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OOREDOO STARS LEAGUE

Edmilson's double extends Duhail lead at the top

Draxler strike helps Al Ahli jump to second place with a hard-fought 1-0 win over Qatar SC

By Sports Reporter
Doha

A brace from Edmilson Junior powered Al Duhail to a 2-0 win over Al Wakrah in the Ooredoo Stars League at Al Janoub Stadium yesterday. Edmilson's goal came in the 13th and 27th minutes as the Red Knights maintained their perfect start to the season, having won all four of their matches to garner the maximum 12 points.

Christophe Galtier's men now have a two-point advantage over second-placed Al Ahli, while reigning champions Al Sadd - who were stunned by Umm Salal on Friday - are third with six points adrift of the leaders. Al Wakrah, meanwhile, remain on five points in seven place, having won one and drawn two of their previous matches.

Yesterday, Duhail were clearly the better of the two sides from the start with waves of relentless attacks as they searched for an early goal. Wakrah's defence caved in the 13th minute, with Edmilson opening the scoring with arguably a goal-of-the-week contender, superbly curling in the ball from the edge of the box beyond the reach of the hapless goalkeeper Mohammed al-Bakri.

The Red Knights were saved from being reduced to ten men five minutes later, with Michael Olunga initially giving the red card for a foul on Wakrah's Hamdy Fathy, but the decision was rescinded after a lengthy VAR check with a yellow card awarded instead. Edmilson was on hand again in the 27th minute to secure his brace of the night with another spectacular strike, dazzling his way past Wakrah's defence before releasing a left-footed shot from a tight angle that sailed straight to the top side of goalkeeper al-Bakri's net.

Duhail continued to up the pressure against their opponents, but some brilliant performances by Wakrah's backline prevented what could have been additional



Al Duhail's Edmilson Junior reacts after scoring against Al Wakrah in the Ooredoo Stars League at Al Janoub Stadium yesterday.

goals for the league leaders going into half-time.

Three minutes into the second half, Duhail were eventually reduced to ten men, with Ibrahim Diallo getting his second booking for a rough tackle on Fathy. The

Blue Wave seized the opportunity of their one-man advantage as they became more daring upfront in an attempt to cut the deficit and possibly rescue a point in the entertaining encounter.

Jacinto Dala missed what could have



Al Ahli and Qatar SC players vie for the ball at the Khalifa International Stadium.

been a simple tap-in into an empty net in the 78th minute following a headed pass from substitute Yousef El Khatib, but the Angolan international somehow missed the ball. Despite several pressures from Wakrah, especially towards the end of the game, Duhail hung on to victory.

Earlier, Al Ahli jumped to second place with a hard-fought 1-0 win over Qatar SC at the Khalifa International Stadium. Former PSG star Julian Draxler scored the most important goal for Al Ahli in the 70th minute. Their third successive win saw The Brigadiers take their points tally to 10, while Qatar SC are still on three points.

The tight-fisted contest saw a lot of attacking action from both sides. There were several close hits including one in the 21st minute when Qatar SC came close to scoring after a Carlos Vinicius strike was saved by Ahli goalkeeper Marwan Sherif, but resulting action saw a Ben Malango kick hit the right post and fall away.

The deadlock was eventually broken in

the 70th minute as an Oumar Sekou kick spilled out of an outstretched Qatar SC custodian Motasem al-Bustami's hands and Draxler rushed to kick the ball into the net.

Ahli then had another chance of doubling up the lead in the 76th minute, but Eric Exposito's kick went past the right post. Three minutes later, Qatar SC saw a curling free-kick of Vinicius being safely collected by the rival keeper. The result was a setback for Qatar SC after they had registered their first win of the league in the last round.

Meanwhile, Al Arabi continued their poor start to the season after they were held to a 1-1 draw by Al Khor at the Al Thumama Stadium. Abdalaziz al-Hasia came off the bench to restore parity for Al Khor in 90+4 minute after Ahmed Alaaeldin had put Arabi ahead in the 32nd minute. With the result, both teams are now on three points, having won no matches so far in the new season.

ATHLETICS

Samba second as Santos wins Diamond League title

By Sports Reporter
Doha

Qatar's Abderrahman Samba ended his season with a second-place finish in the 400m hurdles at the Diamond League finals in Brussels yesterday. Samba clocked 48.20 seconds as Brazil's Olympic bronze medalist Alison dos Santos won his second Diamond League title in 47.93 secs. The third place went to Rasmus Magi in 48.26 secs.

Olympic champion Rai Benjamin of the US and world champion and world record holder Karsten Warholm of Norway skipped the event. This seemed to clear the way for the Santos but Samba gave a good fight to the Brazilian until the end.

"It's my second Diamond League trophy and for me this is a great achievement. This season I have shown that I am fully recovered from the injury sustained in 2023, that is probably the most important thing for me," said Santos.

KIPYEGON WINS AGAIN, TEBOGO AND CROUSER UPSET

Meanwhile, Kenya's 1500m queen Faith Kipyegon sealed victory, but Botswana sprinter Letsile Tebogo and American shot putter Ryan Crouser both tasted rare defeats. Kipyegon, the three-time Olympic and world champion, has had another sensational year over 1500m, even setting a new world record at the Paris leg of the elite track and field circuit.

And she made no mistake at the King Baudouin Stadium, sprinting away to win in a meet record of 3min 54.76sec. "The world record was not on my mind today, my goal was to finish my Diamond League season in a good way and I did," said Kipyegon. "It was good race, but definitely not



FROM LEFT: Brazil's Alison Dos Santos, Jamaica's Roshawn Clarke and Qatar's Abderrahman Samba compete in the 400m hurdles during the Diamond League finals at the Roi Baudouin Stadium in Brussels yesterday. (AFP)

an easy one. It was a bit cold to run 61 seconds in the first lap and 62 seconds for the next lap. I tried to be myself and focus on the finish line."

