haas, the two Williams men George Russell and Robert Kubica and Verstappen, who suffered a power failure.

The Dutchman was set to take penalties and start at or near the back anyway, but this continued a recent run of setbacks.

Hamilton was out early and soon on

top in Q2 before Leclerc took over with a lap in 1:19.553, just a tenth faster than the champion and Vettel, before Hamilton went top in 1:19.464.

Hamilton led Bottas out of the Mercedes garage ahead of the two Ferraris for Q3 and then stopped at the pit-lane exit to allow them to pass – a strategic move that left Vettel as a reluctant leader.

Leclerc topped the opening runs ahead of Hamilton before Raikkonen went off backwards into the barriers at Parabolica to bring a red-flagged stoppage.

This left Bottas as one of four men without an initial lap time before he was re-instated as third behind Leclerc and Bottas, the top trio separated by 0.047 before the final crazy showdown sprints.

The Grid
1st row: Charles Leclerc (MON/Ferrari)

Lewis Hamilton (GBR/Mercedes)
2nd row: Valtteri Bottas (FIN/Mercedes) Sebastian Vettel (GER/Ferrari)
3rd row: Daniel Ricciardo (AUS/Renault) Nico Hulkenberg (GER/Renault)
4th row: Carlos Sainz Jr (ESP/McLaren-Renault) Alexander Albon (THA/Red Bull-Honda)
5th row: Lance Stroll (CAN/Racing Point-Mercedes) Kimi Raikkonen (FIN/Alfa Romeo Racing-Ferrari)
6th row: Antonio Giovinazzi (ITA/Alfa Romeo Racing-Ferrari)
7th row: Daniil Kvyat (RUS/Toro Rosso-Honda) Romain Grosjean (FRA/Haas-Ferrari)
8th row: Sergio Perez (MEX/Racing Point-Mercedes) George Russell (GBR/Williams-Mercedes)

BOTTOMLINE

'Critical but stable' Correa in induced coma after crash

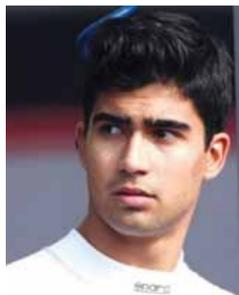
Reuters
Monza

American-Ecuadorian Formula Two racer **Juan Manuel Correa** has been placed in an induced coma after suffering acute respiratory failure following a crash in Belgium last weekend that killed French driver Anthoine Hubert, his parents said yesterday.

They added in a statement that the 20-year-old was in a 'critical but stable' condition in a London hospital.

Correa suffered a spinal injury and fractured his legs in Saturday's horrific crash during the support race for the Belgian Formula One Grand Prix at Spa-Francorchamps.

He was transferred to Britain



from a hospital in Belgium on Tuesday.

Correa, a development driver for the Alfa Romeo Formula One team and grandson of former Ecuadorian president Rodrigo Borja, underwent more than four hours of surgery in Liege

after the accident.

"As time has progressed, new complications have surfaced as a consequence of the massive impact he suffered Saturday in Belgium," Juan Carlos and Maria Correa said.

"On his arrival to London, Juan Manuel was diagnosed with Acute Respiratory Distress Syndrome. This is an injury considered common in high impact accidents such as this one."

The family statement said Correa had fallen into acute respiratory failure and been placed in an "induced state of unconsciousness and under ECMO (extracorporeal membrane oxygenation support)".

"We are confident that our son will surprise us like he always does with his tremendous fighting will and strength and will recover completely," the

statement added.

Hubert, 22, died after his car was hit at speed by Correa's after the French driver had gone off into the barriers at Spa's fast Raidillon corner.

He was the first driver fatality at a Formula One race weekend since Ayrton Senna and Roland Ratzenberger were killed at Imola in 1994.

Formula Two is one rung below F1 and many of the drivers are affiliated to grand prix teams. Britain's George Russell, now with Williams, won the F2 title last year after Monegasque Charles Leclerc, now at Ferrari, in 2017.

Meanwhile, Australian Formula Three driver Alex Peroni walked away from a huge airborne crash at the Italian Grand Prix on Saturday, a week after French F2 racer Anthoine Hu-

bert was killed in Belgium.

The Hobart-born 19-year-old hit a raised 'sausage' kerb at Parabolica and his Campos Racing car was flung high into the air before flipping and landing upside down on the tyre wall, coming to rest against the wire fence.

Peroni walked to the medical vehicle unaided. No other driver was involved, with the race finishing behind the safety car.

Formula One's final practice session before qualifying was delayed while repairs were made to the barriers and the offending kerb was removed.

Formula Three qualifying had to be halted on Friday for safety reasons after a queue of cars lined up on the back straight preparing to start their timed runs while others approached at speed.

ATHLETICS

Rojas leaps to second-longest triple jump in history



AFP
Madrid/Brussels

Reigning world champion **Yulimar Rojas** soared to the second longest triple jump of all-time by managing 15.41 metres at the Andujar athletics meeting yesterday.

The Venezuelan was just nine centimetres short of the long-standing women's world record of 15.50m set by Ukrainian Inessa Kravets in Gothenburg in 1995.

Her effort is also the South American record and 30cm longer than her previous personal best of 15.11m set at the Pan-American Games in Lima last month, when she won gold.

Rojas' rivals, including Colombian star Caterine Ibarguen, will now be aware of the scale of the task facing them in the world championships in Doha which start later this month.

It was also a strong comeback for the 23-year-old after her shock loss in the Diamond League last week in Zurich when she finished second to Jamaican Shanicka Ricketts.

Meanwhile, the Brussels diamond League, Michael Norman claimed a degree of revenge over compatriot Fred Kerley, who beat him to the US title in Des Moines, winning the 400m in 44.26sec. Kerley came in second at 0.20sec.

Norman's 43.45sec in April made him the joint fourth fastest over the one-lap race: only South Africa's injured reigning Olympic and double world champion Wayde van Niekerk and the retired American duo of Michael Johnson and Butch Reynolds have gone faster, with Jeremy Wariner having matched his time.

Norman plumped for a wider lane, in his case five, to make the most of the racer-friendly bend, and in fresh conditions held his nerve with Kerley hitting the final 80 metres in front.

With the IAAF World Cham-

pionships having been pushed back because of heat fears, this year is the first in which the Diamond League has concluded ahead of a major global championships.

Winners claimed \$50,000, a Diamond trophy and a wild card entry for the Doha worlds. Importantly, the finals were loaded as athletes saw them as an ideal opportunity to fire out a warning shot or two ahead of Doha.

Britain's European champion Dina Asher-Smith did just that in the women's 100m, clocking a season's best of 10.88sec to edge out former world and Olympic champion Shelly-Ann Fraser-Pryce of Jamaica.

"Don't call me favourite for the worlds," said Asher-Smith.

"Tonight was like British weather and I just took my chance." Elsewhere, Ethiopian Getnet Wale upset Moroccan Soufiane El Bakkali to win the 3000m steeplechase, while Ethiopian-born Dutch runner Sifan Hassan snatched the women's 5000m trophy, Kenya's world champion Hellen Obiri in fourth.

Obiri's teammate Timothy Cheruiyot produced another dominant display to win the men's 1500m in 3:30.22 for a third consecutive Diamond trophy, and one week after compatriot Donovan Brazier won the men's event in Zurich, American Aje Wilson racked up a gun-to-tape victory in the women's 800m in 2:00.24.

Christian Taylor matched French pole vaulter Renaud Lavillenie's record tally of seven Diamond trophies when he went out to 17.85m to beat long-time rival Will Claye in the triple jump.

