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TENNIS

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HORSE RACING

Queen Of The Pride claims Lancashire crown at Haydock

By Sports Reporter
Doha

Qatar Racing Limited-owned Queen Of The Pride continued her swift rise through the ranks with an authoritative victory in the Lancashire Oaks at Haydock in United Kingdom on Saturday.

With champion middle-distance performer Roaring Lion for a sire and St Leger heroine Simple Verse for a dam, John and Thady Gosden-trained filly had plenty to live up to from day one - but the Qatar Racing homebred is doing a fine job of upholding family honour.

Ridden by Oisín Murphy, Queen Of The Pride was held up in the last trio of the field. Making smooth headway over two furlongs out, the four-year-old pulled clear inside the final furlong to win by three lengths.

The favourite Tiffany (Farhh) came second while Lady Boba (Lope De Vega) took third spot.

Although beaten on her Newmarket debut last summer, she rounded off her three-year-old campaign with victory at Leicester and has continued her progress this season, with a narrow defeat in listed company at Goodwood followed by a Group Three win over the Lancashire Oaks course and distance in last month's Pinnacle Stakes.

"She really relaxed today and jumped and travelled. I thought we went a good, even pace and I was quite cautious of the bend, so I went from following Luke Morris (Tiffany) quite closely to giving him a few lengths head start at the top of the straight. I was really pleased with how she picked up and she ran right the way through the line. We all thought after she won her last race here that something like the Prix de Royallieu would be a good long-term target and I'm sure that's in John and Thady's mind," Murphy said.

Jockey Oisín Murphy guides Queen Of The Pride to Lancashire Oaks victory at Haydock.



FOOTBALL

Euro 2024 heavyweights await semis clash

'Personally I really don't care, because at the end of the day we are in semis'



Netherlands players celebrate after the UEFA Euro 2024 quarter-final against Turkiye at the Olympiastadion in Berlin. (AFP)

AFP
Dusseldorf, Germany

Three weeks down and with one week to go, Euro 2024 has reached the semi-final stage and is getting ready for two heavyweight ties as France take on Spain and England meet the Netherlands.

France and Spain go head-to-head in Munich in the first last-four clash tomorrow, which brings together the best team at the competition so far and the best European nation at each of the last two World Cups.

Spain are through to a second consecutive European Championship semi-final after dramatically knocking out hosts Germany on Friday, when Mikel Merino's late header gave them a 2-1 win in extra time in Stuttgart. Luis de la Fuente's team, on an upward curve since winning the UEFA Nations League last year, have been the most impressive side at the Euros, but are now bracing themselves for a showdown with Kylian Mbappe and the French.

Spain absences against France
Spain are also handicapped by the absences of two of their back four due to suspension, with right-back Dani Carvajal and central defender Robin Le Normand ruled out of the game.

"I think football is a collective sport, and it's true that if it was one-on-one it would be tricky, but it's up to us in the end," defender Marc Cucurella said yesterday when asked about stopping

new Real Madrid signing Mbappe. Spain must also do without midfield creator Pedri after he came off injured against Germany, although Dani Olmo deserves to start after emerging from the bench to score one goal and make another in the quarter-final.

France have the upper hand in competitive meetings with Spain, the team they beat in the 2021 Nations League final and in the 1984 Euros final. Les Bleus also beat Spain in the Euro 2000 quarter-finals and in the last 16 of the 2006 World Cup, although Spain won the last meeting of the teams at this tournament, in 2012.

France have reached a fourth semi-final in five major tournaments despite Mbappe and Antoine Griezmann, their two most influential players, struggling for form. Mbappe, hindered by a broken nose, is not fully fit but is the only French player to have scored a goal in five matches. That was a penalty against Poland, with their other two goals being scored by opposition players.

Didier Deschamps' team, World Cup winners in 2018 and runners-up in 2022, beat Portugal on penalties after their quarter-final in Hamburg finished 0-0 at the end of extra time. The nature of their performances has attracted criticism, but the French players are not bothered. "Personally I really don't care, because at the end of the day we are in the semi-finals," said midfielder Youssouf Fofana yesterday.

England struggle through
England and the Netherlands meet in the second semi-final in

Dortmund on Wednesday after both teams emerged victorious from their respective last-eight matches on Saturday.

In Gareth Southgate's 100th game in charge, Euro 2020 runners-up England fell behind against Switzerland before coming back to draw 1-1 and then triumphing on penalties. They have reached the semi-finals despite not winning any of their last four matches in 90 minutes - those games have been against Denmark, Slovenia, Slovakia and the Swiss, none of whom are ranked higher than 19th in the world.

"You have to show other qualities to win in tournaments and these players are showing unbelievable qualities of character, resilience - it is not just about playing well," Southgate responded to criticism of his team's displays.

The Dutch finished third in their group but brushed aside Romania in the last 16 before fighting back from behind to defeat Turkiye 2-1 in Berlin on Saturday.

Defender Stefan de Vrij got their equaliser before Mert Muldur's own goal decided the game.

The Netherlands, who won the last Euros held in Germany in 1988, are into a first semi-final at the tournament since 2004.

"I think for the whole nation it's something special, we're a small nation and we're in the semis with England, France and Spain, and we're really proud," said coach Ronald Koeman. The sides have one win apiece in past meetings at the Euros, while the Dutch won their last encounter, 3-1 in the 2019 Nations League semi-finals.