Of the 16 finals yesterday, the first 16 having been held on Friday, there was a strong showing from Kenyan athletes. Double Olympic 5,000/10,000m champion Beatrice Chebet also set a meet record of 14:09.82 to win the 5,000m in a powerful solo run. Faith Cherotich outpaced Bahrain's Olympic champion Winfred Yavi to win the 3000m steeplechase in 9:02.36 and Emmanuel Wanyonyi produced a devastating final flourish to win a high-quality

men's 800m in 1:42.70.

There was a surprise in the men's shot put as Italy's European champion Leonardo Fabbri claimed the win with a meet and national record of 22.98m, improving his own personal best by 3cm. American Ryan Crouser, the three-time Olympic champion and twice world gold medalist, finished second with a best of 22.79m, but there were no sour grapes despite missing out on the \$30,000 winner's cheque.

"I threw pretty well. It was a very solid performance, five times over 22 metres," Crouser said. "I just had not that big throw in me like the one Leonardo Fabbri had. He



Kenya's Faith Kipyegon celebrates after winning the Women's 1500m final.

threw a lifetime best so a big throw from him. The level in the shot put was never this high."

And Olympic champion Tebogo was outpaced in the 200m by American Kenny Bednarek, who won in 19.67sec. "I wanted to win the Diamond, but it has been a rollercoaster after the Olympics," lamented Tebogo. Fabbri's shot put victory was one of three on the night for Team Italia, high jumper Gianmarco Tamperi (2.34m) and long jumper Larissa Iapichino (6.80m) also winning.

In field events, two other Olympic champions won their events, Japan's Haruka Kitaguchi taking the women's javelin with a season's best of 66.13m and Australia's Nina Kennedy claiming the pole vault with 4.88m. Grenada's Anderson Peters edged India's Neeraj Chopra by just 1cm for victory in the men's javelin in 87.87m. Puerto Rico's Jamine Camacho-Quinn confirmed her seasonal form to win the 100m hurdles in 12.38sec.

Olympic 400m hurdles champion Sydney McLaughlin-Levrone won her second

invitational race in two days, clocking 22.40sec for victory in the 200m. "Vacation and waffles!" the American, who won a 400m race on Friday, said after the race. "It was great to race here, but to be honest I am just happy with my successful season and with how everything turned out. I am happy that I can walk away healthy and look back on a great season."

In the absence of McLaughlin-Levrone from the 400m hurdles because she was ineligible having not competed on the Diamond League circuit, it was left for Paris bronze medalist Femke Bol to take the victory in 52.45sec. The 200m final proper saw American Brittany Brown top the podium in 22.20sec. Her teammate Sha'Carri Richardson was a no-show after her eighth-placed finish in Friday's 100m.

MEN AND WOMEN'S WINNERS

100m: Akeem Blake (JAM); Julien Alfred (LCA); **200m:** Kenny Bednarek (USA); Britanny Brown (USA); **400m:** Charles Dobson (GBR); Marileidy Paulino (DOM); **800m:** Emmanuel Wanyonyi (KEN); Mary Moraa (KEN); **1500m:** Jakob Ingebrigtsen (NOR); Faith Kipyegon (KEN); **5000m:** Berihu Aregawi (ETH); Beatrice Chebet (KEN); **110m/100m hurdles:** Sasha Zhoya (FRA); Jasmine Camacho-Quinn (PUR); **400m hurdles:** Alison Dos Santos (BRA); Femke Bol (NED); **3000m steeplechase:** Amos Serem (KEN); Faith Cherotich (KEN); **Long jump:** Tajay Gayle (JAM); Larissa Iapichino (ITA); **Triple jump:** Pedro Pichardo (POR); Leyanis Perez (CUB); **High jump:** Gianmarco Tamperi (ITA); Yaroslava Mahuchikh (UKR); **Pole vault:** Armand Duplantis (SWE); Nina Kennedy (AUS); **Shot put:** Leonardo Fabbri (ITA); Sarah Mitton (CAN); **Discus:** Matthew Denny (AUS); Valarie Allman (USA); **Javelin:** Anderson Peters (GRN); Haruka Kitaguchi (JPN)

FORMULA ONE

Ferrari's Leclerc grabs Baku pole for fourth year in a row

Championship leader Verstappen qualifies sixth while Williams fined for leaving cooling fan on Albon's car

Reuters
Baku

Ferrari's Charles Leclerc took pole position at the Azerbaijan Grand Prix for the fourth year in a row yesterday as McLaren's title contender Lando Norris suffered a qualifying nightmare and was set to start 16th.

McLaren's Oscar Piastri joined Leclerc on the front row with Ferrari's Carlos Sainz and Red Bull's Sergio Perez together on the second row.

Red Bull's world championship leader Max Verstappen, 62 points ahead of Norris with eight rounds remaining, qualified only sixth fastest with Mercedes' George Russell ahead of him in fifth.

The pole was the 26th of Leclerc's career, and third of the season, but he has yet to convert the top slot into victory in Baku where champions Red Bull have won for the past three years.

"It's one of my favourite tracks of the season, I really like it," said the Monegasque, who won the previous race in Italy but crashed in Friday practice in Baku.

"In that last lap I went for it a bit more and the lap time came very nice. The car felt really good, everything felt great and it's amazing to be on pole.

"Hopefully we can play a team game tomorrow to win ... in the past we were very strong in qualifying and struggling a bit in the race. This year we have a stronger race car, so I hope that we can finally make it tomorrow."

