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EVERGREEN ROSSI WINS DUTCH TITLE



Italy's Valentino Rossi celebrates after winning the Assen Motorcycling Grand Prix at the TT circuit in Assen, Netherlands, yesterday.

'I race with motorcycles for this feeling: for what I feel in the five or six final laps of the race. That's always great'

AFP
 Assen, Netherlands

Italian MotoGP legend Valentino Rossi won a gripping Dutch Grand Prix yesterday to reignite the evergreen 38-year-old's dream of a 10th world title, as Maverick Vinales' nightmare run continued.

Vinales went into this eighth leg of the season in Assen leading the 2017 championship, but after making up ground from 11th on the grid to fifth, he crashed out on lap 12.

The Yamaha rider leaves the circuit known as 'the cathedral of speed' trailing Andrea Dovizioso, who took fifth, by four points.

Rossi's 10th win at the track lifted him into third, only three points away with defending champion Marc Marquez breathing down his neck, four points behind in the tightest championship battle since the current points system was introduced in 1993. Rossi had to call on all his skill and strength in his 20th season to get the better of his compatriot Danilo Petrucci, who briefly passed Rossi before the Italian grabbed the lead back four laps out.

The sport's headline act crossed the line barely the length of his Yamaha bike in front of Petrucci, who was only six years old when Rossi lined up for his first ever grand prix in 1996. "This place is always special," beamed Rossi.

"The track is fantastic. There are always lots of people around, I'm excited for me and my team - back in first place, a great race."

"I race with motorcycles for this feeling: for what I feel in the five or six final laps of the race. That's always great and especially after a year without a victory."

His teammate Vinales was left bemused by his spill, which

Results

MotoGP

1. Valentino Rossi (ITA/Yamaha) 41min 41.149sec. 2. Danilo Petrucci (ITA/Ducati Pramac) at 0.063s. 3. Marc Marquez (ESP/Honda) 5.201. 4. Cal Crutchlow (GBR/LCR Honda) 5.243. 5. Andrea Dovizioso (ITA/Ducati) 5.327. 6. Jack Miller (AUS/Honda Marc VDS) 23.390. 7. Karel Abraham (CZE/Ducati Aspar) 36.982. 8. Loris Baz (FRA/Ducati Avintia) 37.058. 9. Andrea Iannone (ITA/Suzuki) 37.166. 10. Aleix Espargaro (ESP/Aprilia) 1:01.929

Selected

13. Dani Pedrosa (ESP/Honda) 1:10.344. 14. Johann Zarco (FRA/Yamaha Tech3) 1:35.655. 15. Jorge Lorenzo (ESP/Ducati) 1 lap

MotoGP world championship standings (after eight of 18 races)

1. Andrea Dovizioso (ITA/Ducati) 115 points. 2. Maverick Vinales (ESP/Yamaha) 111. 3. Valentino Rossi (ITA/Yamaha) 108. 4. Marc Marquez (ESP/Honda) 104. 5. Dani Pedrosa (ESP/Honda) 87. 6. Johann Zarco (FRA/Yamaha Tech3) 77. 7. Danilo Petrucci (ITA/Ducati Pramac) 62. 8. Jorge Lorenzo (ESP/Ducati) 60. 9. Cal Crutchlow (GBR/LCR Honda) 58. 10. Jonas Folger (GER/Yamaha Tech3) 51

thankfully he escaped from unscathed whilst bits of his bike littered the track.

"I can't explain what happened, because I don't even know why I crashed. I passed there 2000 times, but today was the day," he said.

Marquez came in third ahead of Briton Cal Crutchlow and Dovizioso.

The surprise pole sitter, MotoGP rookie Johann Zarco, manfully fought off Marquez's attack to the first corner but Yamaha Tech's French rider then lost ground before pitting to change to wet tyres and finished 14th.

Zarco held control until he was overtaken by Rossi on lap 12, only to lose his gamble on the track when hit by a down-pour.

Despite the disappointment of failing to capitalise on his superb performance in qualifying on Saturday, Zarco can take consolation from at least finishing in front of a three-time former world champion, Jorge Lorenzo.

Lorenzo had a weekend to forget, being relegated to the penultimate row of the grid and had to settle for 15th.

Rossi meanwhile was already looking forward to the next instalment of the 2017 title showdown.

"Everything is open and this year we discovered that, from one track to the other, the situation can change a lot. We have to wait for next week and try to be competitive also at the Sachsenring."