England, the new penalty kings, overcome the boredom

England fans woke up yesterday not quite sure whether to celebrate a remarkably confident shootout performance that sent them into the Euro2024 semi-finals or lament another display of caution and inertia by their players and manager.

On the profit side of the ledger was a shootout that should, finally, banish the folk memory of all the penalty pain that preceded it since the first of many defeats by West Germany in the 1990 World Cup semi-finals. Cole Palmer, Jude Bellingham, Bukayo Saka, Ivan Toney and Trent Alexander-Arnold all looked as if they would score, and all did so, expertly.

It should not have come as a surprise as Palmer, Toney and Saka are all regular and hugely impressive penalty takers for their clubs, while Bellingham and Alexander-Arnold are among the sweetest strikers of a ball in the game. With goalkeeper Jordan Pickford going through the full repertoire of "taking control" before saving Manuel Akanji's weak effort, it was an exemplar of how to go about a shootout. Factoring in a Nations League playoff, also against Switzerland, England have now won three of their last four shootouts under Southgate, having lost six of their seven before that.

They have also now reached the semi-final in three of the last four tournaments - a remarkable

achievement given that they had previously managed four in their entire history. England now have a very winnable game against the Netherlands, who have stumbled and scrapped their way into the last four, with the possibility of a third major final appearance and first on foreign soil tantalisingly close. And yet, behind the singing and dancing, looms the uncomfortable truth that England have got this far largely playing very poorly, certainly in attack.

Their defence has been very good, with every opponent generally kept at long range, but despite boasting an extraordinary array of talent in their ranks, England have been nothing short of boring. On Saturday, Saka's 80th-minute equaliser was their first shot on target, just as Bellingham's extraordinary equaliser against Slovakia was, in the 95th minute. The average world ranking of the teams they have beaten - Serbia, Denmark, Slovenia, Slovakia and Switzerland - is 35, yet, other than in fleeting patches and moments of individual brilliance, never have now fifth-ranked England looked a dominant team. They were better on Saturday in terms of probing for openings, but on the few occasions they did get behind the Swiss defence, the quality of cross or final pass was awful. Southgate had, laughably, said on Friday that his mentality

was to "go for it", yet England did anything but. On one occasion late in the game they took a short corner that, three touches later, ended up at the feet of their own goalkeeper. The massed fans behind Pickford's goal could hardly believe their eyes, having long been reduced to near silence by the frankly dull fare they were being expected to encourage. Southgate was widely pilloried for bringing on Toney with one minute to go in the Slovakia match but he appeared wedded to his starting 11 again on Saturday, making a triple change in the 76th minute only after going behind. Even then he persisted with Harry Kane, despite his captain clearly struggling to jog, let alone sprint, before being removed in extra-time after literally falling into his coach's arms after a touchline tumble.

Like a farmer unable to shoot the trusty old sheepdog, Southgate seems determined to keep faith with a striker who is so deadly in the regular season but who so often arrives at summer tournaments looking as if he is carrying a fridge. For all the problems, however, England are still there, while Germany, Italy, Belgium and Portugal et al are not, and that's a scenario the fans would have gobbled up at the start of the tournament, however it has been achieved.



Switzerland's goalkeeper Yann Sommer concedes a penalty goal by England's forward Bukayo Saka during the UEFA Euro 2024 quarter-final at the Duesseldorf Arena in Duesseldorf. (AFP)

MOTORSPORT

Hamilton ends long wait, wins British GP

AFP
Silverstone, United Kingdom

Lewis Hamilton claimed an emotional and long-awaited record 104th career victory yesterday when he resisted Max Verstappen to triumph in vintage fashion at the British Grand Prix for a record ninth time.

The seven-time champion, who will turn 40 in January, cracked with emotion and was in tears as he spoke on Mercedes team radio on his victory lap, having finished 1.465 seconds ahead of Red Bull's series leader and three-time champion.

In a roller-coaster race of changing weather and track conditions, Lando Norris came home third ahead of his McLaren teammate Oscar Piastri, Carlos Sainz of Ferrari and Haas' Nico Hulkenberg with Lance Stroll finishing seventh for Aston Martin.

Hamilton, who had not won since the 2021 Saudi Arabia Grand Prix, delivered a masterclass in tyre and race management to secure his 150th podium finish for Mercedes.

"I've been waiting for this," shouted Briton Hamilton after crossing the line in his Mercedes

to claim a ninth victory at Silverstone, breaking a tie with Michael Schumacher for most wins at one track.

"I can't stop crying," said Hamilton. "I think, since 2021, every day getting up, trying to fight, and to train, and to put my mind to the task and work as hard as I can with this amazing team."

Hamilton is leaving Mercedes for Ferrari after this season.

"This is my last British GP with this team. I wanted to win so much for them. I love them so much. All the hard work they've been putting in."

Verstappen overtook Norris in the closing laps.

"We just didn't have the pace today," said Verstappen. "I was slowly dropping back when it mattered at the beginning. It really wasn't looking great at one point, but we made the right calls."

Norris had lost the lead after a misjudged pit stop.

"First of all, congrats to Lewis," Norris said. "That crucial decision at the end, he just did a better job, so hats off to him and Mercedes, they deserve it. It was tough. It was fun battling these guys and these tricky conditions, risking a lot, on a knife-edge."

Two-time champion Fernando Alonso was eighth in the second Aston Martin, ahead of Williams' Alex Albon and Yuki Tsunoda of RB.