Leclerc's time of one minute 41.365 seconds was 0.321 quicker than Piastri's best effort.

The Australian had been third after the first flying laps, with Ferrari one-two, but found some extra speed with his final effort.

"I got a little bit close to the walls on the last lap; just tried to get the most out of it," said Piastri, who agreed last week to obey team orders to help Norris but is unlikely to be in a position to be asked now.

"This track rewards commitment and the last lap in Q3, I knew I had a little less to lose, so just tried to maximise the car."

Norris could only watch as a spectator after going out at the first hurdle when a yellow flag was displayed briefly at the end of the first phase and scuppered his last at-



Ferrari's Monegasque driver Charles Leclerc poses for pictures with a fan after the qualifying session ahead of the Azerbaijan Grand Prix at the Baku City Circuit in Baku yesterday. (AFP)

tempt to get out of the bottom five. "Everyone did their second laps and I didn't," he told *Sky Sports* television.

"It was unlucky, that's all. I had

to lift. There's a long race ahead, we have some good tyres in the bank, I'm still hopeful we can get a good result.

"I think the car is quick. Bit

frustrating, but nothing I can do," he said.

The Briton moved up a place from 17th after Alpine's Pierre Gasly, who qualified 13th, was dis-

qualified for a fuel flow irregularity but given permission to start the race.

McLaren boss Andrea Stella said his team were discussing with the governing FIA why the yellow flag was triggered by Esteban Ocon's Alpine, which had not stopped.

"There was a situation that ideally, and I think by the regulations, shouldn't have happened. We paid the price but we don't give up," he added. Seven-times world champion Lewis Hamilton qualified seventh with Aston Martin's Fernando Alonso eighth and the Williams of Argentine rookie Franco Colapinto and Alex Albon ninth and 10th respectively.

Albon's hopes of moving up were wrecked when he left the pits with a yellow cooling fan lodged in the car's airbox.

He stopped, removed the bulky item from behind his head and threw it onto the side of the track but missed the chance of a final lap.

"I'm not kicking the team. I feel like sometimes these things can happen and we've just got to make sure it doesn't happen again," said the Thai.

Williams were fined €5,000 (\$5,538.00).

CRICKET

Livingstone the hero as England beat Australia

Reuters
Cardiff

Liam Livingstone smashed a magnificent 87 from 47 balls as England beat Australia by three wickets at Cardiff's Sophia Gardens on Friday to level their three match T20 series 1-1 and set up a Sunday decider in Manchester.

Livingstone's second half century in his 50th T20 match for England set the crowd rocking and came after Australia, with Jake Fraser-McGurk hitting his first international 50, had set the hosts a target of 194.

Captain Phil Salt hit three successive sixes in the third over before Sean Abbott pegged England back with two quick wickets in the fourth, Fraser-McGurk catching Will Jacks for 12 before Jordan Cox was bowled for a second ball duck.

Salt went for 39 off 23 balls, caught by Abbott, but the experienced Livingstone's tremendous partnership with newcomer Jacob Bethell (44 from 24) steadied the hosts and set them on the path to victory.

Livingstone hit six fours and five sixes before he was bowled by Matt Short - who ended his evening with five wickets - with one run required.

Adil Rashid came in and closed the game out with a quick single and six balls remaining as England equalled the highest successful T20 run chase at Sophia Gardens.

The victory cancelled Wednesday's opening 28 run defeat in Southampton.

"I feel like I'm in decent nick with bat and bowl. I'm enjoying my cricket, it's nice to play with a smile on my face," Livingstone, player of the match, told *Sky*



England's batsman Liam Livingstone in action against Australia during their second T20I at Sophia Gardens, Cardiff, on Friday. (Reuters)

Sports television. "Bethell is an incredible talent. He's got a great head on young shoulders. Exciting talent. He's a fearless kid and to play like that is pretty special."

Australia had Travis Head captaining Australia for the first time in place of the unwell Mitchell Marsh but he was unable to repeat Wednesday's fireworks and was despatched for 31 off 14 balls after England won the toss.

Rashid made the catch after Head struck straight to him at point off Brydon Carse's second ball of the match in the fifth over.

Australia were 67-1 after the powerplay and 87-2 when Rashid clean bowled opener Short for 28 off 24 balls.

Fraser-McGurk reached his 50 from 31 deliveries but was then caught by Jamie Overton on Livingstone two balls later with Australia on 119-3. "I've done some No.3 work in the Big Bash and IPL so it wasn't foreign. Just the first time I did it in international cricket," said the Australian. "I was just happy to get above 20 for the first time in a while."

Overton repeated his catch, for Livingstone's second wicket, after Marcus Stoinis lofted the ball high to him at long on and was out for two with the visitors at 131-4.

Tim David walked at 157-5 after a player review, caught behind by Salt off a short ball from Carse and Josh Inglis followed

him, this time caught by Carse on Sam Curran's first of the over with Australia 157-6.

"We got a really good score and we got really close," said Head. "You do your best and it doesn't always work. Jake Fraser-McGurk played nicely. We didn't get the win and we move on to Manchester."