Crashed out: Maverick Vinales

FORMULA ONE

Ricciardo wins in Baku as Lewis, Vettel clash

AFP
 Baku

Sebastian Vettel was penalised for dangerous driving after deliberately crashing into title rival Lewis Hamilton in a wild and chaotic Azerbaijan Grand Prix won by Red Bull's Daniel Ricciardo on yesterday.

Hamilton's Mercedes teammate Valtteri Bottas snatched second place from 18-year-old Williams driver Lance Stroll in the final straight, as Vettel finished fourth ahead of Hamilton to extend his championship lead to 14 points.

Despite Ricciardo's win, the race will be remembered for the angry confrontation between former world champions Vettel and Hamilton.

Ferrari star Vettel was handed a 10-second stop-go penalty for "dangerous driving" after he deliberately drove into Hamilton's Mercedes while both were following the safety car.



Vettel claimed Hamilton had braked in front of him and he responded by driving into the back of his rival before then bumping the Briton from the side.

"I think it's just not driver conduct. It's dangerous driving and to get a 10-second penalty for that... I don't need to say anything else," Hamilton told Sky Sports.

Vettel pleaded innocent. "Nothing happened, did it? He brake checked me as well, so what do you expect?" the German told Sky.

"I'm sure he didn't do it on purpose but for sure it was not the right move. If I'm struggling, people at the back struggling even more, so I don't think it was necessary."

"I got damage, he risked damage. He's done something similar in China at the restart a couple of years ago so it's not the way to do it, I think."

"I passed him because he pitted. After the incident, we were side by side, I raised my hand and told him, well I didn't say anything, but showed him

that I wasn't happy with that."

Making the most of a series of extraordinary incidents and interventions in an action-packed race, which included three safety car interventions and a red-flagged stoppage, Ricciardo, who started 10th, roared home 3.904 seconds ahead of the rest to deliver his first win of the season.

Esteban Ocon of Force India was sixth ahead of Kevin Magnussen of Haas, Carlos Sainz Jr of Toro Rosso, who also survived a first-lap collision, two-time champion Fernando Alonso, who scored McLaren's first points of the year in ninth, and Pascal Wehrlein of Sauber.

Hamilton, who had dominated after a strong start from his 60th pole position, was also undone by a loose headrest that caused him to be ordered to pit for repairs, for safety reasons.

Bottas meanwhile produced a brilliant drive to take his fifth podium finish of the season, having dropped to the back of the field after a first-lap bump with fellow Finn Kimi Raikkonen.

RESULTS

1. Daniel Ricciardo (Australia) Red Bull - TAG Heuer 2:03:55.573 2. Valtteri Bottas (Finland) Mercedes +0:03:904 3. Lance Stroll (Canada) Williams-Mercedes 00:04:009 4. Sebastian Vettel (Germany) Ferrari 00:05:976 5. Lewis Hamilton (Britain) Mercedes 00:06:188 6. Esteban Ocon (France) Force India - Mercedes 00:30:298 7. Kevin Magnussen (Denmark) Haas - Ferrari 00:41:753 8. Carlos Sainz Jr (Spain) Toro Rosso - Renault 00:49:400 9. Fernando Alonso (Spain) McLaren 00:59:551 10. Pascal Wehrlein (Germany) Sauber - Ferrari 01:29:093 11. Marcus Ericsson (Sweden) Sauber - Ferrari 01:31:794 12. Stoffel Vandoorne (Belgium) McLaren 01:32:160 13. Romain Grosjean (France) Haas - Ferrari 1 lap 14r. Kimi Raikkonen (Finland) Ferrari 5 laps r. Sergio Perez (Mexico) Force India - Mercedes 12 laps r. Felipe Massa (Brazil) Williams-Mercedes 26 laps r. Nico Huelkenberg (Germany) Renault 27 laps r.

SPOTLIGHT

Pellegrino, the complete coach who hates losing and frets when he wins

Southampton's new manager, highly regarded for his man-management and tactical nous, obsesses about the damage victory can inflict on players' hunger

By Sid Lowe
The Guardian

There were around 40 people on the coaching course Mauricio Pellegrino took when he was a player at Valencia in 1999 and he wanted to know what it was that moved them to be there, so he did something he has done ever since football took him from his home in the Argentinian pampas: he asked and he listened.

There were all sorts of reasons but surprisingly few matched his. For some, it was just something to do. For others, it was about money, just a job. Not for Pellegrino. He asked a friend there whether he would take it if a tiny third division club came for him. "No," he said. "Coaching's not your vocation, then," Pellegrino replied.