Croatia's Sandra Perkovic and Colombia's Caterine Ibarguen

both missed their chance to match Taylor, the former finishing second to Cuban Yaime Perez in the shot put while the latter finished eighth in a long jump competition won comfortably by Germany's Malaika Mihambo.

Mass crash hands Ireland's Bennett Vuelta win

AFP
Madrid

Ireland's **Sam Bennett** launched a sudden attack in the direct aftermath of a mass fall on the home straight yesterday to win stage 14 of the Vuelta a Espana at Oviedo.

Overall Vuelta leader Slovenia's Primoz Roglic missed the crash but was slowed down by it and remains 2min 25sec in the lead with two monster mountain stages on Sunday and Monday.

World champion and second placed Alejandro Valverde and third placed Tadej Pogacar ended up with cuts and bruises in the crash in a dramatic culmination of what had been expected to be a straight bunch sprint.

"I knew they'd be going full gas, I was lucky to avoid it," said an exhausted looking Roglic.

After winning the first flat stage in Valencia last week Irish champion Bennett set off after Max Richeze of Deceuninck-Quick Step and Tosh Van der Sande of Lotto Soudal as they suddenly found themselves advancing toward the line, with Bennett burning them off with ease.

He raised one finger in a tentative celebration at the line and later said he was asking if he had won.

"Because I wasn't expecting to be in the mix I wasn't concentrating and didn't know if the breakaway had been caught



or made it home," Bennett said. "I just kind of found myself in a small group after the crash and bided my time because they were going too fast."

"At 300m I went for it because I just wanted to get it over," Bennett said.

In bright sunshine with a clement 21C (70f) the peloton had embarked on the third of six flat stages (out of 21) from Vicente de la Barquera and wound through a series of picturesque seaside towns and the lush rolling countryside of the Asturias region.

With the Bay of Biscay and the Cantabrian mountains providing a spectacular backdrop a small breakaway got a slight lead and clung on until the outskirts of Oviedo.

A slight narrowing of the road appeared to be the cause of the crash just as the sprinters began to jostle for position and a shoulder charge from one rider sent a ripple of panic across the peloton just as it was hitting top speed 1km from the line.



US OPEN

Slam chase means more to Nadal than winning the most

'It's not possible to have a long career if you don't enjoy what you are doing'



Rafael Nadal of Spain serves to Matteo Berrettini of Italy in their semi-final match at the US Open.

AFP
New York

Rafael Nadal is more excited about the thrill of battling for Grand Slam trophies than he is worried about if he ever holds the record for Grand Slam titles.

The 33-year-old Spaniard, an 18-time major champion, defeated Italy's Matteo Berrettini 7-6 (8/6), 6-4, 6-1 on Friday at the US Open to book a final showdown with Russian fifth seed Daniil Medvedev.

Roger Federer has won a

record 20 Grand Slam titles with Nadal next and top-ranked Serbian Novak Djokovic closing fast on 16 after winning four of the past five Slam crowns.

As much as the "Big Three" are fighting for the lead, Federer at age 38 and Djokovic the youngest at 32, Nadal says the chance to be in the fight means more than the final trophy total.

"Of course, I would love to be the one who achieves more Grand Slams, but I still sleep very well without being the one who has more Grand Slams," Nadal said.

"I am happy about my career. I am very happy about what I'm

doing. I'm going to keep working hard to try to produce chances. Sunday is one. It's just one more chance, that's all. My opponents are going to keep playing."

World number two Nadal sees it as a simple matter of enjoying what you have achieved and not coveting someone else's accomplishments.

"If I able to win the final, OK, will be amazing," Nadal said.

"If I lose, I hope to keep having chances in the future to add things. But as I always say and is true: I would love to be the one to have more, yes, but you cannot be all day frustrated or all day thinking about what does your

neighbour have better than you. "You have to be happy with yourself. You have to do your way. If you are the one to achieve more, fantastic. If not, at least I give my best during all my career. That's all."

Nadal won his first Grand Slam at the 2005 French Open and this year captured his 12th career title on the red clay of Roland Garros.

Asked what sustains his desire to play after having fought off numerous knee injuries and achieved a career Grand Slam, Nadal cited his love for the challenge and the thrill tennis brings him.

"What sustains you, I don't know," he said. "Secret is probably just the passion for what you are doing. It's not possible to have a long career if you don't enjoy what you are doing."

It's the uncertainty of sport, where any match could provide exciting thrills or great disappointment.

"When I arrived here, my goal was to produce a chance to compete for the big thing again. Here I am," Nadal said.

"I give myself another chance... That's the personal satisfaction. That's the personal happiness. You win, you lose. That's part of all the sport."

Nadal defeat at US Open will teach me: Berrettini

AFP
New York

Matteo Berrettini pledged to learn from Friday's US Open semi-final defeat by Rafael Nadal and use those lessons to help him return to the latter stages at future Grand Slam tournaments.

Italian Berrettini paid a steep price for wasting two set points in the first set as 18-time major champion Nadal roared back to claim a 7-6 (8/6), 6-4, 6-1 victory.

"Winning the first set would

have mean I think a lot. Especially with him it's tough to go a set down after an hour, more than an hour," Berrettini said.

"But I was feeling I was playing really good, even though he had a lot of chances on my serve. I think I played also good important points.

"I mean, I was brave, like I asked to myself. I couldn't say anything bad. I cannot complain about what I did. I was playing with Rafa, center court, in semis. I think it's OK."

Berrettini, the first Italian man in the US Open semi-finals since Corrado Barazzutti in 1977, was trying to follow

the footsteps of the only Italian men's Slam winner - Adriano Panatta at the 1976 French Open. At 23, Berrettini rode his powerful serve and blistering forehand to become the youngest US Open men's semi-finalist since Novak Djokovic in 2010. He was appearing in just his eighth Grand Slam main draw and admitted he is far from the finished article.

"I'm still learning tennis. It's really weird. I was coming here with not a lot of confidence. I was injured. I didn't play a good match in Cincinnati. Didn't expect to do such a great tournament," Berrettini said.

"I'm learning to be ready. Every match is important. Every point is important. This one for sure. Then all the matches, you have to be focus and ready to get the chances that you're making.

"I think when I have the right attitude on the court, I can play with any guys. If I'm focusing, if I'm playing my tennis, I can be really dangerous. That's really important to have this confidence."

Berrettini put up a far better fight against Nadal than he did when he lost 6-1, 6-2, 6-2 to Roger Federer in the fourth round at Wimbledon in July, his best Slam

showing prior to the US Open.

"Last time I played one of the Big Three it didn't go like that well," he recalled.

"The feelings I had on court for sure was unbelievable experience. I didn't have so many chances. I think I learned a lot from the match in Wimbledon.

"I was more ready. I was feeling also that the next time I'm going to play Rafa, I'll be more ready because I didn't ever play him even on practice.

"I didn't know what expect a lot. I think this match will help me a lot to improve my tennis, my everything, and for sure be ready for him the next time."

SPOTLIGHT

Dimitrov seeks solace in morale-boosting US Open run

AFP
New York

Grigor Dimitrov sought to focus on the positives of an encouraging fortnight in New York after his US Open run ended Friday in a semi-final loss to red-hot Russian Daniil Medvedev.

The world number 78 from Bulgaria fell short in his effort to become the lowest-ranked player to reach a Grand Slam final since Marat Safin at the 2004 Australian Open, losing 7-6 (7/5), 6-4, 6-3 to fifth seed Medvedev.

But Dimitrov, who is projected to climb to 25th next week, refused to feel too downbeat after struggling through most of the past two seasons and battling a shoulder injury earlier this year.