BRIEF SCORES
Australia 193/6, 20 overs (McGurk 50, Inglis 42; L Livingstone 2-16) **v England 194/7, 19.0 overs** (Livingstone 87, Bethell 44; Short 5-22)
Toss: England
Result: England won by three wickets

Charbel, Mansour shine in 4th round of Qatar National Sprint



Charbel Chebly took the top spot in the Open Class 1 while Mansour Chebli was the fastest in the Production 1 category in the fourth round of the 2024 Qatar National Sprint on Friday. Charbel dominated the O1 Class with a best lap time of 44.378 seconds in his Renault Clio, while Mansour finished closely behind in second place with a time of 44.911 seconds, also driving a Renault Clio. Saudi Arabia's Abdulaziz al-Ramih rounded out the top three in Class O1 with a 46.226-second lap in his Toyota GT86. In Class O2, Jad Alawar from Lebanon secured first place with 45.685 seconds in an Evo 8, while Qatar's Maher Serre won the O3 category with a lap time of 48.141 in his Nissan 350Z. In Class P1, Mansour emerged victorious with a best lap of 46.319 seconds, followed by Charbel Chebly and Nadim Ziade. In Class P2, Ziade claimed first with a 45.436-second run in his Renault Megane, while the P3 class saw Francesco Fornaciari claiming the victory with a time of 46.673 in a Lotus Exige. In the women's category, Paige De Jager took the top spot in her Mitsubishi Eclipse with a time of 52.614 seconds, ahead of Nasmee'a Christian and Melina Jokic. The remaining two rounds of the Championship will take place on October 5 and 19.



FOCUS

Qatar Insurance Group signs agreement to sponsor the 2024 Samla Race



Qatar Insurance Group (QIC Group), the leading insurer in Qatar and the MENA region, has announced the signing of an agreement with the Organizing Committee of the Samla Race to support the sixth edition of the national endurance competition "Samla 2024", continuing its role in highlight Qatar and Doha as a global sports capital.

The agreement ceremony, held at Qatar Insurance Group's headquarters in West Bay, was signed by Salem al-Mannai, Group CEO of QIC Group, and Azzam al-Mannai, CEO of the Organizing Committee of the Samla Race, designates Qatar Insurance as the official insurance sponsor of the event.

The race will take place from December 5 to 7 over a distance of 200 kilometers, featuring swimming, running, shooting, kayaking, and mountain biking. It is expected to see a record participation rate this year.

"This agreement reflects Qatar Insurance Group's commitment to supporting the national sports scene. It aligns with our social responsibility and supports the country's efforts to raise awareness of sports' importance in the lives of individuals and communities. This is in line with the Qatar National Vision 2030 and in recognition of the significant impact of this distinguished event on Qatari society," Salem al-Mannai said.

"Samla is a challenging event that showcases endurance and determination, re-

flecting the resilience of Qatari youth. We look forward to strong competition, sportsmanship, and watching athletes overcome the challenges of Samla, serving as a source of inspiration and pride for Qataris and millions of followers in the region."

Azzam expressed his gratitude and conveyed the significance of QIC Group's sponsorship to the success of the race: "On behalf of the entire organizing committee and all the participants, I extend our deepest thanks to QIC for their steadfast support by being a sponsor of the Samla Race for the second consecutive year and for being an integral part of this journey. Together we will continue to make the Samla Race a beacon of sportsmanship, resilience, and community spirit."

TENNIS

US beat Germany to top Davis Cup group

Reuters
Zhuhai, China

A second-string United States extended their Davis Cup winning run by dismantling Germany to top Group C in Zhuhai yesterday after both countries secured their spots in the quarter-finals of the premier men's team competition.

The 32-times winners were without big names like US Open runner-up Taylor Fritz, Tommy Paul and Frances Tiafoe for their Finals group stage campaign this week but still had plenty of firepower to down Germany and complete a third straight win.

Brandon Nakashima gave the Americans an unassailable 2-0 lead by comfortably beating Maximilian Marterer 6-4 6-2 in the second singles match of the day before Germany won the doubles clash to hand the Americans their first loss

this week. "It's been unbelievable this whole week. It's special to be part of this team," said Nakashima, who sealed his third victory in his debut campaign to stay perfect.

"To represent the country has always been a dream of mine since I started playing tennis, so I'm super happy that I was able to get three wins on the board for the team," he said.

World number 309 Reilly Opelka, back on the circuit after hip and wrist surgeries, saved three matchpoints and cranked up his serve when it mattered to beat debutant Henri Squire 6-7(4) 7-6(9) 6-3 earlier in the day.

Tim Puetz and Kevin Krawietz later beat Rajeev Ram and Austin Krajicek 6-1 7-6(4) but US captain Bob Bryan said he was satisfied after a good week that highlighted the team's singles depth.

"We've got a lot of great players in the US right now, you can see it in the rankings. A lot of guys to

choose from for the Finals," Bryan said.

"Hats off to these guys for coming here and carrying us to Malaga. We've got a couple of months to relax and get ready but it's going to be fun over there.

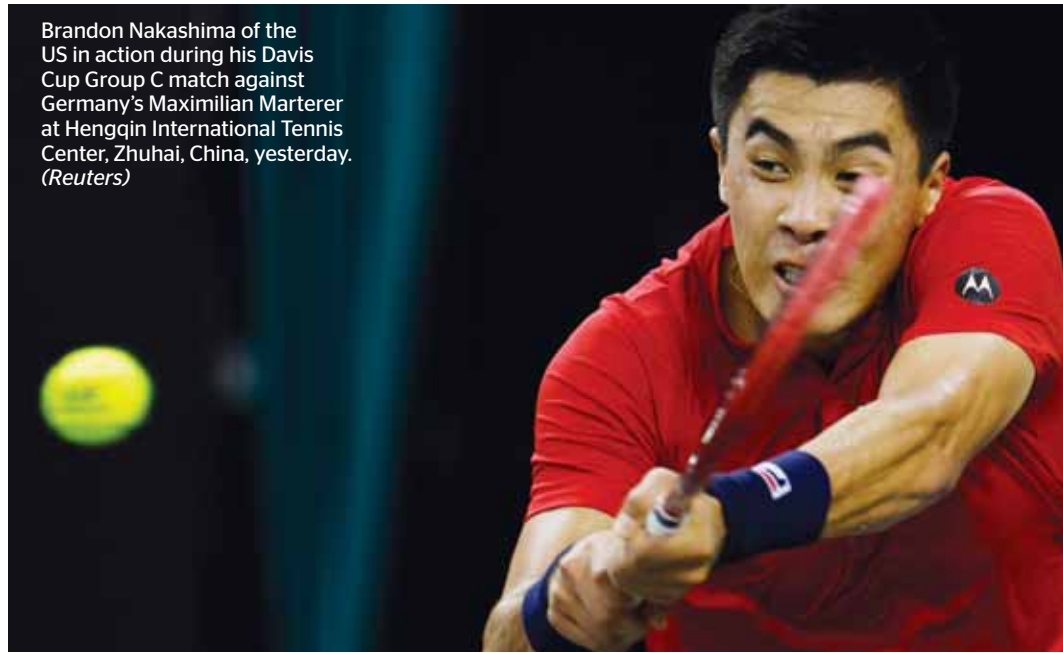
"We're looking forward to it." The top two countries from four groups based in different cities will go through to the Final 8 knockout stage to be held in Malaga in November.