On a day of clouds and intermittent sunshine in central England a crowd of more than 120,000 wit-



Two-time champion Fernando Alonso was eighth in the second Aston Martin, ahead of Williams' Alex Albon and Yuki Tsunoda of RB.

nessed three Britons starting their home race at the front of the grid for the first time since 1962.

George Russell started on pole and made a clean start with Hamilton moving in tight behind him to provide protection from Verstappen who had quickly passed Nor-

ris. Russell settled and by lap six led by 1.6 seconds with Hamilton 1.4 seconds ahead of Verstappen and the two McLarens.

By lap 14, rain began to sweep across the old wartime airfield as Norris passed Verstappen to regain third.

As the rain intensified, the McLarens came alive and Piastri passed Verstappen on lap 17.

'The sun's coming out'

Hamilton then overtook Russell for the lead as both Mercedes slithered in the rain.

Norris, revelling in the conditions, passed Russell for second on lap 19 and then powered past Hamilton while Piastri made it a McLaren 1-2, on lap 21.

As the first shower relented, Verstappen was five seconds adrift in fifth.

By lap 28, Norris led Hamilton who was trying to preserve his tyres while hanging on to the rapid McLaren.

Russell's race ended on lap 34 when he was called in to pit and retire the car with a hydraulic problem.

With 15 to go, Hamilton reported that "the sun's coming out" before on lap 39 he, Verstappen and Piastri pitted together. Norris pitted a lap later losing the lead to Hamilton who measured his final stint to perfection, ending 56 winless races to a tumultuous home reception.

Hamilton wept as he fell into the arms of his father as the home crowd roared.

CRICKET

Abhishek shines as India hammer hosts Zimbabwe

The visitors recover from defeat in first T20 with a 100-run win

AFP
Harare

Abhishek Sharma slammed a 46-ball century as India bounced back with a 100-run win over Zimbabwe in the second Twenty20 international at the Harare Sports Club yesterday.

Sharma, playing in his second international match, made 100 in an Indian total of 234 for two.

Zimbabwe, who won the first match by 13 runs on Saturday, were bowled out for 134.

The left-handed Sharma, who was out for a duck on debut on Saturday, thrashed eight sixes and seven fours.

"It was a good performance after the defeat yesterday," said Sharma when he was named man of the match.

"Thanks to the coaches and captain to keep confidence."

After opening his score with a six against off-spinner Brian Bennett, who dismissed him on Saturday, Sharma charged to his half-century with a six off medium-pacer Dion Myers.

He then raised his hundred with three successive sixes off left-arm spin bowler Wellington Masakadza before being dismissed next ball, caught at backward point.

Sharma was dropped on the long-off boundary off Luke Jongwe when he had 27.

"After the drop I thought it was my day," he said. "I always believe in my ability. If it's in my arc and even if it's the first ball I will go after it."

Ruturaj Gaikwad (77 not out) and Rinku Singh (48 not out) continued to take the attack to the



India's Abhishek Sharma celebrates his century against Zimbabwe in the second Twenty20 international at the Harare Sports Club yesterday. (@BCCI)

Zimbabwe bowlers, who conceded 160 runs in the last 10 overs.

India made more runs in their innings than the combined total of both teams in a low-scoring encounter on the same pitch on Saturday when Zimbabwe made 115 for nine and India were bowled out for 102.

Despite an aggressive 26 off nine balls by Bennett, Zimbabwe's hopes were virtually extinguished when they crashed to 46 for four

after four overs, with seamers Mukesh Kumar and Avesh Khan taking two wickets each.

India captain Shubman Gill said his young team had responded well to Saturday's defeat.

"Yesterday it was more about not being able to handle the pressure. It is a young side and many of them are new to international cricket. It was good to have pressure in the first game. We knew what to expect in this game."

BRIEF SCORES

India 234-2 in 20 overs (A. Sharma 100, R. Gaikwad 77 not out, R. Singh 48 not out).

Zimbabwe 134 in 18.4 overs (W. Masakadza 43, L. Jongwe 33; M. Kumar 3-37, A. Khan 3-15, R. Bishnoi 2-11).

Result: India won by 100 runs. **Series:** The five-match series is tied at 1-1.

Toss: India **Next match:** July 10, 2024

SPOTLIGHT

Broad hails 'bowling addict' Anderson ahead of farewell Test



Former England cricketer Stuart Broad arrives ahead of the British Formula One Grand Prix at Silverstone Circuit, Silverstone, Britain, yesterday. Broad, 38, retired last year after 167 Tests. (Reuters)

AFP
London

Stuart Broad has praised James Anderson as "an addict of the art of bowling" as the veteran fast bowler prepares for his final Test.

Anderson, 42 later this month, will face the West Indies in a series opener at Lord's starting on Wednesday before ending an England career which has so far yielded 700 wickets in 187 Tests - both records among quick bowlers.

Broad, who played alongside Anderson in 138 of those games before retiring from Test cricket after last year's Ashes, said his longstanding new-ball partner's excellence was down to a sheer love of bowling.

"He loves the rhythm of running into bowl, the control of the technique of his action, the tactical side of whether he's bowling away swing, inswing, wobble seam," Broad wrote in the *Sunday Times*.

"When you talk about professionals who have had longevity, you often talk about their dedication to training, their discipline in the gym and their diet," Broad added in his article.

The 38-year-old Broad, who himself took 604 wickets in 167 Tests, added: "And of course you don't play to 42 unless you have

that but the thing that makes him different is his genuine love of the art of what he does.

"Addict is generally used as a negative word but I'd say he is an addict of the art of bowling."