"It was a good match overall. I think it was just a few points here and there. Yeah, three sets to love, but, I mean, the score for me doesn't justify the match itself. I think it was a good level," Dimitrov said.

"Overall he played really well, fought hard, a lot of the key points he played well. I don't want to be too down on myself. Great weeks. First time in semi-final out here. Just going to take a lot of the positives, for sure."

Twelve months ago, Dimitrov stood inside the top 10, but a slump in form and shoulder pain precipitated a steep drop that saw the 28-year-old shocked by

405th-ranked Kevin Kim in Atlanta in July.

It was no third time in lucky in Grand Slam semi-finals for Dimitrov, having previously made it to the last four at the Australian Open and Wimbledon, as he ran into a player in the form of his life in Medvedev.

"I just didn't play good enough on those key points, especially I think the set point in the first set. I knew what he's going to do. He came up with the goods," Dimitrov said.

"Second set, again, I was not able to get free points on my serve, or on his for that matter. He used the court pretty well. But for sure I'm critical of myself. I think absolutely I could have done better on certain occasions. Again, I don't want to go too deep right now on myself."

Medvedev improved his North American hardcourt record this summer to 20-2, reaching a fourth final in a row. He won a maiden Masters title in Cincinnati following runner-up finishes in Montreal and Washington.

No player born in the 1990s has won a Grand Slam in the era of "Big Three" dominance but Dimitrov believes the 23-year-old Medvedev has every chance of ending the drought.

"Anything's possible. You get the chance to be in the final, so you got to leave everything out there. If he keeps going the same way, plays the same, I think absolutely he's got a major shot!"



Grigor Dimitrov of Bulgaria

More doubles history for Cabal and Farah

Reuters
New York

Juan Sebastian Cabal and Robert Farah became the first Colombians to win the US Open men's doubles title on Friday, easing past Marcel Granollers and Horacio Zeballos 6-4 7-5 to underscore their status as tennis's dominant partnership.

Just weeks after becoming the first Colombians to win a Grand Slam doubles title with an epic five-set victory at Wimbledon, Cabal and Farah were celebrating again after handing the Spanish/Argentine duo their first ever defeat.

"Unreal. It's amazing. What a journey," said Cabal. "If you tell us three months ago that this is going to happen, I probably will not believe you."

"But that's the way, this life that we are pretty blessed. "We just put in the work. Every day we just believe in work, push every day to be better." Cabal and Farah needed nearly five hours to see off France's

Nicolas Mahut and Edouard Roger-Vasselin in the Wimbledon final but made quick work of Granollers and Zeballos, taking just 91 minutes under the closed roof of Arthur Ashe Stadium to get their hands on the trophy.

"The way Colombia received us when we came back from Wimbledon was really breathtaking, and I don't even want to think about how crazy it is going to be now that we come back from the US Open," said Farah. "I think that back-to-back is quite an achievement."

"We are very happy to represent our country the way that we are doing it." Playing in their 400th match together, the top-ranked Colombians had a huge edge in experience over Granollers and Zeballos, who were teaming up for just their second event.

Down 5-3 in the second set with Granollers and Zeballos serving to level the match the Colombians broke back, sweeping four straight games to clinch the title and become just the sixth pairing to complete the Wimbledon/U.S. Open double.

BOTTOMLINE

Medvedev finally glad to prove doubters wrong

AFP
New York

Daniil Medvedev has enjoyed silencing those who questioned his fiery temperament and wrote him off during his teenage years after a sizzling hardcourt season that has left him on the cusp of US Open glory.

The Russian secured a place in his first Grand Slam final Friday with a 7-6 (7/5), 6-4, 6-3 defeat of Grigor Dimitrov, set-

ting Medvedev up with an instant shot at revenge for last month's Montreal loss to Rafael Nadal.

However, his path to final match in New York has been a rocky ride - embraced at first by Medvedev but one he is now keen to forget as he tries to shed his image as the wacky villain.

Booed by fans after an on-scene gesture in the third round, Medvedev taunted them in response by saying he thrived on their jeers for the energy to win. He later apologized and admitted it has been a long road to clean up his act.

"There were many who would say, coaches or something, at the age of 16 or 14, I could get engaged during the match because I thought they clapped on a double-fault or something. I would scream at them. They would scream at me," Medvedev recalled of his younger years.

"Many of these people would say, 'Okay, the guy is completely crazy, he's never be a good tennis player!' Which is maybe happened to some of the tennis players. I'm glad I proved them wrong."

"Talk about reactions, they were totally different. Some wanted to just help me get better. Some, as I say, said, 'OK, who is this crazy guy and what is he doing on the tennis court?' I've improved big-time. Hopefully I will improve even more."

The glacial relations with the Flushing Meadows faithful appears to be thawing, the frosty reception that greeted his quarter-final entrance against Stan Wawrinka replaced by more generous applause ahead of his clash with Dimitrov.

ON-COURT 'DEMONS'

While 18-time Grand Slam champion Nadal figures to attract considerable support from the 24,000 fans at Arthur Ashe Stadium in the final, Medvedev doesn't expect the boos to return.

"I would be surprised, but I would have to take the energy and go again with this energy. As I say, I'm not proud of what I did. I'm working to never do it again," said Medvedev, described as a misunderstood genius by his coach.



Daniil Medvedev of Russia reacts after winning the first set against Grigor Dimitrov of Bulgaria (not pictured) in their semi-final match at the US Open.

BASKETBALL

Antetokounmpo and Greece fall to US at World Cup

Walker, a leading light for the Americans in China, scored 15 points for the holders



Greece's Giannis Antetokounmpo (second from left) in action with US' Kemba Walker (left), Harrison Barnes and Myles Turner (right) during their FIBA World Cup second round game in Shenzhen, China, yesterday. (Reuters)

AFP
Shenzhen, China

NBA MVP Giannis Antetokounmpo was unable to save Greece as holders the United States reached the Basketball World Cup quarter-finals with a 69-53 win yesterday.

In front of a capacity 12,000 crowd in the southern Chinese city of Shenzhen, Gregg Popovich's world and Olympic champions had two or sometimes three players on Greece's danger man.

Stop the 24-year-old from the Milwaukee Bucks and you stop Greece was clearly the mantra and they were comfortable in

making it a fourth win in four games.

There was a buzz of anticipation each time Antetokounmpo had possession and despite close American attention he finished with a double-double of 15 points and 13 rebounds.

Kemba Walker, a leading light for the Americans in China, topped the holders with 15 points and also had six assists.

This is no "Dream Team" with the US missing their NBA megastars and failing to really light up the tournament. They laboured to an overtime victory in the first round against Turkey.

But there are signs they are warming to the task and they were never in serious danger

against Greece in this second-round encounter.

After a tight first quarter when Antetokounmpo scored seven points, Team USA - whose roster is one of the youngest in the competition at average age 26 - turned the screw.

They were up 13 points at half-time and Antetokounmpo, serenaded by chants of "MVP! MVP! MVP!" missed two free throws in the third as the US stretched into an insurmountable lead.

BOGUT BOOED AGAIN

Andrew Bogut was branded "the ultimate professional" by Australia's coach after he was booed throughout an 82-76 win over the Dominican Republic.

The 34-year-old, a key member of the Golden State Warriors' NBA championship-winning roster in 2015, has been heckled and jeered throughout Australia's successful campaign by Chinese fans angry with a barbed comment about national swimming hero Sun Yang.

There was more of the same in Nanjing, but centre Bogut is relishing it and has not been afraid to fan the flames with sarcastic tweets referring to his "Chinese fans".