It is Pellegrino's. "Had it not been for football I would never have left home," he once said. He was a little introverted, at least to start with, and one former teammate says football is his life while he told a player who worked under him that through football he found a way to express himself. Especially through coaching, his calling. He has emerged and evolved over the years but even as a player he was a manager.

Louis van Gaal once said: "He'll make a great coach." Although Pellegrino was not pleased, joking that meant the Dutchman did not think he was much of a centre-back, Van Gaal is not a man given to handing out compliments and he knew he was right.

Pellegrino did not always think he was much of a player, either: he was too tall, too skinny, too clumsy, he had problems with his back. But there was something about him that teammates and coaches appreciated that took him to Barcelona, Valencia and Liverpool, and a coaching career that now brings him to Southampton via Spain and Argentina.

"He makes you think," his former centre-back partner Roberto Ayala says. He makes himself think, too, particularly about others.

The goalkeeper Santi Cañizares, a teammate at Valencia, says: "He shared his experience with everyone: he listened and advised, analysed, put himself into people's skin: he was practically a psychologist. He was not our best centre-back but he was the centre-back the coach most valued. He always had a positive attitude, he had no jealousy at all, no anger, it was always, always about the team. He understood tactically, he was obsessed with the team, he took responsibility: too much. He was ashamed by defeat. I've known very few players like that. He has three things: incredible humility, complete profes-

sionalism and he never celebrated victory."

Pellegrino once admitted: "Football was my school of life but I had a big deficit as a player: I didn't enjoy it." Now he believes he can help players do so and he has changed a little but that idea played a part in shaping him. "In Argentina football is cultural," he explained to *El País*. "Losing is a drama; winning is only good because it means not losing."

The social rejection you feel when you lose makes us very competitive." Winning, by contrast, blunts your edge and avoiding that is something that preoccupies him. "Obsesses him," according to one friend.

Cañizares shared that attitude and laments its loss in the game but laughs when he recalls Pellegrino asking before the 2001 Champions League final: "What if we win? How will we get our humility back?" "Bloody hell, Flaco," he replied. "Let's just win first, yeah?"

They called Pellegrino Flaco, the Skinny One, everywhere except at Barcelona, whom he had joined in 1998; Johan Cruyff was the only Flaco there. Pellegrino never worked under Cruyff but he did work with Van Gaal, who swiftly saw something in him.

At Valencia, Claudio Ranieri saw it too, as did Hector Cuper. Under him they did not win that Champions League final, and Pellegrino missed the decisive penalty in the shootout, but Cañizares insists: "To win, you have to lose first."

Two consecutive European Cup final defeats were followed by two league titles in three years, Valencia overcoming the galacticos, and the manager who led that historic side certainly saw something in him.

Rafael Benítez took Pellegrino to Liverpool with him in 2005 – as much for what he could do for the team as what he could do in it.

He stayed only a season but returned as Benítez's assistant in 2008, although one former player says he was still a peripheral figure, occupying a backseat. He watched and listened, as he always had: as a player, Pellegrino would question every decision – not because he was accusing his coaches but because he was analysing them. Never standing still, never satisfied that he had found a definitive answer.

He has said he learned organisation from Marcelo Bielsa, space from Van Gaal. With Benítez, he saw the obsession with tactics, and England from the inside, how it is played and lived, what it means culturally. The feel for the game and for his players, though, is his own – and there's a moral element to it. "People have less religious belief and less belief in politicians: the only thing we have left to identify with is the shirt," he has said. "That's for life: grandad, dad,



Southampton's new manager Mauricio Pellegrino has signed a three-year contract. (AFP)

grandson united by a colour. I'm not against business, but I don't want that cultural part to be lost."

Players confirm Pellegrino, the son of farmers, repeatedly tells them that sport challenges the values of society, where individualism prevails. Society, he says, demands that you win, that

you have the best car, the most money; football demands that you help your team-mate, even if that means not scoring, not playing, not being in the spotlight. If the team are better, you are better. Yet achieving that means engaging with individuals, understanding. "When I grew up coaches never asked: 'How do you feel?' But if

I don't ask a player, how am I going to know his dreams?" he has asked.

At Alaves last season, that dream was a Copa del Rey final – only the second cup final, after the 2001 Uefa Cup which they lost to Liverpool, in the 96-year history of the club from Vitoria in the Basque Country. "He transmits to the players what the club and the city mean: he has built a side the fans identify with," says the captain, Manu Garcia, born in Vitoria and a lifelong member at Mendizorrosa.

"He's a very complete coach; not many have the tactical awareness of the game and also so much talent for group management. He and his staff have a lot of 'left hand'; they have the whole team plugged in, they avoid conflict, everyone gets an opportunity."