Heavyweights Spain and Australia have also qualified along with the United States and Germany.

Belgium face Brazil in Bologna later hoping to go through from Group A while the Czech Republic take on France in Group B with neither team in the reckoning after losing both their matches in Valencia.

Finland, last year's surprise semi-finalists, meet Argentina in Manchester needing a win to stay alive in Group D.

Brandon Nakashima of the US in action during his Davis Cup Group C match against Germany's Maximilian Marterer at Hengqin International Tennis Center, Zhuhai, China, yesterday. (Reuters)



FOOTBALL

Kane's hat-trick sends Bayern top of the Bundesliga

Hoffenheim 'keeper Oliver Baumann makes 464th league appearance

AFP
Berlin

Bayern Munich maintained their perfect start to the season and jumped to the top of the Bundesliga table after hammering newly-promoted Holstein Kiel 6-1. Jamal Musiala scored the third fastest goal in Bundesliga history, giving Bayern the lead after just 15 seconds.

A mistake by Kiel captain Lewis Holtby opened the door for his former Tottenham Hotspur teammate Harry Kane, who doubled Bayern's lead seven minutes in.

It went from bad to worse for the hosts, as Musiala took advantage of another defensive error to deliver a cross that was eventually turned into his own net by Nicolai Remberg.

After just 13 minutes Bayern Munich were 3-0 up.

Three years on from their famous victory against Bayern in the second round of the German Cup, Kiel looked starstruck.

Kane scored his second just before the break, before substitute Michael Olise smashed in a rebound shortly after the hour mark. Armin Gijovic's header gave the home fans something to cheer about, but Bayern had the last word as Kane dispatched an injury-time penalty to seal his hat-trick and a big Bayern win.

Bayern are two points clear at the top of the Bundesliga, but Vincent Kompany's side now turn their attention to their Champions League campaign which starts with a home game against Dinamo Zagreb on Tuesday.

Leverkusen bounce back

Defending champions Bayer Leverkusen put their first defeat in 35 Bundesliga games behind them yesterday when they thumped Hoffenheim 4-1 with Victor Boniface bagging a brace.



Bayern Munich's Harry Kane celebrates scoring their sixth goal and completing his hat-trick against Holstein Kiel at Holstein-Stadion, Kiel, Germany, yesterday. (Reuters)

The win will be a confidence-boost for Xavi Alonso's men Leverkusen, who start their Champions League campaign next Tuesday in Rotterdam against Feyenoord.

Frenchman Martin Terrier scored his first Bundesliga goal to give the visitors a deserved lead, before Boniface danced around defenders to add a second while Mergim Berisha soon pulled one back.

"It comes from a Tiktok trend in Nigeria, who created this dance and he asked me if I could do it after I score," said Boniface, explaining his goal celebration. But eventually, Leverkusen found a way through.

Florian Wirtz converted a penalty before Boniface added a well-taken second. Hoffenheim

goalkeeper Oliver Baumann, making his 464th Bundesliga appearance to draw level with German football legend Lothar Matthäus, made a string of saves to keep the home side in the game. "A good team loses once, but not two, three or four times in a row," Granit Xhaka said afterwards.

Leipzig held

Despite dominating, Leipzig couldn't find a way past Union Berlin and had to settle for a point after a 0-0 draw.

With Marco Rose out suspended and Bo Svensson sick, both teams were without their head coaches on the sideline.

Xavi Simons hit the bar, and Union goalkeeper Frederik Ronnow saved a Lois Openda penalty and a David Raum free kick to

frustrate the hosts, who couldn't maintain their perfect start to the season.

Elsewhere, Frankfurt beat Wolfsburg 2-1 as Omar Marmoush came back to haunt his former employer by scoring a goal in each half.

At the third time of asking, Stuttgart got their first win of the season by beating Borussia Mönchengladbach 3-1 thanks to two goals in four second-half minutes from Ermedin Demirovic. In-form Germany striker Deniz Undav had given Stuttgart the lead in the first half, only for Alassane Plea to equalize for the hosts.

A brace from Junior Adamu helped Freiburg to a 2-1 win over Bochum, who had taken the lead with their first goal of the season.

SERIE A

Juventus held at Empoli ahead of their CL return; Bologna draw at Como



Teun Koopmeiners of Juventus is seen battling for ball possession against Empoli's Youssef Maleh during a Serie A match at Stadio Carlo Castellani, Empoli, Italy, yesterday. (Reuters)

AFP
Milan

Juventus were held to a goalless draw at Empoli in Serie A yesterday ahead of their return to the Champions League, while Bologna came back from two goals down to draw 2-2 at Como.