Bogut has been targeted after he tweeted in July: "Swimmers who medal vs Sun Yang should break the podiums with hammers."

The tweet, which garnered

thousands of interactions, was a cheeky reference to China's triple Olympic champion missing a doping test after a vial of his blood was smashed with a hammer.

Bogut had the last laugh once more, finishing with eight points, eight rebounds and six assists as the Boomers closed on a spot in the last eight.

Asked about the opprobrium directed at Bogut, coach Andrej Lemanis said: "You'll have to speak to Andrew about that."

"He's the ultimate professional and has the ability to impact us in a positive manner."

"We appreciate what he does for this group and are thankful to have him. We enjoy the way he plays," Lemanis added.

NFL

Plan is for Brown to play in season opener: Oakland coach Gruden

Reuters
New York, United States

Oakland Raiders coach Jon Gruden announced Friday that Antonio Brown is expected to play in the team's season opener against the Denver Broncos, mere hours after the wide receiver reportedly issued an apology.

Gruden's comments are the latest in a whirlwind saga surrounding Brown, who approached Raiders general manager Mike Mayock while he was watching practice to initiate an exchange that led to the men being physically separated on Wednesday, ESPN and NFL Network reported.

According to ESPN, Brown was flanked by the team's captains on Friday morning when he opened a team meeting with his "emotional apology."

"That's the plan," Gruden told reporters of Brown's expected participation for the season opener.

"Antonio's back today. We're really excited about that. Ready to move on. He's had a lot of time to think about things. We're happy to have him back and I know Raider Nation is excited about that too," Gruden said.

Later Friday, Brown posted a video to his YouTube channel that appears to contain the audio of a phone call he had with Gruden, reportedly earlier this week while Brown's status with the team was in flux. The video lasts nearly two minutes and in it, Gruden asks Brown, "What the hell is going on, man?"

"Just a villain all over the news, man," Brown replies.

"You're not a villain," Gruden then says back. "You're just, you're the most misunderstood (expletive) human being in my entire life that I've ever met."

"Do you want to be a Raider or not," Gruden later asks, to which Brown replies, "Man I've been trying to be a Raider since Day 1."

The highly produced video includes background music and videos of Brown practising and playing with his kids, along with TV analysts presumably discussing Brown.

According to ESPN, when Gruden was shown the video, he was truly amused and told a source he thought it was "awesome."

It is illegal in California to record a private conversation or phone call without consent of all parties to the conversation.

Brown, 31, initially had been expected to be suspended by the Raiders for conduct detrimental to the team and miss at least the Week 1 game, with \$30m in guaranteed money also on the line should the Raiders opt to take a hard-line position in the matter.

"I'm excited to be out here today," Brown told reporters on Friday after being a full practice participant. "I apologised to my teammates and the organisation. Enough talk, man. I'm excited to be out here with my teammates. I'm grateful for all the fans. I'm excited to be a part of the Raiders and see you guys soon."

NBC Sports.com reported an NFL spokesman Friday declined comment regarding the situation and whether Brown's alleged misconduct had triggered possible scrutiny under the Personal Conduct Policy, which prohibits "violent or threatening behaviour towards another employee or a third party in any workplace setting."

There has been plenty of drama around Brown since he was acquired from the Steelers in March and signed to a contract extension.

Per ESPN's Josina Anderson, Brown confronted Mayock on Wednesday over being fined almost \$54,000 and called Mayock a "cracker" and addressed him with a number of "cuss words" during the altercation. Anderson reported Mayock began to walk away because he felt the situation would escalate.

Brown told ESPN's Dianna Russini that he did not call Mayock a "cracker" during their Wednesday altercation. Brown told Russini he would "never use that word."

Gruden did not take a side in the matter Thursday and appeared truly conflicted despite a pattern of behaviour from Brown that would seem to indicate a lack of dedication to the Raiders.

Brown's agent, Drew Rosenhaus, said prior to Gruden's announcement that the wideout was hoping to play in the season opener.

"Right now I think his relationship with Coach Gruden is good, very good," Rosenhaus said. "I'm not going to get into his relationship with Mike Mayock, but I will say that we're hopeful that that will be a good one, as well. It has been in the past; it can be in the future."

Brown also missed time due to a frostbite-like condition on his feet, an incident Gruden said wasn't Brown's fault but stemmed from improper protection on his feet during cryotherapy.

Then he sat out during a dispute with the NFL over his helmet, returning only after losing two grievances.



Bucs' Evans misses practice

Tampa Bay Buccaneers wide receiver Mike Evans' status for the team's season opener is listed as questionable after he missed practice Friday due to an illness. Buccaneers coach Bruce Arians said the hope is Evans will be able to play in the Sunday game against the visiting San Francisco 49ers. Evans, 26, is coming off his fifth consecutive 1,000-yard season. The two-time Pro Bowl selection set the single-season franchise record with 1,524 receiving yards in 2018, making 86 catches and scoring eight touchdowns through the air. Evans has 395 receptions for 6,103 yards and 40 touchdowns in five seasons since being selected by Tampa Bay with the seventh overall pick of the 2014 NFL Draft.

Packers-Bears opener post three-year ratings high

Thursday night's game between the Green Bay Packers and Chicago Bears was the most-viewed NFL season opener since 2016, *Variety* reported Friday. Green Bay's 10-3 victory in Chicago scored a 15.3 in the overnight metered-market ratings, topping the 13.4 posted by last year's opener between the Atlanta Falcons and the Philadelphia Eagles by 14 percent. The game also beat NBC's "Sunday Night Football" Packers-Bears telecast from last year by seven percent. The Packers-Bears opener produced the highest overnight metered-market household score for any sporting event since last year's Super Bowl. The total viewership for the game hit the 22-million mark, up from last year's opener which drew around 19m viewers.

MLB

Giants hold on to beat Dodgers



San Francisco Giants' Mauricio Dubon (right) follows through on a two-run single in the game against Los Angeles Dodgers in Los Angeles, United States, on Friday. (USA TODAY Sports)

Reuters
New York, United States

Mauricio Dubon hit a home run and Jeff Samardzija went six solid innings as the San Francisco Giants complicated the Los Angeles Dodgers'

weekend division-clinching plans by holding on for a 5-4 victory in the opener of a three-game series at Dodger Stadium on Friday night.

The Giants overcame a three-homer night from AJ Pollock, who got the Dodgers within a run in the ninth inning with his third blast.

Dubon's second career home run came against Dodgers left-hander Clayton Kershaw, who was held to his shortest outing of the season at four-plus innings. Kershaw (13-5) gave up three runs on seven hits with three walks and six strikeouts, needing 99 pitches to record 12 outs.

OTHER RESULTS			Atlanta	4-3	Washington
Texas	7-6	Baltimore	Houston	7-4	Seattle
Pittsburgh	9-4	St. Louis	LA Angels	5-4	C White Sox
Boston	6-1	NY Yankees	Milwaukee	7-1	Chicago Cubs
Tampa Bay	5-0	Toronto	Cleveland	6-2	Minnesota
Kansas City	3-0	Miami	Oakland	7-3	Detroit
Arizona	7-5	Cincinnati	Detroit	5-4	Oakland
NY Mets	5-4	Philadelphia	Colorado	3-2	San Diego

Combined with the Arizona Diamondbacks' victory over the Cincinnati Reds, the Dodgers' magic number for clinching their seventh consecutive National League West title remained at four.

Pollock hit two home runs off the right-handed Samardzija, and the third off left-handed closer Will Smith to give him 13 this season. The Dodgers' NL-record homer total increased to 255.