Pellegrino has two assistant coaches, Carlos Campagnucci and Xavi Tamarit, author of a book on the theory of periodisation fathered by Vitor Frade and followed by Jose Mourinho, among others. His fitness coach, David Rodríguez, and the goalkeeper coach, Javier López Vallejo, complete the team who have had a huge impact in Vitoria.

As Garcia talks enthusiastically through Pellegrino's tactical variations, his model as it shifts from 4-4-2 into 4-3-3, the multiple functions of the full-backs, the two central midfielders becoming one, the striker dropping in, the search for numerical superiority, you get a feel for the depth of understanding, the way it is mechanised, pieces interlocking, every element interdependent. "I'm 31, and of course I've learned a lot from all my coaches, but in just one year he has taught me to understand the game so much better than I did before – and that's not such an easy thing to do," Garcia says.

"He sees the game very well. He is a strategist, he analyses opponents closely and he believes in juego posicional [a positional game]. He has a lot of faith in that approach, in defence but also in attack: respect the positions, a well-ordered team, everything under control. He likes his team to express the way he is: intelligent, understanding, ordered. He works hard during the week and the things he plans for usually happen at the weekend."

Not that there is any guarantee, Pellegrino knows: the opposition play, too, and defeat awaits. He spent his playing career desperate to avoid it but he has come to accept it and learn from it, too; it made him who he is. He also knows that it has an impact on the way he is seen, even if he does not change. He knows there is no single answer and that virtues can soon be seen as vices.

"Football is like two people dancing: if the other person treads on your toes, you can't lift your heels," he says. "It's 22, not 11. There is what you want to do and what you can do. Experience shows that good results and bad results are part of the same packet. If you're calm and you win people say: 'The team is doing well because he's calm.' If you lose, they say: 'He's so calm he can't get the team going.' You can see a prince or a frog in every player, every coach, and everyone."

FOCUS

Messi's gritty hometown braces for a glamorous wedding

AFP
Rosario, Argentina

Security is at the top of everyone's minds in Rosario, Argentina these days. On Friday, football superstar Lionel Messi will be married there to Antonella Rocuzzo at a lavish celebration bringing together some of the world's best-paid football players, just up the street from one of the city's poorest and most dangerous neighbourhoods. Some 21 members of the hugely popular FC Barcelona team, including Luis Suarez and Neymar, as well as stars like Gerard Pique – accompanied by partner Shakira, perhaps more popular than the Catalan defender himself – will be flying into this port city 180 miles (300 kilometres) north of Buenos Aires.

The luxurious City Center casino-hotel complex, where guests will stay and the ceremony is expected to take place, borders a poor neighbourhood known as the birthplace of the bloody drug gang Los Monos.

"Messi's marriage – like the casino's presence in the neighbourhood – is a metaphor for inequality," provincial official Carlos Del Frade, author of several books on Rosario's exploding drug trade, said.

A mere 400 yards (metres) from the bright lights and neon of City Center, two people on a motorcycle opened fire on June 17 on four women belonging to Los Monos. The attack claimed the life of Petrona Cantero, 56, the sister of Ariel Cantero, the historic leader of Los Monos, who is now serving a prison sentence.

Drug gang-linked violence has claimed more than 1,000 lives in the past five years in this gritty port city, Del Frade said. Last year, the homicide rate in Rosario was double the national average of seven per 100,000 inhabitants, according to a report from the Ministry of Security of Santa Fe province, which includes Rosario.

In the Las Flores neighbourhood, just behind the City Center complex, Los Monos holds virtually total power, according to Del



Barcelona superstar Lionel Messi will get married to Antonella Rocuzzo on Friday.

Frade, who said the gang amounts to the "de facto government" there. Historically, Rosario has long had a strong working class, and today's violence stems largely from widespread unemployment, political scientists and economists say.

Messi's father, a metalworker here in the 1990s, emigrated with his family to Barcelona in 2000, amid the grave economic crisis then facing Argentina. Today, the government in Rosario says it feels confident the safety of the illustrious visitor and his guests can be assured, regardless of the high crime rate. "Rosario is prepared for the wedding," city administrator Monica Fein said. "Lionel chose to come get married here because it is his hometown and he feels comfortable here and we will do everything in our power to make it so."

For now, the details of the planned security operation remain closely guarded. Last week, local officials met with representatives of the Messi family, but no information leaked out, including on the location of the meeting itself, which was changed at the last moment to keep journalists away.