Anderson's reputation was based on his ability as an outstanding conventional swing bowler, particularly in home conditions, but Broad said this ignored his skill in deploying reverse-swing.

"He doesn't get enough credit for his reverse-swing, which has been crucial to his great record in the subcontinent," Broad wrote. "Because his line and length are so immaculate it makes it lethal."

"(South Africa fast bowler) Dale Steyn was phenomenal and quicker than Jimmy but Jimmy is certainly the best reverse-swing bowler I've played with and probably the best I've witnessed in the flesh outside of Steyn."

"(His) ability to adapt and learn is why he has been so successful for so long. In professional sport you have to be continually improving because there is always a younger bowler trying to get your shirt."

"It is that genuine love for the art of bowling that has made him want to improve and learn new deliveries."

"It's why he will go out at Lord's this week as England's greatest ever bowler."

FOCUS

New coach Gillespie wants Pakistan Test side to seek consistency

AFP
Karachi

Former Australian fast bowler Jason Gillespie yesterday vowed to make Pakistan a consistent side after taking charge as red-ball coach with a hectic six-month schedule in focus.

The 49-year-old will start his two-year tenure with a two-match series against Bangladesh next month followed by three against England in October - both at home.

Pakistan will also tour South Africa for two Tests in December before hosting the West Indies in

as many Tests in January next year.

Gillespie, who arrived early yesterday, said Pakistan are a "talented" side but need consistency.

"How can they be more consistent is one thing that I am hoping I can find some solutions for," Gillespie told a news conference.

He hoped Pakistan can improve on their fifth position in the current World Test Championship cycle, competed by nine teams since 2019.

"Ultimately we want to win games of Test cricket," said Gillespie. "There are skillful cricketers here, how can we play as a team and perform well against good quality international opposi-

tions and that's going to be the key for us."

Hailing from one of Australia's best Test sides in 1990s and 2000s, Gillespie played 71 Tests, 91 one-day internationals and a solitary T20I in a successful career.

He coached Yorkshire to win the English County Championship in 2014 and 2015.

Gillespie was hired to improve Pakistan's Test side that lost 1-0 to Australia in 2022 before suffering their first-ever 3-0 home white-wash at the hands of England the same year.

Pakistan were routed 3-0 in Australia last year - their sixth series white-wash in Australia since



New coach Jason Gillespie talks to Pakistan players at a training session in Karachi yesterday. (@TheRealPCB)

1999 - which Gillespie believed was not one-sided.

"As an observer from outside, I think there were some moments in

games where Pakistan were on top but could not finish well," Gillespie reflected. Pakistan squandered good positions in the second Test

in Melbourne and the third in Sydney through crucial dropped catches, leaving them tagged as a poor fielding side.

He said Pakistan needed to be smart to counter what he termed England's "very aggressive" style of playing Tests, dubbed as "Baz-ball" after their coach Brendon McCullum's nickname.

"England will be a challenge, no doubt about that. "But I think we are certainly up to it," said. "We are going to play very smart!"

Pakistan will begin their Test series against Bangladesh in Rawalpindi from August 21-25.

The second Test is in Karachi from August 30-September 3.

ATHLETICS

Mahuchikh, Kipyegon set world records

AFP
Paris

Ukraine's Yaroslava Mahuchikh and Kenyan Faith Kipyegon hit world record-breaking form at yesterday's Diamond League meet in Paris in the perfect boost before the Olympics kick off in three weeks' time in the French capital.

Mahuchikh broke the 37-year-old women's high jump world record, while Kipyegon improved her own record in the women's 1,500m, two results that will make them two of the stars to watch in Paris.

World champion Mahuchikh set a new best of 2.10m, beating by 1cm the record set by Bulgaria's Stefka Kostadinova at the 1987 world championships in Rome.

"Coming into this competition, I had feelings that I could jump 2.07m and maybe 2.10m," said Mahuchikh. "Finally, I signed Ukraine into the history of world athletics."

In the 1,500m, led out by two pacemakers, two-time defending Olympic champion Kipyegon broke to the front and clocked 3min 49.04sec in a superb display of running. It improved by 0.07sec her previous best set in Florence in June 2023.

"Wow this is just amazing! I am



Ukraine's Yaroslava Mahuchikh celebrates after setting a new world record during the women's high jump at the Paris Diamond League at Stade Charlety in Paris yesterday. (Reuters)

so happy to break the world record over my favourite distance again," said Kipyegon.

"I can't wait to come back to Paris to defend my Olympic title!"

Armand 'Mondo' Duplantis went close in a bid to better his own pole vault world record in an afternoon of top-class track and field that featured a stunning men's 800m, while French decathlete Kevin Mayer took a worrying tumble in the 110m hurdles.

There was a distinctly Olympic tinge to proceedings at a packed Stade Charlety in southern Paris.

The stadium was awash with tri-colour flags, Olympic mascots and a lot of blue after organisers asked fans to come dressed in the colour to support home athletes.

It did not work for decathlon world record holder Mayer, who tumbled to the ground in the hurdles, the third event of a triathlon also including the shot put and long jump.

Mayer received medical attention before being helped off the track. In better news for the hosts, Sasha Zhoya equalled his personal best of 13.15sec to win the 110m



Kenya's Faith Kipyegon celebrates after winning the women's 1,500m to set a new world record at the Paris Diamond League at Stade Charlety in Paris yesterday. (Reuters)

hurdles in a photo finish from American Trey Cunningham.

Sedjati on fire

The two world records notwithstanding, the stand-out race was the men's 800m.