Pollock's first homer gave the Dodgers a 1-0 lead in the second inning, but Dubon evened the score 1-1 in the fourth with his homer off the left field foul pole against Kershaw. It was his second home run in a span of five days.

After Austin Slater singled and Kevin Pillar walked to open the fifth inning, Kershaw was replaced by right-hander Dylan Floro.

The Giants ended up with a

four-run inning, and a 5-1 lead, after a two-run double by Mike Yastrzemski and a two-run single by Dubon. It was a three-RBI night for Dubon, who had driven in just one career run entering the game.

Pollock's second homer came in the fifth inning. It was his first multi-homer game as a member of the Dodgers and the fifth of his career.

Samardzija (10-11), who also gave up an RBI single to Cody Bellinger in the sixth inning, allowed three runs on five hits with no walks and three strikeouts. The veteran picked up just his second career victory over the Dodgers and his first as a starter.

Smith got two quick outs in the ninth before Pollock homered for the third time. Smith then walked Russell Martin before striking out namesake Will Smith for his 32nd save in 36 chances.

TOP OF THE LINE

Ireland beat Wales, go to World Cup top of rankings

Reuters
Dublin, Ireland

Ireland put in a much needed confidence-boosting performance in a 19-10 victory over Wales yesterday that felt a little more like a World Cup clash than the final warm-up before the tournament begins later this month.

With both sides close to full strength and the intensity dialled up a notch or two, there was far more pressure on Ireland's frontline men to perform after their disappointing Six Nations and record 57-15 warm-up rout by England two weeks ago.

Such are the niceties of rugby's ranking system,

tries from Rob Kearney, Tadhg Furlong and James Ryan mean Ireland will arrive in Japan as the world's top-ranked side for the first time. The encouraging performance, however, will mean more.

The result also meant Warren Gatland was unable to deny Joe Schmidt a victorious farewell in his final game at the Aviva Stadium, as Schmidt had done to his fellow Kiwi in Cardiff last week with both coaches set to depart after the World Cup.

Rob Kearney (right) of Ireland scores the team's first try during the warm-up rugby Test against Wales at the Aviva Stadium in Dublin, Ireland, yesterday. (AFP)



FOCUS

Pocock returns as Wallabies down Samoa

'There's plenty to work on there, I thought some of our shape was really good but it did get a bit stop-start at times, they put us under pressure'

Reuters
Sydney, Australia

David Pocock made a successful return as the Wallabies bid farewell to Australia with a hardfought 34-15 victory over Samoa at Western Sydney Stadium yesterday in their final match before the Rugby World Cup.

Flanker Pocock, sidelined by injury for most of the year and playing his first match since March 8, captained the home side in place of the rested Michael Hooper and managed 58 minutes before making way for fresh legs.

The twice world champions were 22-3 in front at halftime with Pocock having provided the pass for lock Adam Coleman to score the first of Australia's six tries in the eighth minute.

Winger Marika Korobete, who looked dangerous throughout, scored the pick of those scores when he rampaged past four defenders in the 16th minute, with centre Adam Ashley-Cooper and flanker Lukhan Salakaia-Loto also crossing before halftime.

Samoa hit back after the break with Dwayne Polataivao scoring both of their tries but winger Dane Haylett-Petty and centre Matt To'omua crossed in the



Australia's David Pocock (centre) is tackled by Scott Malolua (right) of Samoa during the international rugby Test in Sydney, Australia, yesterday. (AFP)

last 10 minutes to see the hosts safely to victory.

"It was a tough one, lots of big hits. But it was good to be back out there, very enjoyable," said Pocock.

"There's plenty to work on there, I thought some of our

shape was really good but it did get a bit stop-start at times, they put us under pressure and there's a couple of things at scrum time we'll work on."

Samoa briefly threatened a repeat of the upset they achieved in their last match against the

Wallabies in Sydney in 2011 with their resurgence in the second half after the first had ended with an unfortunate injury.

Starting scrumhalf Scott Malolua had a test debut to forget, dislocating his shoulder in a tryline ruck to put his participa-

tion in the World Cup in serious doubt.

His replacement Polataivao made an immediate impact, though, scoring his first try in the 53rd minute after the Pacific islanders had dominated an attacking scrum and the second eight minutes later following a line-break from centre Reynold Lee-Lo.

"It was a tough first half, we gave up four tries through mistakes and a quality side like Australia are going to capitalise," said Manu Samoa skipper Tusi Pisi.

"The boys have worked really hard over the last month and hopefully we can put in some good performances at the World Cup."

Australia came through relatively unscathed on the injury front although there will be some concern at Coleman leaving the field with what looked like a thumb problem after 56 minutes.

Coach Michael Cheika, who led Australia to the final four years ago in England, will take reassurance from the fact that he fielded a side very different from that expected to start the World Cup opener against Fiji in Saporo on Sept. 21.

The Wallabies also face Wales, Uruguay and Georgia in Pool D, while Samoa are in Pool A with hosts Japan, Ireland, Scotland and Russia.

OBITUARY

Erasmus and Boks mourn the loss of 'legend' Williams

Reuters
Kumagaya, Japan

Springbok coach Rassie Erasmus said the country has "lost a legend" after the sudden passing of former South Africa World Cup winner Chester Williams due to a suspected heart attack at the age of 49 on Friday.

The death of the jinking winger, who scored 14 tries in 27 appearances for the Springboks, including four in a single test, came just weeks before the World Cup kicks off in Japan. He was due to attend as one of the event's past legends.

Williams broke racial barriers to emerge a national hero as one of South Africa's first black rugby union internationals.

Erasmus, in Japan ahead of the Rugby World Cup that starts on Sept. 20, said the team were in shock after hearing the news.

"I played with Chester and many of our management knew him well and we are all in shock this morning," Erasmus said.

"Many of our players were too young to remember the 1995 Rugby World Cup final, but they have grown up watching highlights of the final and of Chester, and know him as a rugby player who became an icon for our country.

"Only this week our management team was chatting to Chester about his plans to come to the tournament and about tickets for Rugby World Cup matches. It will take us some time to get over this shock."

The passing of Williams follows just six weeks after the death of 1995 World Cup final teammate James Small, who also suffered a heart attack at the age of 50.

The Boks defeated favourites New Zealand 15-12 in an epic decider at Ellis Park that went into extra-time and saw South Africa lift the first of two World Cup ti-



tles.

Williams is the fourth member of the team to pass away after scrumhalf Joost van der Westhuizen succumbed to Motor Neuron Disease in February, 2017, and loose-forward Ruben Kruger perished after a long battle with brain cancer.

Erasmus said Williams has cemented his place as one of the Boks' most iconic players.

"Our thoughts and prayers right now are particularly with the family that Chester has left behind, with Maria and the children. We have lost a legend, they have lost a husband and father," he said.

"It's probably no comfort to them now, but I am sure that Chester's name will go down with the greats of South African rugby as a player and for what he stood for in our country's history.

"This is a very sad day for South Africa and South African rugby!"

Mako Vunipola, Nowell to miss World Cup group games

AFP
London, United Kingdom

England coach Eddie Jones has revealed that he will be without both Mako Vunipola and Jack Nowell for at least the first two games of the Rugby World Cup due to injury.

Vunipola aggravated a hamstring injury when he made a brief return against Ireland late last month, while Nowell has been making good progress from a serious ankle injury. "We feel that he (Vunipola) will be right possibly for game three or four," said Jones, after his side's 37-0 win over Italy

at St James's Park on Friday in their final World Cup warm-up.

"Jack in the last couple of days has taken off and we've had to hold him back, but he should be right again around the same time as Mako.