Gustavo Leone, a Rosario official, ex-

plained that this was "a private event." He added that if some guests want to visit Messi's city a private tour will be arranged, but only under conditions of strict security and confidentiality. Some local residents, people who know every twist and turn in the city's streets, cannot understand the decision by the football star – who made some 70mn euros last season, according to the Eurosport sports network – to hold his wedding celebration in such an unsafe area.

"The truth is, I'm surprised they're doing it here, considering that Messi is one of the best-paid players in the world. I just can't believe it," Micaela Llana, a 24-year-old secretary here said. Locals have been following the preparations as if they were all expecting to be invited, so they know all about last-minute changes to the plans. "The other hotel (the five-star Puerto Norte, where the celebration was to have been held) is in a much prettier area," said Ariel Vallejo, who works for a private security firm.

And everyone dreams of showing off the best parts of the city where the football superstar – five-time winner of the prestigious Ballon d'Or award – was born.

ROUND-UP

West Ham midfielder Antonio wants to keep getting better

West Ham United midfielder **Michail Antonio** (right) knows footballers can be "forgotten in two weeks" and is determined to keep improving to avoid that fate. Antonio started his senior career at semi-professional team Tooting and Mitcham United before joining Reading in 2008 and rising up the divisions, moving to West Ham in 2015.

The winger has since made over 50 league appearances for the Hammers. The 27-year-old had his best campaign in 2016-17 where he won the club's Player of the Year award after scoring nine goals in 29 league starts to help the London side secure a 11th placed finish but Antonio aims to improve further. "I never think 'I've made it' because, in football, you can be forgotten within two weeks and I don't ever want to be forgotten. I want to always be better and make my career last as long as possible," Antonio told the club's official website.

"It does make me proud to know where I've come from and how hard I have worked, but I'm also scared of it, because I know what I've had to do, and I don't ever want to go back to that situation. It drives me more to be better."

Antonio is recovering from a hamstring injury that ended his season in April but signed a new four-year contract at West Ham in May and is confident that he can achieve his target of scoring more goals next season.

SWANSEA WILL REAP BENEFITS OF FULL PRE-SEASON: CLEMENT

Swansea City manager Paul Clement hopes that having a full pre-season with his side will help them start the 2017-18 Premier League campaign strongly and avoid another relegation scrap. Clement joined Swansea in January, when they were bottom of the table, and led them out of the relegation zone with the team collecting 26 points from 18 games to finish 15th after four wins in their last five league matches.

The 45-year-old believes that his side will benefit from the opportunity to have a full pre-season as he can develop the team without the pressure of a relegation battle. "The key to making sure we do not have the same sort of season is starting strongly," Clement said.

"Every game is important and we want a good tally by the halfway point so we can avoid this pressure and suffering we have had in the second half of last season. Pre-season will be important in that we did not have time to do that in January be-



cause the pressure was on and it was so hectic. This gives us a less pressurised environment in which to do all those things."

STRIKER COSTA HARD TO REPLACE AT CHELSEA, SAYS LAMPARD

Premier League champions Chelsea will find it difficult to replace influential striker Diego Costa if he departs in the current transfer window, club legend Frank Lampard has said. Costa, 28, has been Chelsea's top scorer in all three seasons since joining the club in 2014, leading them to two league title wins.

Earlier this month, the Spain international said that he would leave Stamford Bridge after being told by manager Antonio Conte that he was not a part of the club's future plans. "He's a fantastic striker and we all saw that last season and since he's been at Chelsea. He would be very difficult to replace, there's no doubt about it," Lampard said. "He's an all-round physical presence that also has the quality to get goals, that's not easy to find in the modern day."

GETAFE RETURN TO LA LIGA AT FIRST ATTEMPT

Getafe returned to La Liga at the first time of asking on Saturday when they defeated Tenerife 3-1 in the second leg of their promotion play-off. The Madrid club, who were relegated from the top flight a year ago, recovering from losing the first leg 1-0 on Wednesday. They will join Levante and Girona in La Liga next season after those clubs earned automatic promotion.

CONFEDERATIONS CUP

Werner brace fires Germany into semis against Mexico

The victory in Sochi meant Germany finished top of Group B ahead of Chile

AFP
Sochi

Timo Werner netted twice as Germany set up a Confederations Cup semi-final against Mexico with a 3-1 win yesterday against 10-man Cameroon, who initially had the wrong player sent off.

Germany midfielder Kerem Demirbay opened the scoring just after the break before Werner struck either side of Vincent Aboubakar's consolation effort for Cameroon on 78 minutes.