Algeria's world silver medallist Djamel Sedjati edged in-form Kenyan teenager Emmanuel Wanyonyi by two-hundredths of a second to win a thriller in 1min 41.56sec.

France's European champion Gabriel Tual claimed third in a national record of 1:41.61 as all top eight finishers set personal bests.

The podium's times were the third, fourth and fifth fastest ever run. Only world record holder David Rudisha and Wilson Kipketer have gone faster. World Athletics president Sebastian Coe has now been pushed down into sixth place on the all-time list.

Polish pace setter Patryk Sieradzki responded perfectly when Wanyonyi surged to the front of the pack, accelerating away to take the field through 400m in a blistering 48.79sec.

All eyes were on Wanyonyi, who had won the Kenyan trials in

1:41.70, but Sedjati and Tual stuck with the Kenyan coming into the home straight, the Algerian producing one final surge to claim a thrilling victory.

"I am confident and will prepare serenely for the Olympic Games in Paris in the coming weeks. I know that I can do even better there," said Sedjati.

While Mahuchikh and Kipyegon set new world records, Duplantis went close to breaking his own in the pole vault.

Duplantis came in at 5.65m and passed at 5.75, France's 2012 Olympic champion Renaud Lavillenie - who has failed to get the qualifying mark for this month's Olympics - making an early exit from the competition.

The US-born Swede then sailed over both 5.85 and 5.95m.

American Sam Kendricks bailed out at the 6.00m mark, but Duplantis went clear and the bar was raised to 6.25m, 1cm higher the world record. It proved to be too high.

"I felt really good, managed some really good jumps," said Duplantis.

"There was a lot of height out there and that gives me a lot of confidence. I look forward to the next one. I think the Olympics is going to be amazing because the energy has already been amazing in this run up to the Games."

TENNIS

Alcaraz, Sinner into Wimbledon quarter-finals

'IT'LL BE AN INTERESTING MATCH AND I WILL GIVE 100%'

AFP
London

Defending champion Carlos Alcaraz survived a scare to reach the Wimbledon quarter-finals yesterday, while world number one Jannik Sinner eased into the last eight for a third successive year.

Injured American Madison Keys quit her last-16 clash against Jasmine Paolini in floods of tears after having been one game from victory as Donna Vekic overcame three rain interruptions to reach the quarter-finals for the first time.

World number three Alcaraz defeated French 16th seed Ugo Humbert 6-3, 6-4, 1-6, 7-5 to make the last-eight of a Grand Slam for the ninth time in just 14 appearances.

However, it was another uncomfortable afternoon for the Spaniard, who had needed five sets to see off Frances Tiafoe in the third round.

His erratic performance yesterday saw him drop serve five times and commit an uncharacteristic 33 unforced errors.

The 21-year-old, bidding to become just the sixth man to win the French Open and Wimbledon back-to-back, eased through the first set under the Centre Court roof before crucially saving four break points in the fifth game of the second.

Humbert stormed back, breaking the champion three times in the third set as Alcaraz went spectacularly off the boil.

Alcaraz was twice unable to hold onto breaks in the fourth set and had to fend off three break points in the eighth game to stay level at 4-4.

Left-hander Humbert then lost his bearings to hand over a service break in the 11th game and Alcaraz took full advantage to quickly seal the tie.

'Fight to last ball'

"I will be there, fighting until the last ball," said Alcaraz, who is chasing a fourth Grand Slam title.

Alcaraz will take on either American 12th seed Tommy Paul or 36-year-old compatriot Roberto Bautista Agut, a semi-finalist in 2019.

Over on Court One, top seed Sinner moved into the last-eight with a 6-2, 6-4, 7-6 (11/9) win



Spain's Carlos Alcaraz poses for a selfie with young fans after winning his fourth-round match against France's Ugo Humbert at All England Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club, London, Britain, yesterday. (Reuters)



Italy's Jannik Sinner celebrates after winning his fourth round match against Ben Shelton of the US yesterday. (Reuters)

over American 14th seed Ben Shelton.

Sinner, who won his maiden Slam crown at the Australian Open this year, will face Russian fifth seed Daniil Medvedev for a place in the semi-finals in a rematch of their final in Melbourne.

Sinner's best performance at Wimbledon came in 2023 when he lost to Novak Djokovic in the semi-finals.

"It was a tough match, especially the third set. I had to keep saving set points. These matches can go long but I was glad to close it in three," said the Italian.

Medvedev, a semi-finalist last year, progressed when 10th seed Grigor Dimitrov retired in the first set with a knee injury.

"Jannik's beaten me the last five times, but this will be the first time we've played on grass," said

Medvedev. "It'll be an interesting match and I will give 100%."

US 12th seed Keys was just one game away from a third quarter-final at the All England Club before she was forced to quit against Paolini.

After dropping the first set to the seventh seed Italian, Keys hit back to level the match at 3-6, 7-6 (8/6).

The 2017 US Open runner-up then raced into a 5-2 lead in the decider when she suffered a left leg injury in the eighth game.

At 5-4, she took a medical time-out, returned with her left leg bandaged but with her movement severely restricted, she wept openly on court before quitting at 5-5. Paolini will face reigning US Open champion and second seed Coco Gauff or 19th seed Emma Navarro for a place in

the semi-finals. "I'm very sorry for her. It's sad," said French Open runner-up Paolini, who had never won a grass-court match until two weeks ago.