"He (Vunipola) is a very important player and we are very confident that he will make a very important contribution for us."

England open their campaign against Tonga on September 22 before taking on the United States four days later.

However, Jones will hope to have both fit for the far tougher tests against Argentina on October 5 and France a week later.

SPOTLIGHT

Argentina thump Sydney club 74-0 in final warm-up

AFP
Sydney, Australia

Winger Bautista Delguy scored four quick tries in a second-half blitz as Argentina thumped Sydney club side Randwick 74-0 in their final World Cup warm-up game yesterday.

Coach Mario Ledesma had the chance to face a Pacific nation in a full Test this weekend, but opted for a lighter routine after a taxing year that saw the Jaguares reach the Super Rugby final.

The result was never in doubt, but a strong Pumas side took time to get going on a blustery day in a seaside suburb with Randwick holding them scoreless until the 18th minute.

Tomas Cubelli finally broke the deadlock by touching down off a scrum and it opened the floodgates, with Argentina piling on 12 tries for an easy victory while dominating territory and possession.

Julian Montoya, Juan Manuel Leguizamón, Marcos Kremer and Santiago Carreras all crossed before the break, with Nahuel Tetaz Chapparo adding another soon after the restart.

Replacement Delguy then scored four tries in 10 minutes as the Randwick defence was blown apart, with former captain Agustín Creevy and Ramiro Moyano adding the final two.

"Glad to have no injuries," Ledesma told reporters. "That's the main one and giving the opportunity to everybody."

They will face a much tougher task at the World Cup in Japan after being drawn in a tough Pool C against France, Tonga, England and USA.

Argentina went down 24-18 to an experimental South African side in Pretoria in their last Test – their ninth straight defeat since beating Australia a year ago.

They have played 37 World Cup matches, winning 19 and losing 18, with the best showing a third-place finish at the 2007 tournament hosted by France.

STATEMENT

NZ choose to play a man down with eye on WCup

Reuters
Wellington, New Zealand

The All Blacks got exactly what they wanted from their final match ahead of the World Cup when they demolished Tonga 92-7 on Saturday, and deliberately chose to play the last 15 minutes a man down, coach Steve Hansen said.

Inside centre Ryan Crotty, who was not injured, was taken off immediately after he scored his second try in the 65th minute at Waikato Stadium despite the All Blacks having used all of their replacements.

The decision was to ensure Crotty was not overworked after two months out with a broken thumb and also to put the All Blacks under pressure and see how they responded, Hansen said.

"We ran out of reserves and Ryan only needed to play for 65 minutes," Hansen told reporters in Hamilton.

"Obviously his welfare was more important and it was a



New Zealand George Bridge (right) runs past Tonga's Malietoa Hingano during the rugby union Test in Hamilton, New Zealand, yesterday. (AFP)

good opportunity again to put ourselves under a bit of pressure when it comes to how many we have on the park.

"We had to make that choice and the score told us we could make that choice with relatively low risk."

The tactic was reminiscent of the last World Cup in England

when they practised different scenarios in matches throughout the pool phase to ensure they were ready for the knock-out games.

The match yesterday – Hansen's last in charge on home soil as he steps down after the World Cup – allowed the side to fine tune some of their attack-

ing plans and continue to build combinations ahead of their Pool B opener against South Africa.

It also ironed out any cobwebs in the side, having not played together since they beat the Wallabies three weeks ago.

"We got rugby time. We got collision time. We got set piece

time. We got time on the ball under pressure. We got time on the ball in open space. So that's what rugby is about," Hansen said.

"We play a massive game in two weeks and if we didn't have any of that today we would be in trouble.

"We got exactly what we needed out of it. The score was irrelevant. It was what we did and we were happy."

The side also got through the game without any injury concerns.

The All Blacks leave for Japan tomorrow and Hansen said that after the 36-0 win over Australia and Saturday's victory over Tonga they were tracking well for their opener against the Springboks.

"I think we're in good shape. I think we're like a lot of teams. We have had a good build up. We have had some good footy," he said.

"Regardless of what happens in the first game I know by the end of the (pool phase) we will be a better side."

FOCUS

Legit Clinic - where learning basketball is fun

'Apart from teaching basketball skills - dribbling, shooting and passing - through the course, we will help them inculcate a healthy lifestyle'

By Sports Reporter
Doha

Basketball is the flavour of the season.

While the crème de la crème have been fighting it out at the Basketball World Cup in China, the game's enthusiasts in Qatar have a great opportunity to get involved in the sport with 'Legit hoop doctors'.

The Legit Basketball Clinic has been providing intense training sessions to aspiring players at the air-conditioned star-of-the-art facilities of Aspire Dome.

Dozens of youngsters have been honing their skills for the last two months every Thursday and Saturday, but will now have the chance to hone their skills at the first full-time Legit Basketball Clinic.

The Legit group was founded by Lourd Wilhelm Biltz in April 2018 with a mission to create a healthy environment for the residents of Qatar through basketball and contribute to the Qatar National Vision 2030.

"Our vision is to keep the youth physically active and in the process keep improving their passion for the game of basketball," Wilhelm Biltz told *Gulf Times*.

The concept of Legit emerged from the passion for the game among a group of friends.

"We don't have these facilities in our growing years back home. So we as a group of former players, coaches and referees wanted to give something back to the society through the game we love. Our aim is to guide the kids taking the scientific approach," he said.

Our vision is to keep the youth physically active and in the process keep improving their passion for the game of basketball.

— Lourd Wilhelm Biltz
Founder Legit Basketball Clinic

"We have around 50 participants in the clinic," said the founder, who represented Lekhwiya in 3x3 basketball. "It's a good turnout."

The clinic will run year-long every Thursday and Saturday for three hours. Head coach Michael Aliparo is also enthusiastic about the initiative.

"This is our first clinic - just getting our feet wet," said Legit head coach Michael Aliparo during a break in the action at Aspire.

Aliparo added: "We have three age groups. First is from 5-11 years and the second is from 12-18 years and the third is 19 years and above."

"Our aim is to be the best in Qatar in helping each and every person, who aspires to be better physically and mentally, with the help of the game."

"Apart from teaching basketball skills - dribbling, shooting and passing - through the course, we will help them inculcate a healthy lifestyle."

Aliparo represented QSports in a 3x3 basketball tournament at Salalah Tourism Festival in Oman last month and even helped his team reach the semi-finals of the tournament.

Aliparo, who plays as shooting guard, has turned out for Al Wakrah Club in Qatar, besides lining up for various professional teams in the Philippines, also spoke about the impor-



Legit Basketball Clinic founder Lourd Wilhelm Biltz with coaches and students during a training session at the Aspire Dome yesterday. PICTURES: Jayan Orma



Legit Basketball Clinic head coach Michael Aliparo instructing the kids during a training session.

tance of exposure for the kids.

"We have plans to give them a match feel with tune-up games in Qatar and some real time experience in the local leagues for youth so that they can earn experience and maturity of the game,"

he said. Biltz as a mentor is hoping to see his students grow in the sport.

"When we see students improving their performance while enjoying their time at the clinic, we feel we have achieved something. And it's very sat-

isfying for me and my team," he said.

Throughout the clinic, big smiles were on display, an indication of the participants' enjoyment and love for the game, which, of course they shared with their instructors.



A trainee going for the basket.

FOCUS

Doha Festival City hosts athletics competition for kids

By Sports Reporter
Doha

Doha Festival City, Qatar's preferred and world class destination for entertainment, has partnered with the Local Organising Committee of the IAAF World Athletics Championships Doha 2019 as a national supplier of the event, which Qatar organises for the first time ever in the Middle East from September 27 until October 6.