But the video assistant referee system was again thrust into the spotlight when Cameroon defender Ernest Mabouka was sent off just past the hour for a dangerous tackle on Liverpool's Emre Can. Colombian referee Wilmar Roldan initially sent off Sebastien Siani by mistake, before the decision was rectified and Mabouka was dismissed instead.

"I didn't understand it and I still don't understand it now," fumed Cameroon's Belgian coach Hugo Broos. "I think this is something for the referee, he and he alone can explain what happened."

The victory in Sochi meant Germany finished top of Group B ahead of Chile, who drew 1-1 with Australia in Moscow. The Germans face Group A runners-up Mexico in Sochi next Thursday in their semi-final, while Chile will face Portugal on Wednesday in Kazan.

Joachim Loew reached the milestone of 100 wins in his 150th international as Germany's head coach. He maintained his impressive record of steering the national team to the semi-finals of every tournament over the last decade. "I have to say I am very proud and full of praise for the team for reaching the semi-finals," said Loew. "We didn't necessarily expect this in the build-up from such a young team. The lads have done a good job." Loew made four changes from the side which drew 1-1 with Chile on Thursday.

Centre-back Antonio Ruediger came in for Arsenal's Shkodran Mustafi and Werner, the top-scoring German in the Bundesliga last season, took Lars Stindl's place up front. After a strong season with Hoffenheim, Demirbay slotted into attacking midfield alongside captain Julian Draxler and Hertha Berlin's Marvin Platenhardt, who came in for Jonas Hector on the left wing. Cameroon fielded the same team for the third game in a row as midfielder Arnaud Djoum kept his place after Georges Mandjeck injured himself in the warm-up.

The first half was a poor reflection on both teams and was blighted by stray passes, an absence of precision and a lack of tempo.



Germany's forward Timo Werner (right) vies for the ball with Cameroon's defender Ernest Mabouka during the Confederations Cup group B match at the Fisht Stadium Stadium in Sochi, Russia, yesterday. (AFP)

But the world champions broke the deadlock when Draxler exchanged passes with Demirbay, who blasted past Cameroon goalkeeper Fabrice Ondoa from distance on 48 minutes. Aboubakar and substitute Moumi Ngamaleu then sighted the Germany goal, but the African champions were reduced to 10 men when Mabouka raked his studs down Can's knee.

Roldan initially sent off midfielder Siani, drawing furious Cameroonian protests with Broos incensed on the sidelines, and even Germany boss Loew got involved. The video referee then stepped

in and amended the decision with Mabouka eventually handed his marching orders instead.

The dismissal rattled the Africans and Germany scored a minute later when Werner headed beyond Ondoa. A fumble by Marc-Andre ter Stegen gave Cameroon a glimmer of hope on 78 minutes as Aboubakar's header flew through the German goalkeeper's fingers.

But Werner put the result beyond doubt when he fired home substitute Benjamin Henrichs' pass on 81 minutes. Werner could have finished with a hat-

trick as he drilled a late effort straight at Ondoa.

RESULTS

At Sochi: Germany 3 (Demirbay 48, Werner 66, 81) Cameroon 1 (Aboubakar 78)
At Moscow: Chile 1 (Rodriguez 67) Australia 1 (Troisi 42)

SEMI-FINAL LINE-UP:

Wednesday, June 28
At Kazan: Portugal v Chile (1800 GMT)
Thursday, June 29
At Sochi: Germany v Mexico (1800 GMT)
Final on July 2 in Saint Petersburg.

RUSSIA SLAMS WORLD CUP SQUAD DOPING PROBE REPORT

Moscow: Russian deputy Prime Minister Vitaly Mutko yesterday shrugged off a report that the country's entire 2014 World Cup squad was under FIFA investigation for doping.

British newspaper *The Mail* yesterday wrote that the Russian players are being probed by FIFA as part of a broader scandal over allegations of state-backed doping in the country. But Mutko – who also heads the country's football authorities – blasted the report as "nonsense" and insisted that there has never been any problem with doping in the Russian game.

And FIFA insisted all players including all of the Russian squad underwent pre-competition and post-match tests in Brazil. "All of which resulted negative," a spokesman for football's governing body said.

The statement added: "FIFA has simply confirmed that, in close collaboration with (World Anti Doping Agency) WADA, it is still investigating the allegations involving football players in the so-called McLaren report. However, FIFA did not refer to any particular players, since it cannot comment on the status of ongoing investigations."

In Moscow, Mutko told TASS news agency that Russian football was clean. "There have never been and will never be any problems with doping in our football. Our team are permanently being tested, they undergo doping tests after every match."

He added: "They (*The Mail on Sunday*) have written some sort of nonsense. Don't bother reading the English newspapers in the morning."