Sun beats Raducanu

The flickering hope that Emma Raducanu's renaissance could last the distance at Wimbledon was snuffed out in a fourth-round reality check against 123rd-ranked qualifier Lulu Sun, who knocked out Britain's last player standing 6-2 5-7 6-2 yesterday.

Sun, who will now face Croatia's Donna Vekic in the quarter-finals, showed ice-cool composure and unflappable bravery to outplay the 2021 US Open champion in front of a pumped-up home crowd on Centre Court.

"It was a great match. I really dug deep to get the win," Sun said in a teary on-court interview.

"I really had to fight tooth and nail because she was obviously going to run for every ball and fight until the end. I don't even have the words right now."

Raducanu, who had shown glimpses of her best form over the opening week at the All England Club, looked once again a shadow of the player whose stunning triumph as a qualifier at Flushing Meadows nearly three years ago stunned the sport.

From the start, Raducanu seemed off the pace, almost sleepy in comparison to the high-energy Sun, whose ground strokes had far more zip and penetration.

CYCLING

Pogacar on the attack again as Frenchman Turgis wins gravel stage



UAE Team Emirates' Tadej Pogacar in action with riders during stage 9 of the 111th Tour de France yesterday. (Reuters)

Reuters
Troyes, France

Tadej Pogacar was true to his swashbuckling cycling style as he attacked defending champion Jonas Vingegaard relentlessly in a thrilling Tour de France ninth stage peppered with gravel roads yesterday.

Anthony Turgis prevailed at the end of a gruelling 199km ride with a superbly timed sprint from the breakaway group to give France their third win of the edition, but all eyes were on Pogacar and his rivals for most of the day.

The Slovenian, who retained the overall leader's yellow jersey, used several gravel sections to put pressure on Vingegaard, but the Dane was perfectly protected by his Visma-Lease a Bike teammate and no difference was made between the riders of the "Big Four".

"I ride with my heart and today was a day to do it," said Pogacar, who hit out at Visma-Lease a Bike's risk-averse strategy after Vingegaard looked just content to stay in his wheel.

"They only look at me and they underestimate the others. It could backfire," added the 25-year-old, who is gunning for the first Giro d'Italia/Tour de France double since 1998.

Pogacar, who once again showed he could attack on any terrain, crossed the line in the main bunch with Remco Evenepoel, Primož Roglic and Vingegaard after the defending champion rode almost half of the stage on a teammate's bike following a puncture.

Going into today's first rest day, Pogacar leads Evenepoel by 33 seconds, Vingegaard by 1:15 and Roglic, who survived a big scare, by 1:36.

Roglic was distanced in the second of 14 gravel sections and the Visma-Lease a Bike team upped the pace to keep him at bay.

Some huge work by his Red Bull-Bora-Hansgrohe teammates, how-

ever, helped the Slovenian bridge a 30-second gap. Vingegaard punctured in the fourth gravel section and swiftly swapped bikes with teammate Jan Tratnik, managing to keep his spot in the main bunch of riders.

With about 80km left, he had to dig deep again as Evenepoel attacked, followed by Pogacar.

Vingegaard lost a few metres but quickly managed to get into his rival's wheel.

The trio caught the breakaway group but with the defending champion refusing to collaborate, the trio dropped back into the peloton and the big guns called a truce.

There was more to come from Pogacar, though.

FINAL SPRINT

In the 11th gravel section, the UAE Emirates leader's brutal acceleration left everyone gasping for dirt-filled air and Vingegaard, as well as Evenepoel, saw him fade behind a cloud of dust.

Vingegaard's teammate Matteo Jorgenson pulled Vingegaard back into Pogacar's wheel but Evenepoel and Roglic were missing.

Instead of collaborating with Pogacar, Jorgenson and Vingegaard opted to sit behind, forcing the 2020 and 2021 Tour champion to lift his foot off the gas pedal, allowing Roglic and Evenepoel to rejoice.

In the front of the race, Belgian Jasper Stuyven made his move 11 km from the line but he was caught by his fellow breakaway riders with 1 km left, his face a mask of pain, dust and disbelief.

Coated with dirt, Turgis kept his cool in the final sprint to beat Britain's Tom Pidcock and Canadian Derek Gee to give his TotalEnergies team their first win on the Tour since 2017.

"It's incredible. I've been trying for years to get a big win. I had good sensations. I hung in there, was dropped a few times, it was a long day," said Turgis, who took his first victory since 2019.

MOTOGP

Bagnaia capitalises on Martin crash in Germany

AFP
Sachsenring, Germany

Francesco Bagnaia capitalised on Jorge Martin's cruel late crash to win the German MotoGP yesterday and take control of the world championship.

Martin appeared to have the race wrapped up but made a mistake and fell at turn one on the penultimate lap to hand the win to the double world champion.

Marc Marquez, who will be Bagnaia's teammate next season on the factory Ducati, took second, with Alex Marquez, his younger brother, completing the podium. "I don't know what happened," lamented Martin.

"It took me by surprise, I was pretty much in control, the pace

was good, I was riding perfectly"

Martin's dramatic departure from the Sachsenring stage gifted not only the race victory to Bagnaia but also the riders' standings.

Bagnaia heads into MotoGP's summer break 10 points clear of Martin. "It wasn't easy," said Bagnaia, who was winning his fourth successive grand prix after Assen, Italy and Catalunya.

"I saw Jorge was starting to make some mistakes on the last two or three laps, then when he had his crash I just slowed down a lot. (I'm) very happy. It's the first time I win here in Sachsenring."