Thiago Motta's side take temporary lead of the Italian top flight, one point ahead of Inter Milan, Torino and Udinese, who are all yet to play this weekend.

But Juve underwhelmed in Tuscany, creating very little in a performance that offered little to worry PSV Eindhoven, who visit Turin on Tuesday evening.

Dusan Vlahovic went closest for Juve four minutes at half-time when he shot straight at Deviz Vasquez after being sent racing towards goal.

And Juve had Federico Gatti to thank for a goal-saving tackle in the fifth minute of stoppage time which denied Emmanuel Gyasi which would have been a stunning winner.

Juventus will take part in the revamped Champions League after a year away from European football following a UEFA ban for financial fair play violations.

Earlier debutant Samuel Iling-Junior saved Bologna ahead of their first ever match in the Champions League with the late equal-

iser in their 2-2 draw at Como. Substitute Iling-Junior struck a brilliant curling finish in the first minute of stoppage time of an exciting game at Como, who were playing their first top-flight home match in 21 years.

Bologna played one tie in the old European Cup in 1964 and host Shakhtar Donetsk on Wednesday without a win this season under new coach Vincenzo Italiano.

Italiano's team, who also netted through Santiago Castro, have three points from their first four matches while Como have two after throwing away a great chance to win at Stadio Giuseppe Sinigaglia.

Patrick Cutrone, who forced Nicolò Casale's early own goal, looked to have won the match for his hometown team Como in the 53rd minute when he rammed in hosts' second.

Cutrone, 26, was born in Como and signed for the ambitious lake-side outfit - owned by tobacco giant Djarum - two years ago when they were still in Serie B.

Como had played their first three matches of the campaign away from home to give the club time to increase the Sinigaglia's capacity to around 10,500 places and bring it in line with Serie A regulations.

Serie A giants AC Milan last night hosted Venezia and wasted little time to score four goals in the first half. AC Milan won 4-0.

IMPRESSIVE US SURGE TO HUGE 6-2 LEAD OVER EUROPE AT SOLHEIM CUP



Megan Khang and Nelly Korda of Team United States react with teammates Rose Zhang and Andrea Lee after winning their match during the fourball matches against Team Europe during the first round of the Solheim Cup 2024. (AFP)

Gainesville, Virginia: A US team eager to end a seven-year Solheim Cup title drought enjoyed a dream start on the opening day on Friday in Virginia, taking a 6-2 lead over Europe behind the sensational play of Nelly Korda, Megan Khang, Rose Zhang and others. The US won three of their four foursome matches in the morning to take a 3-1 lead and stretched the advantage to 6-2 in the afternoon four-ball session for the largest lead ever recorded after the first day of the team event.

"It has been a really good day," said US captain Stacy Lewis. "Things played out the way we were hoping. I'm really happy with the pairings I was able to put out and the players produced some great shots, some great scores, and got us a ton of points."

World No.1 Korda came skipping out of the tunnel to the first tee and never put a foot wrong all day. Alongside partner Allisen Corpuz, the duo notched a

3&2 victory over Esther Henseleit and Charley Hull in the opening foursome match of the day to grab the early momentum for the home side.

Korda and Khang then proceeded to crushed Georgia Hall and Leona Maguire 6&4 in the opening four-ball match of the afternoon thanks to some blistering drives by Korda as the pair feasted on the course's par-fives.

"When you have a teammate who is so pure off the tee you never have to worry, you just have to send it," said Korda, who teed off first for the pair on every hole.

"That was the motto, I was going to go first and send it and if I sent it in the wrong direction, I knew I had a really good partner who would go next," she said with a laugh. "Nelly doesn't miss it often," Khang noted. Korda pumped her fist after guiding an eagle putt into the hole on 14 to seal the 6&4 win and put the US up 4-1. Europe scored an important point when Solheim

Cup veteran Anna Nordqvist's birdie on 13 delivered a 6&5 match win for her and partner Madelene Sagstrom over Americans Lexi Thompson and Allison Lee to cut the US lead to 4-2.

But that would be the last highlight of the day for the visitors.

Zhang and Andrea Lee overcame a slow start but played last six holes at eight-under par for a convincing 5&4 win over Europe's Linn Grant and Charley Hull. The American rookie duo of Lauren Coughlin and Sarah Schmelzel both looked comfortable on the biggest stage in women's team golf, Coughlin nailing a long birdie putt to beat Emily Pedersen and Maja Stark 3&2 for the 6-2 overnight lead.

The US is looking to win the Solheim Cup for the first time since 2017. Europe retained the trophy for a third consecutive time last year when they clawed their way back from an early deficit for a 14-14 tie in Spain.

HORSE RACING

Qatar Arc Trials attracts top entries at ParisLongchamp

QREC-sponsored meet is the last stepping stone to the Qatar Prix de l'Arc de Triomphe weekend

By Sports Reporter
Doha

The Qatar Arc Trials featuring world class entries is set to take place at the ParisLongchamp today. The Qatar Racing and Equestrian Club (QREC)-sponsored meeting is considered the last stepping stone to the Qatar Prix de l'Arc de Triomphe weekend.

The two highlights of the day are the Group 1 Qatar Prix Vermeille, a race for fillies and mares only run over the same distance of 2,400m as the Qatar Prix de l'Arc de Triomphe, and the Group 1 PA Qatar Cup - Prix Dragon, a race for Purebred Arabians run over the distance of 2,000m, which is considered to be the last preparatory race for the Group 1 PA Qatar Arabian World Cup.