The partnership sees Doha Festival City host a Mini Athletics Championship from September 5 until October 3 for children aged 4-14. Doha Festival City has created a replica of the Khalifa International Stadium, the host venue of the IAAF World Athletics Championships, at the Centre Court, first floor.

The stadium replica features six athletics events, spectator area, and a press conference

space, giving the younger generation a glimpse of what fans can expect when the Middle East's biggest ever sporting event begins in three weeks with the participation of first-class athletes from 213 countries.

The venue will open daily, from 2pm-10pm on weekdays, and until 11pm from Thursdays to Saturdays, welcoming children to play and enjoy a variety of athletics activities including jumping, throwing, relay races, sprints and hurdles.

On Mondays and Wednesdays, experienced coaches will be on the ground to offer training sessions for three hours at each pit, while on weekends children will compete against each other to win medals.

Senior athletes will also make an appearance on weekends to meet and greet their fans at Doha Festival City, where they will sign the bibs of kids club members and hand out medals and prizes to the winners.

Hazim Murad, Assistant General Manager of Doha Festival City, said: "We have worked with our creative team to produce a unique experience for children that resembles the real-life one. The venue is rounded with entrance gates and an audience area that makes it look like a miniature of the iconic Khalifa International Stadium."

Robert Hall, General Manager of Doha Festival City, said: "We are so excited to partner with the Local Organising committee of the IAAF World Athletics Championships Doha 2019. We are keen on supporting the country's efforts towards its National Vision 2030, and to celebrate such important moments and events with the people of Qatar."

"The partnership brings yet another unique experience to our shoppers and visitors and adds value to our retailers and business partners who chose us for being Qatar's number one and preferred destination. We

look forward to welcoming Qatar's guests, citizens, and residents for this festival of world-class sport," he added.

Sheikha Asma al-Thani, Director of Marketing and Communications at the Local Organising Committee, said: "We are thrilled to partner with Doha Festival City as a key national supplier who can support us in delivering a successful championship that showcases Qatar's capability of hosting large-scale world sporting events. The mini championship enables us to further engage the public in sport and inspire the next generation of athletes, which is an integral part of our mission."

As part of the partnership between Doha Festival City and the Local Organising Committee, tickets of the IAAF World Athletics Championships Doha 2019 will be available for sale at the mall at a dedicated booth opposite to Centrepoint store in the ground floor.



Assistant General Manager of Doha Festival City Hazim Murad (left) and Head Of Sponsorship IAAF World Athletics Championships Abdelhadi al-Marri pose with the championships official mascot Falah.

SPOTLIGHT

Indian football players land in Qatar for qualifier

The Indian national football team arrived in Doha yesterday ahead of their 2022 FIFA World Cup qualifier against Qatar on Tuesday.

Qatar had beaten Afghanistan 6-0 on Thursday, while India wasted a 1-0 advantage to allow Oman score two goals in the final few minutes to clinch a 2-1 victory. Indian coach Igor Stimac was candid in his admission that India need to stop relying only on captain Sunil Chhetri to score goals.

Chhetri had given India a 24th minute lead before Oman hit back in late in the game in Guwahati to snatch a last-gasp victory.

"As soon as the Oman match ended, we shifted our focus immediately to the next match. Qatar are the strongest team in the group and playing them will not be easy. However, it's a great opportunity to learn from," said Stimac.



Indian football team members at the Hamad International Airport yesterday.

TRIBUTES

Pakistan's PM remembers leg-spinner Qadir as 'genius'

AFP
Islamabad

Pakistan's Prime Minister Imran Khan yesterday remembered former spinner **Abdul Qadir** as a "genius" a day after the legendary cricketer died of a heart attack.

Cricket hero-turned-politician Khan and Qadir had a long and eventful association as teammates. Qadir, who would have turned 64 on September 15, was a favourite of the former captain. "Abdul Qadir was a genius, one of the greatest leg spinners of all time," Khan tweeted, as fans all over Pakistan mourned the player's death.

"And he was also the life of the dressing room entertaining the team with his wit & humour".

Qadir made his Test debut against England in Lahore in 1977 and went on to play 67 Tests, taking 236 wickets with a best of 9-56 against the same



side in 1987. Those figures are still the best by a Pakistan bowler in a Test innings.

He also took 132 wickets in 104 one-day internationals, with Imran using him as an attacking weapon in the 1983 World Cup held in England.

"Qadir's bowling statistics do not do justice to his genius," said Khan. "Had he been playing cricket now with the modern DRS system, where batsmen can be given out on the front foot as well, Qadir would have gotten as many wickets as

the great Shane Warne".

Legendary Australian leg-spinner Warne - the second-highest Test wicket-taker with 708 (only behind Sri Lanka's Muttiah Muralitharan's 800) - was also a big fan of Qadir.

Qadir's unique dancing action was as attractive as it was destructive, spinning the ball prodigiously, and he had a lethal googly and a flipper.

He played the last of his international matches in 1993 before also serving as chief selector of Pakistan.

ASHES

Aussies scent win as England left needing another miracle

'They're coming out alright at the moment!. I'm feeling okay. One big final push tomorrow'

AFP
Manchester, United Kingdom

Pat Cummins took two wickets in two balls, including England captain Joe Root for a golden duck, to leave Australia on the brink of retaining the Ashes at Old Trafford yesterday.

England were 18-2 in their second innings at stumps on the fourth day of the fourth Test, still needing a further 365 runs on today's last day to reach a target of 383.

"They're coming out alright at the moment!", Cummins told *Sky Sports*. "I'm feeling okay. One big final push tomorrow."

By contrast, Australia require eight wickets to seal a win that would see the holders keep the Ashes at 2-1 up with one to play in a five-Test series.

The most England have made in the fourth innings to win a Test was the 362/9 they posted in their series-levelling success last time out at Headingley, where Ben Stokes's stunning 135 not out and the resistance of No 11 Jack Leach secured a remarkable one-wicket victory.

Earlier, Steve Smith's remorseless run-glut continued as he made 82 - his lowest score this series - in Australia's second innings of 186-6 declared.

Rory Burns and Root had shared a partnership of 141 while making 81 and 71 respectively in England's first-innings 301, but yesterday they were both out for nought in the first over of England's chase.

Left-handed opener Burns, looking to turn Cummins's third ball legside, got a leading edge and was caught at short cover by Travis Head.

Next ball a brilliant delivery that nipped away off the seam and clipped the top of off stump saw Root bowled by Cummins for his third nought of the series and second golden duck.

Cummins was on a hat-trick, with the struggling Jason Roy next in but the World Cup winner responded with a solid forward defensive shot and he was eight not out at stumps, with Joe Denly unbeaten on 10.

'UNBELIEVABLE SMITH'

Earlier, Smith's ninth successive Ashes fifty, extending his own record, followed his superb 211 in the first innings of his comeback Test after he missed the match at Headingley with concussion.

In what is his first Test series



Australia's Pat Cummins celebrates taking the wicket of England's Joe Root with teammates during day four of the fourth Ashes Test at the Emirates Old Trafford, Manchester, yesterday. (Reuters)

since completing a 12-month ball-tampering ban, former Australia captain Smith has now scored 671 runs, including three hundreds, at an average of 134.2.

He was on course to become the first batsman in Ashes history, and only the eighth in any Test, to score a double hundred and hundred in the same match when he lofted left-arm spinner Leach with Stokes, running round from long-off, holding a safe catch to end a 92-ball innings featuring 11 fours.