The Mail reported that the 2018 World Cup hosts' squad from the 2014 World Cup in Brazil and a further 11 players are being looked into after they ended up on a list of over 1,000 "people of interest" compiled by world anti-doping authorities. The article quoted a FIFA spokesman as saying that football's governing body was "still investigating the allegations".

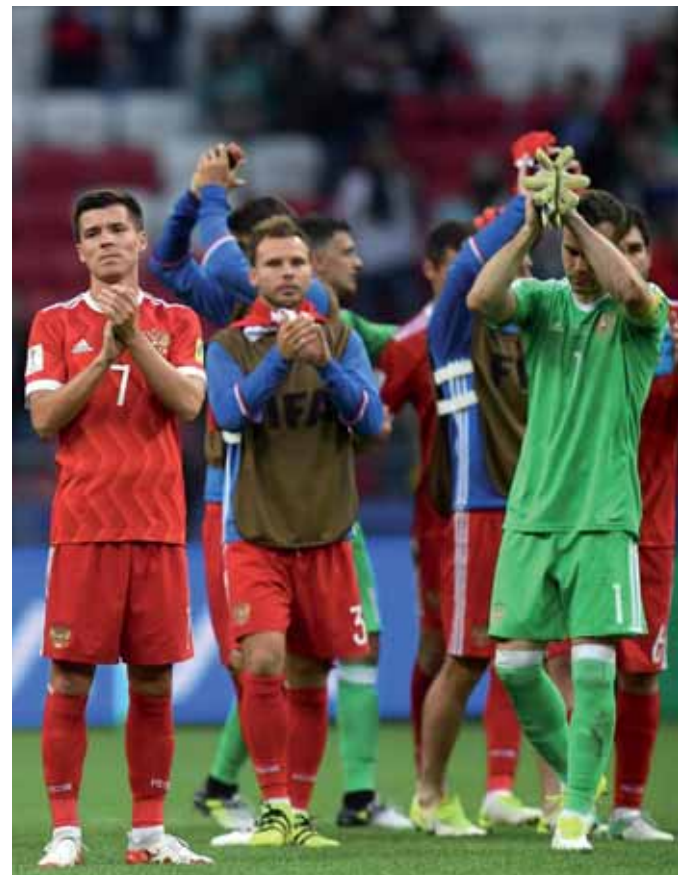
There is as yet no clear proof that the players were guilty of doping despite the alleged suspicions, the newspaper added. The latest claims threatens to cast a shadow as Russia hosts the Confederations Cup tournament a year ahead of the kick off of the World Cup in the country.

Four of the Russian players from the 2014 World Cup squad in Rio have been involved at the Confederations Cup. Russia was earlier accused by WADA of running a state-sponsored operation across sports to aid and protect drug cheats.

Most of Russia's track-and-field team was banned from the Olympic games in Rio over the doping scandal and its entire Paralympics squad was excluded. The allegations that football might have been involved could represent a major new twist in the doping saga and could drag in some of Russia's highest-profile sports stars.

FOCUS

Russia puts brave face on early exit



Russia's forward Dmitry Poloz (left) and his teammates acknowledge the fans after they lost to Mexico in the Confederations Cup group A match in Kazan on Saturday. (AFP)

AFP
Moscow

Russia struggled for positives yesterday after they crashed out of the Confederations Cup on home soil in an ominous sign of how the hosts might fare at next year's World Cup. Football bosses shrugged off fans' fears after the team's early exit following a 2-1 defeat by Mexico in Kazan on Saturday, insisting the squad was making progress despite the disappointing results.

"The tournament is unfortunately over for us but we want to thank the fans," coach Stanislav Cherchesov said in a video statement to supporters. "While in sporting terms we didn't manage to achieve what we wanted, in terms of morale then I think we took a step forward. Better times await us."

Expectations among Russian fans were low ahead of the Confederations Cup as the national team struggled for form in a series of warm-up games. Former goalkeeper Cherchesov has largely failed to get his players firing despite overhauling the squad since he was appointed less than a year ago after Russia's woeful showing at Euro 2016.

He insisted that he would remain in charge with 12 months to go to the World Cup. "Three quarters of the squad have never played at this level, and with new

players coming through all the time I'm optimistic about the future," he said in his post-game press conference. "I've worked with pleasure and will continue my work with the team. Probably even better than I'm doing now."

Russia, who started the Confederations Cup with a win over New Zealand, crashed out of the event after the group stage following consecutive defeats at the hands of European champions Portugal and the most decorated CONCACAF team Mexico.