Both the Qatar Cup and the Qatar Arabian World Cup are part of Qatar's commitment to promote and progress Arabian racing worldwide; a commitment which has been extended to include sponsoring several other Arabian races at some of the world's top racecourses as well as the introduction of the Doha Triple Crown. The coveted title has been won by only two horses so far; namely Ebraz, owned by HE Sheikhha Reem bint Mohammed bin Khalifa al-Thani in 2019, and Al Ghadeer, owned by Al Shaqab Racing in February this year, completing the impressive trio of victories in the Qatar International Stakes at Goodwood, Qatar Arabian World Cup at ParisLongchamp and HH The Amir Sword at Al Rayyan racecourse.

Apart from the two highlights of the Qatar Arc Trials day, there are other seven races on the card.

Under Chairman Issa bin Mohammed al-Mohamadi, the QREC management has been in constant co-ordination with the management of France Galop as part of Qatar's sponsorship of this prestigious event. Qatar Arc Trials to be run today is the final rehearsal before the main event in early October. Qatar's sponsorship of the meeting has contributed to further devel-



Two highlight races of the day are the Group 1 Qatar Prix Vermeille and Group 1 PA Qatar Cup - Prix Dragon.

oping and elevating the racing standard as well as the huge media momentum of the event, being one of the most important sporting events in France every year. Dozens of thousands of spectators and racing fans fill the stands of ParisLongchamp to witness and be part of the major challenges among the world's most famous horse owners, trainers and jockeys.

RUNNERS FOR QATAR CUP

The final official lists of runners in the Qatar Arc Trials were declared on Friday. Four horses have been declared in this year's edition of the Group 1 PA Qatar Cup - Prix Dragon, including the two Al Shaqab Rac-

ing representatives Al Tammtam, a Group 1 PA winner at Longchamp, and the very consistent Al Wakrah both trained by Jean de Mieuille. François Rohaut will saddle Ch'Ezza, winner of The President of the UAE Cup - Coupe d'Europe des chevaux-arabes, a Group 1 PA, who will run in the silks of Abdulla bin Fahad al-Attayah. Last year's winning trainer Thomas Fourcy will count on Nabucco Al Maury running in the colours of Mansoor Khalil Al-Shahwani.

It is worth mentioning that the last three winners of the Qatar Cup - Prix Dragon were the Al Shaqab Racing-owned Ghadah in 2023, the Yas Horse Racing Management-owned Teema in 2022 and

the Sheikhha Reem-owned Ebraz in 2021

QATAR PRIX VERMEILLE

An incredible line up of 12 fillies and mares has been declared in the Group 1 for Thoroughbreds on the Qatar Arc Trials Day, the Qatar Prix Vermeille. These include the Prix de Diane Longines Group 1 winner Sparkling Plenty, who will defend the interests of Al Shaqab Racing and Jean-Pierre-Joseph Duboi. Aidan O'Brien will saddle the recent Qatar Nassau Stakes Group 1 winner Opera Singer.

The dual Group 1 winner Emily Upjohn will try to add another success at this level to her career record. Bluestocking, win-

ner of the Pretty Polly Stakes Group 1, will run for her owner and breeder Juddmonte farms Ltd. There are also the French-trained fillies Survie, Birthe, Dare To Dream, Halfday, Aventureand Mosaïque and all five of them are Group winners.

OTHER GROUP RACES

The Group 3 Qatar Prix du Pin 10 runners include the Listed winner Shartash and Dark Trooper for Wathnan Racing, the Group 3 winner Topgear, presented by Christopher Head as well as the Group 1 performer Exxtra, trained by C&Y Lerner.

In the Group 2 Qatar Prix Foy, there are five runners. Iresine will try to regain his title ridden by his loyal jockey Marie Velon against the 2023 Grand Prix de Paris (Group 1) winner Feed The Flame and the Group 1 St Leger winner Continuous.

The Group 2 Qatar Prix Niel lines-up six runners, including the recent Group 1 Qatar Prix du Jockey Club winner Look De Vega carrying Al Shaqab Racing's colours and the 2024 Grand Prix de Paris (Group 1) winner Sosie, both preparing for the Group 1 Qatar Prix de l'Arc de Triomphe in early October. As many as 15 runners were declared in the Group 3 Qatar Prix du Petit Couvert, including Wathnan Racing's Rogue Lightning, Aesop's Fables, a Group 2 winner second time out trained by Aidan O'Brien, as well as the Group 3 winner Montelle presented by Pascal Bary.



PREMIER LEAGUE

Liverpool stunned by Forest, Haaland hits brace in City win



Nottingham Forest's Callum Hudson-Odoi (right) celebrates after scoring against Liverpool. (Reuters)

AFP
Liverpool

Liverpool's perfect start under Arne Slot came to a stunning end as Nottingham Forest won 1-0 at Anfield yesterday, while Erling Haaland's double sent Manchester City three points clear at the top of the Premier League in a 2-1 win over Brentford.

Earlier, Manchester United eased the pressure on Erik ten Hag with a comfortable 3-0 win at Southampton. Forest had not won at Anfield in the top flight for 55 years but the home faithful were stunned when Callum Hudson-Odoi fired in the winner 18 minutes from time. Liverpool had won all three of their opening games under Slot without conceding, including a 3-0 win away at Manchester United two weeks ago. But the Reds were sloppy and sluggish after the international break and made to pay.

"The result frustrates the most and we cannot be happy about how the game went. It was a stop-start game and we hardly created any chances," said Slot. "We only have to look at ourselves, we have to be better. Far too many times we lost the ball, it was not good enough. We have to be better with the ball."

Victory lifts Forest into fifth with eight points from their opening four games. "The players did it so well. We were against the ropes but we stayed in the game and found our moment," said Forest boss Nuno Espirito Santo.