Marc Marquez is an eight-time winner on this circuit but the six-time former world champion has not won a race since October 2021.

"I promise you I would trade a victory to be on the podium with my brother, it's an amazing feel-

ing" said the Spaniard. His younger brother and current Ducati Gresini teammate Alex reflected: "It's a super amazing Sunday here, I gave everything. "I did my own race and in the end with Martin's crash we were on the podium and I said, okay, we need to stay, we need to bring this home."

The day had been going so perfectly for Martin up to his costly mistake - the winner of Saturday's sprint race holding a 15-point cushion at the top of the standings going into this ninth round of the season. The pole-sitter held off Miguel Oliveira at the start, with Bagnaia moving up into second by the end of lap one.

'Pecco' then hunted down and went past his prey, Martin, on the following lap, but was unable to pull away and Martin was back in control of the race with 23 laps to

go. The Spaniard, on Ducati's satellite Pramac bike, did what Bagnaia was unable to do - put daylight between the pair.

With a third of the 30-lap contest remaining Martin was over half a second clear of his Pramac teammate Franco Morbidelli, with Bagnaia relegated to third.

But only briefly, as the double world champion nipped past Morbidelli with Martin now almost a second away up the road.

Bagnaia bided his time, and his patience paid off as Martin slithered out of the race and off the top of the standings with an error under pressure.

So it is Bagnaia and not Martin who heads off to MotoGP's summer holidays bathed in sunshine with the next race in their compelling title battle coming in Britain at the start of August.



Ducati Lenovo Team's Francesco Bagnaia celebrates with a trophy on the podium after winning the German Grand Prix at Sachsenring, Hohenstein-Ernstthal, Germany, yesterday. (Reuters)

COPA AMERICA

Uruguay beat Brazil on penalties to reach semis

'We outplayed Brazil in segments of the game and were outplayed in others'

AFP
Las Vegas

Uruguay beat Brazil on penalties (4-2) to reach the semi-finals of Copa America after an ugly game ended goalless on Saturday.

Uruguay, who finished the game with ten men after Nahitan Nandez was sent off in the 74th minute, will face Colombia in Charlotte, North Carolina, in their semi-final on Wednesday.

Colombia, now unbeaten in 27 games, beat Panama 5-0 in Saturday's other quarter-final earlier in Arizona. The other semi-final, in New Jersey on Tuesday, will see world champions Argentina face surprise package Canada.

For five-times world champions Brazil it was a disappointing early end to a tournament in which they never truly clicked, and a lot of work remains to be done if Dorival Junior's team are to be in shape to compete for the title in the 2026 World Cup. In a city better known for boxing than for the beautiful game, it was a bruising contest with little quality play and a tournament high 41 fouls.

A poor quality playing field hardly helped with both teams struggling to produce their best football on an uneven surface.

The first - and best - chance of a game of few opportunities came in the 35th minute when Uruguay striker Darwin Nunez had a clear header in front of goal but mistimed his effort which flew wide off his shoulder.

Within moments, Brazil created an opening of their own with Raphinha breaking clear, but Uruguay keeper Sergio Rochet stayed tall and made a vital save.

Marcelo Bielsa's Uruguay were as tenacious as always, harrying Brazil in midfield and never afraid to interrupt their flow with a foul.

Brazil resorted too often to long balls forward but with only their



Players of Uruguay celebrate after winning the CONMEBOL Copa America 2024 quarter-final against Brazil at Allegiant Stadium in Las Vegas, Nevada. (AFP)

17-year-old talent Endrick, in for the suspended Vinicius Junior, as a central striker they lacked the physical presence to make that approach effective.

The game deteriorated the longer it went on with foul after foul, not deterred by lenient refereeing. But Uruguay's hopes of wearing Brazil down were dealt a blow when Nandez hacked down Rodrygo with a dangerous slide into his ankle and after a VAR review the defender was sent off.

From then on it was clear that Uruguay were simply trying to make it to full-time and penalties and with no extra-time in Copa America, they were able to achieve their aim. After Federico Valverde scored with the first spot kick, Eder Militao saw his effort saved by the diving Rochet. When Douglas Luiz hit the post for Brazil, they trailed 3-1 and Jose Gimenez had the chance to clinch the game for

Uruguay. His effort was superbly saved by Alisson Becker.

Substitute Gabriel Martinelli scored to keep Brazil alive but midfielder Manuel Ugarte kept his cool to drive home the decisive kick and send the 15-times Copa champions into the last four.

Bielsa praised his team's calmness in the shoot-out and their desire during the 90 minutes.

"I'm more seduced by attacking than defending, but I have to appreciate that in a tight game we created one more situation than our opponents, we defended well and we played 15 minutes with one less player, which at this level is a real factor," he said. "If you ask me if I'm happy with having created three goal situations in 90 minutes, no, I'm not. But our opponents had two," he said.

"Today we outplayed Brazil in segments of the game and were outplayed in others," added the

Argentine. For Brazil the thoughts turn to the need to ensure they make it to the next World Cup after a poor start to CONMEBOL qualifying.

"We leave the tournament undefeated but not satisfied," said Dorival Junior whose team won once and drew twice in the group stage. "We didn't play at a high level from a technical point of view, but I don't dismiss any of the games. I think there was commitment, fighting spirit. At no time did the team stop going for the result," he added.

"This process needs patience. We have two years to work before the World Cup. The first thing is to qualify for the World Cup because we are sixth in the (South American qualifiers) and it is a position that makes us uncomfortable," he said.