Australia were in trouble at 44-4 before tea, with Stuart Broad and Archer taking two wickets apiece after England narrowly avoided following-on in reply to the tourists' 497-8 declared. But Smith counter-attacked in superb style.

"None of us expected the innings Smithy went out with, he was incredible," said Cummins. "We'd have been happy to get though the night but Smithy was unbelievable."

Meanwhile England coach Trevor Bayliss insisted: "Anything is possible. We saw that in the last Test match.

"We have got a couple guys out there and a few guys in the shed who are more than capable of

scoring a hundred," the Australian added.

Smith did give a chance on 48 when he reverse-swept Leach, with Stokes, anticipating the shot and moving quickly across from slip, failing to hold what would have been a sensational catch.

The 30-year-old Smith toyed with England's bowlers on a sunny afternoon, pulling Broad for an extravagant four.

While Smith has enjoyed a run-spree, David Warner - also returning to Tests from a year-long ball-tampering ban - has become Broad's 'bunny'.

Saturday saw left-handed opener Warner out for his third straight Test duck when Broad, the successful bowler on each occasion, had him lbw.

It was the sixth time Warner had fallen to Broad this Ashes and meant he had completed 'a pair' in the match after a nought in the first innings.

World Cup-winner Archer, in only his third Test, had been down on pace during Australia's first innings.

But the express quick was back over the 90 mph mark on Saturday during a return of 3-45 in 14

Scorecard

AUSTRALIA 1st Innings 497-8 dec	M. Labuschagne lbw b Archer 11
ENGLAND 1st Innings (overnight: 200-5)	S. Smith c Stokes b Leach 82
R. Burns c Smith b Hazlewood 81	T. Head b Archer 12
J. Denly c Wade b Cummins 4	M. Wade c Bairstow b Archer 34
C. Overton c Smith b Hazlewood 5	T. Paine not out 23
J. Root lbw b Hazlewood 71	M. Starc not out 3
J. Roy b Hazlewood 22	Extras (b5, lb2, w7, nb1) 15
B. Stokes c Smith b Starc 26	Total (6 wks dec, 425 overs, 204 mins) 186
J. Bairstow b Starc 17	Fall of wickets: 1-0 (Warner), 2-16 (Harris), 3-24 (Labuschagne), 4-44 (Head), 5-149 (Smith), 6-158 (Wade)
J. Buttler b Cummins 41	Bowling: Broad 14-4-54-2 (1w); Archer 14-2-45-3 (1nb); Overton 5.5-1-22-0 (2w); Leach 9-0-58-1;
J. Archer c Paine b Cummins 1	Extras (2 wks, 7 overs, 32 mins) 18
S. Broad b Starc 5	Fall of wickets: 1-0 (Burns), 2-0 (Root)
J. Leach not out 4	Bowling: Cummins 3-1-8-2; Hazlewood 2-1-2-0; Lyon 1-0-5-0; Starc 1-0-3-0
Extras (b4, lb11, w5, nb4) 24	
Total (all out, 107 overs, 504 mins) 301	
Fall of wickets: 1-10 (Denly), 2-25 (Overton), 3-166 (Burns), 4-175 (Root), 5-196 (Roy), 6-228 (Bairstow), 7-243 (Stokes), 8-256 (Archer), 9-283 (Broad), 10-301 (Buttler)	
Bowlers: Starc 22-7-80-3; Hazlewood 25-6-57-4 (1nb); Cummins 24-6-60-3 (3nb, 1w); Lyon 36-4-89-0.	
AUSTRALIA 2nd Innings	
D. Warner lbw b Broad 0	
M. Harris lbw b Broad 6	

CRICKET

Rashid's Afghans pile misery on Bangladesh

AFP
Chittagong, Bangladesh

Ibrahim Zadran and Asghar Afghan hit half-centuries while Rashid Khan played a quick cameo after claiming five wickets in an innings, as Afghanistan took command in the one-off Test against Bangladesh in Chittagong yesterday.

The visitors - playing only their third Test in history - reached 237-8 at stumps on the third day, setting a huge target for Bangladesh by taking an overall lead of 374 runs.

Debutant Zadran hit highest 87 off 208 balls for Afghanistan in the second innings while former skipper Afghan made 50 off 108 balls, his second fifty, adding to Bangladesh's frustration.

Rashid added 24 off 22 balls before wicketkeeper-batsman Afsar Zazai's unbeaten 34 runs extended Afghanistan's lead.

"Our aim is to get a 400-plus lead. We are just 30-40 runs short, so it will not be easy for Bangladesh to achieve it," Zadran said. "We feel we are 70 percent hopeful of winning the game."

Bangladesh's Mehidy Hasan was hoping against hope.

"Anything can happen in cricket... a team can lose from a winning position and also can win from a losing position," Mehidy said.

"Our batsmen need to take the challenge. Our batsmen have to contribute in order to win the match," he said.

Skipper Shakib al-Hasan took three wickets for Bangladesh, including two in the first over of the innings, but Zadran and Afghan shared 108 runs for the fourth wicket to snatch the momentum back for Afghanistan. Shakib trapped Ihsanullah Janat for four in the third ball of the innings and then dismissed first innings centurion Rahmat Shah for a golden



Afghanistan's Ibrahim Zadran in action during the one-off Test against Bangladesh in Chittagong yesterday. (AFP)

duck in the next ball.

Afghan, who also made 92 runs in the first innings, joined Zadran after off-spinner Nayeem Hasan removed Hashmatullah Shahidi for 12.

Tajjul Islam dismissed Afghan, who hit four fours and two sixes in his second fifty of the game, before Nayeem ended Zadran's brilliant innings featuring six fours and four sixes. The spinner also dismissed Mohammad Nabi in the next ball after the all-rounder hit him for a six to revive some hope for Bangladesh.

Rashid then took the attack on Nayeem, hitting him for five boundaries in one over before Tajjul bowled him finally.

The Afghan skipper earlier completed his five-wicket to finish with 5-55 as Afghanistan bowled out Bangladesh for 205 runs in the first innings after the hosts resumed the third day's play with 194-8.

Rashid, who scored 51 runs with the bat making his debut as youngest-ever Test captain, took the final wicket of Nayeem to wrap up Bangladesh's innings after Nabi gave a breakthrough in the first over of the day. Nabi bowled Tajjul without allowing him to add any run to his overnight 14 before finishing with 3-56 runs.

Nabi announces retirement from Test cricket

Former Afghanistan captain Mohamed Nabi announced his retirement from Test cricket yesterday after the ongoing one-off red-ball fixture against Bangladesh in Chittagong. Nabi discussed the decision in a video statement released by the Afghanistan Cricket Board.

"I have served Afghanistan for the last 18 years. It was my dream as well to help Afghanistan obtain Test status and that dream is realised now," he said.

The 34-year-old all-rounder said he would like emerging young players get chances in the long-format of the sport instead of him.

"I want them to get the chance they deserve so that we have a good Test team in the future as well."

Nabi has been a key part of Afghanistan's rise in world

cricket, featuring in 121 one-day internationals and 68 Twenty20 internationals. The Afghan also played in his country's two previous Test matches, helping his side record their maiden wins against Ireland in Dehradun in March.

His contribution in the ongoing Test is limited to so far scoring eight runs in two innings and picking three wickets giving away 56 runs after the third day of action. Afghanistan are leading Bangladesh by 374 by after scoring 342 and 237-8 in two of their innings and bowling the home side out for 205 in between.

Nabi confirmed he will continue to represent his nation in the shorter formats. "I will strive to play ODIs and T20Is for Afghanistan as long as I am able to," he said.