City took full advantage of Liverpool's defeat to move clear at the top by stretching their 100 percent record to four games despite a disastrous start. However, Haaland's form at the start of the season remains unstoppable, even if the Norwegian just missed out on a record third consecutive hat-trick in the Premier League. The 24-year-old's powerful deflected effort brought City level before he showed a combination of strength and skill to shrug off Ethan Pinnock and dink the ball over the on-rushing Mark Flekken.

Only the post denied Haaland another hat-trick after half-time but he now has a Premier League record nine goals in the first four games of the season.

United had been left to fester on their humbling by Liverpool for two weeks over the international break, but bounced back after a slow start at Southampton. The Red Devils needed a penalty save from Andre Onana to deny Cameron Archer before two goals in five minutes just before half-time swung the game decisively in the

visitors' favour.

Matthijs de Ligt nodded in his first United goal before Marcus Rashford ended his six-month drought by finding the bottom corner with a curling effort.

Southampton are yet to register a point in four games since their return to the top flight and inflicted more damage on themselves when captain Jack Stephens saw red for a wild lunge on Alejandro Garnacho. The Argentine dusted himself off to then round off the scoring with a thumping finish into the roof of the net in stoppage time.

Aston Villa moved up to third after Everton blew a two-goal lead for the second consecutive game. Dwight McNeil and Dominic Calvert-Lewin gave the Toffees a dream start at Villa Park.

But Everton remain without a point this season due to dreadful defending. Ollie Watkins struck twice either side of half-time to level before Jhon Duran's stunning strike from distance earned Villa a third win in four games.

Brighton remain unbeaten but were unable to break down Ipswich in a 0-0 draw at the Amex. Crystal Palace came from 2-0 down to salvage a 2-2 draw against Leicester thanks to Jean-Philippe Mateta's double. West Ham also struck late through Danny Ings to snatch a 1-1 draw at Fulham.

LIGUE 1

Marseille continue strong start

AFP
Marseille

Marseille continued their impressive start to the season under new coach Roberto De Zerbi by beating Nice 2-0 to go provisionally top of Ligue 1, despite finishing the match with 10 men.

Mason Greenwood was unable to add to his remarkable tally of five goals in his first three matches in French football, but there was a debut goal for new signing Neal Maupay before a brilliant strike by Luis Henrique sealed the victory. Marseille had Canadian defender Derek Cornelius sent off late on, but held on for the win which moved them to 10 points from four matches.

That lifted them a point clear of Paris Saint-Germain, although the defending champions will return to the summit if they can maintain their perfect start to the campaign by beating Brest. "We have had an almost perfect start. I wasn't too pleased with how we played today, but football is not just about quality. It is also about character, and blood, and in that sense we were excellent," said De Zerbi.

The game at the Velodrome was watched by a crowd of more than 65,000 and there was a celebratory atmosphere as Marseille wore a collectors' edition shirt to mark their 125th birthday and fans set off fireworks late on, bringing the game to a brief halt. "In such passionate cities, you need a strong link between fans and players, otherwise you can't do anything," De Zerbi said when asked about the raucous atmosphere.

Maupay opened the scoring five minutes before half-time in this Mediterranean derby when he headed in a deflected cross by Luis Henrique for his first goal since returning to French football from



Marseille's Pol Lirola (right) vies for the ball with Nice's Tom Alexis Louchet during the French Ligue 1 match in Marseille, southern France. (AFP)

Everton. Luis Henrique, the Brazilian winger, made it 2-0 with a magnificent goal eight minutes into the second half as he came in off the left flank and played a quick exchange with Amine Harit before curling a shot high into the net.

Cornelius was dismissed for a second yellow late on 75 minutes, but that did not stop OM getting all three points, and hopes will be high that they can push PSG in the title race if they can keep playing like this. "Just as the fans have dreams, so do we, but there is also the reality. We have made so many changes in a short time and we still have huge margin for improvement," De Zerbi added.

Flick confident Barca can overcome impressive Girona

Barcelona: Barcelona manager Hansi Flick is confident his side have what it takes to beat local rivals Girona away today and avenge last season's two defeats in the Catalan derby.

Flick, whose Barca reign has started with four consecutive victories, enjoyed watching Girona last season as they took La Liga by storm, going toe-to-toe with Real Madrid in the title race and reaching the Champions League for the first time.

But despite heaping praise on rival manager Michel's work with their unheralded neighbours, who finished third, Flick said there will be no sympathy when they step on the pitch.

"We've won four games in a row and we have to keep going," Flick said. "I know it will

be complicated because Girona play really well, it's a match at the highest level, Champions League level, and we're playing away. But we are confident because we have quality.

"Last season I watched Girona a lot and I was really impressed by what the coach did and how the players responded. But we know how we have to play and I'm sure the players will deliver. We must not look back. What happened, happened. The key on Sunday is that all our players give their best out there."

Barca are top of the standings with 12 points, one ahead of Villarreal, who have played a game more, four in front of Real Madrid and Atletico Madrid and five above fifth-placed Girona, who are coming off solid wins against

Osasuna and Sevilla.

Flick said his team needed to make Girona uncomfortable and dominate possession against an exciting attacking side who won 4-2 in both La Liga games against Barca last term.

Meanwhile, Jesus Navas rifled in a powerful shot from a tight angle to give Sevilla its first victory after edging Getafe 1-0 at home yesterday. His goal in the 23rd minute relieved some pressure on new coach Francisco Garcia Pimentia.

In another match yesterday, Javi Puado scored a hat-trick to lead Espanyol to a 3-2 win at home over Alaves and secure a second consecutive win for the Barcelona-based club that spent last season in the second division.