The tournament's final will be held in Miami on July 14.

EURO 2024

Unity key to stopping Mbappe, says Spain's defender Cucurella

AFP
Donaueschingen, Germany

Spain defender Marc Cucurella believes the key to stopping France striker Kylian Mbappe in their Euro 2024 semi-final clash is a unified approach.

Joint record three-time winners Spain face France in Munich tomorrow after ousting hosts Germany in extra-time.

Explosive new Real Madrid signing Mbappe has struggled at the Euros after breaking his nose in France's first match, scoring once from the penalty spot, but remains Les Bleus' main attacking threat.

"I think football is a collective sport, and it's true that if it was one-on-one it would be tricky, but it's up to us in the end," Cucurella told a news conference yesterday.

"Apart from being good with the ball, we are a very hard-working team, we give everything for each other, and I think that's the key. "We have to be united, to know what to do in each moment, and above all we need to minimise their counter-attacks which are perhaps their strongest weapons."

Cucurella has been one of the most impressive players in Spain's side this summer, a surprise to some after an inconsistent season with Chelsea.

The left-back had only appeared once for his country before this year, but improving performances at Stamford Bridge in the final months of the season and Valencia defender Jose Gaya's injury helped him claim a starting spot.

With defender Dani Carvajal suspended against France after a red card in extra-time in the 2-1

win over Germany, the 25-year-old could be used at right-back, where he operated for Chelsea on occasion.

"I'll try to give my best, to contribute my grain of sand," said Cucurella.

"I feel more comfortable on the left but in the end I have to try to do the best I can and help the team. What's important is that we win, and it doesn't matter who plays, if on Sunday we are in the final."

The defender was involved in a controversial moment against Germany where the ball struck his hand in the area but the hosts were not awarded a penalty.

"If the referees said it wasn't a penalty, then I will respect that," said Cucurella.

"In the end these are things that happen, they are decisions... (Germany's Toni) Kroos could have been booked before and then sent off."

"Football is a game of errors and accuracies, in the end we were more accurate than them, we scored one goal more and we got through."

Kroos hacked down Barcelona's Pedri in the early stages and the midfielder was substituted and will miss the rest of the tournament with a knee ligament sprain.

The former Real Madrid star wished Pedri a speedy recovery in an open letter to Germany fans after his retirement from football, and the Spaniard replied yesterday.

"I came to Germany for Euro 2024 and here I will stay, until the end, because don't doubt it, the dream continues," wrote Pedri on social media platform X. "Thanks Toni Kroos, for your message, this is football and these things happen. Your career and your achievements will always remain."



FOCUS

Weghorst emerges as Dutch wildcard ahead of Euros semi



AFP
Berlin

The scoresheet may not reflect it but the key to the Netherlands' progress to the Euro 2024 semi-finals was target man Wout Weghorst.

The Dutch came from behind to beat Turkey 2-1 in Berlin on Saturday in a tense quarter-final, with the balance tipped in their favour by the burly Burnley striker's appearance from the bench.

With Turkey comfortably sitting 1-0 up at half-time fervently backed by raucous support at the Olympiastadion, Ronald Koeman rolled the dice and called for his wildcard op-

tion. Weghorst burst into football's global consciousness with a stunning brace as a substitute against Argentina in the 2022 World Cup quarter-final and is still devastating in that role. The 31-year-old six-foot-six striker rescued the Netherlands a 2-1 win over Poland in their Euros opener with a well-taken goal off the bench.

Koeman restricted Weghorst to 44 minutes across the Netherlands' opening four matches but gave him a full 45 against Turkey and it paid dividends, as the team booked a semi-final date with England. Instantly the Dutch had a target to aim for in the box, with Memphis Depay's drifting denying them a focal point until Weghorst's appearance. "Because of

(Weghorst) you create a little bit more chaos in the box and they have to defend more, so I think Wout helped a lot," said Dutch defender Nathan Ake. "He's a nightmare to play against. He is strong, is a nuisance in a box and he fights for everything. He runs off everything. So for us he is a great asset."

Weghorst, who spent the season on loan at Hoffenheim, put the jitters into Turkey's previously solid defence. Mert Gunok's save from Weghorst led to the corner from which the Netherlands equalised, with Stefan de Vrij heading home Depay's cross. With the Turkish rear-guard tying themselves in knots to stifle Weghorst, the Netherlands netted again six min-

utes later with Mert Muldur, under pressure from Cody Gakpo, bundling into his own net from Denzel Dumfries' raking ball. "We started quite well but it changed after 20 minutes, (then) they were dominating," explained Koeman.

"Then it was clear for me to make this substitution with Wout, with Cody on the wing and Denzel on the right, we had to have a lot more crosses than in the first half."

Liverpool winger Gakpo leads the Netherlands squad for goals and is also the competition's joint-top scorer with three strikes in Germany, but he paid tribute to Weghorst's huge impact off the bench. "It's different (with him on)... in this game when we wanted

to play a little bit more opportunistically, then you can bring Wout because he's tall, he's good in the air, he fights for every ball that comes in the box," Gakpo told reporters. "So, that's what we tried in the second half in the beginning. We played some good crosses and then we saw the Turkish side dropping a little bit more, so we could play better. "Maybe that was the key today. I'm very happy that Wout could be Wout today. Top."

Next up for the Dutch is England, a country where Weghorst has struggled to make much of an impact. He signed for Burnley in 2022 from Wolfsburg but only netted twice in 20 games with his side relegated from the Premier League.