Television footage showed some furious fans walking out of the Kazan stadium before the final whistle in Saturday's game against Mexico. "Shame on them! They showed no will to win! It's just impossible to play for the country that way," one fan told state TV.

But while football pundits in the country insisted that any anger was understandable, they said the supporters had to face up to the fact that, with the World Cup looming, the country needs to put its faith in the current batch of players. "We all need to realise that we don't have another team," Dmitry Zelenov, an expert for the *Sport Express* newspaper, wrote. "There should not be despair but faith. Faith that despite the flop we're moving in the right direction. There's a strong desire to kill this squad. It's a justified wish. But we shouldn't kill it. Because we don't have another one."

SPOTLIGHT

Chile book semi-final date with Portugal

AFP
Moscow

Martin Rodriguez rescued a 1-1 draw for Chile against Australia yesterday to send the South American champions through to a Confederations Cup semi-final against Portugal.

James Troisi steered Australia ahead on 42 minutes in Moscow, but Chile replied through half-time substitute Rodriguez on 67 minutes to advance as Group B runners-up behind Germany. Germany progressed as group winners following a 3-1 victory over Cameroon in Sochi, with the world champions to face Mexico for a place in the July 2 final in Saint Petersburg. Chile's coach insisted they had not underestimated Australia after Troisi gave the Socceroos a shock lead.

"In fact that could have been a quarter-final in the World Cup, such was the level of this game," said Juan Antonio Pizzi. "We are happy to reach the semi-finals and reach that aim. Now we must refocus on our next ambition."

Australia coach Ange Postecoglou regretted missed opportunities as they bow out of the Confed Cup after two draws and a defeat. "We wanted to get out of the group and we haven't, so we are disappointed," said Postecoglou. "They (Chile) are a world class team, a fantastic team, and have played some of the best teams in the world off the park. We needed energy to face that and the guys who came in did a great job. From my perspective, it was a great performance."

Veteran forward Tim Cahill collected



Chile's Martin Rodriguez (right) celebrates with teammate Alexis Sanchez after scoring against Australia in Moscow yesterday. (Reuters)

his 100th international cap at Spartak Stadium, joining long-serving former goalkeeper Mark Schwarzer (109) as the only other Australian player to reach the landmark. Alexis Sanchez went tumbling to ground early on following a last-ditch intervention from Mark Milligan, but the video assistant referee dismissed penalty claims as replays showed a clear touch from the Australian defender.

Claudio Bravo returned for Chile following a calf injury and the Manchester City goalkeeper produced a smart block to deny a lunging Massimo Luongo, although Australia forged ahead on 42 minutes. A risky pass from Bravo was intercepted inside the Chile half, allowing Robbie Kruse to steer the ball across the face of the box to an unmarked Troisi who clipped over the advancing keeper.

Arturo Vidal nearly replied instantly when his stooping header was blocked on the line by Milligan with the rebound eluding Jose Fuenzalida. Australian centre-back Trent Sainsbury missed a glorious chance for a second goal before the break, lashing wildly over the volley after Chile's defence momentarily

switched off. But the introduction of Rodriguez and Pablo Hernandez at half-time proved crucial as Chile levelled midway through the second half. Eduardo Vargas beat his marker to a looping ball in the area, knocking down into the path of Rodriguez who smuggled the ball beyond Matt Ryan for his first international goal.

Vargas headed fractionally wide after Sanchez had escaped down the left and picked out his striking partner, while Jamie MacLaren miscued badly in front of Bravo after a brilliant delivery from Troisi before the contest gradually petered out.

Sonny Bill gifts team kit to young British Lions fan

AFP
Auckland

All Blacks centre **Sonny Bill Williams** has made another heart-warming gesture, this time presenting his All Blacks shorts and socks to a young Lions fan as he left the field after the first Test in Auckland.

The latest touching moment follows Williams memorably giving away his World Cup winners' medal to a young English fan after the All Blacks won the



world crown at Twickenham two years ago.

This time, after the All Blacks beat the Lions 30-15 Saturday in the first Test, Williams stripped off his shorts and socks

and handed over the kit to a young Lions fan with the gesture caught on video and posted on social media.

"Is there no end to @SonnyBWilliams and his classy gestures?!" tweeted Pat McCarry who put up the video.

"Sonny Bill gives his socks & shorts to a young Lions fan on the edge of Eden Park. Sonny Bill in his undies ladies!" added Melanie D.

After the All Blacks won the 2015 World Cup final against Australia, Williams presented his winners' medal to a boy who had been knocked over by a security

guard. "I was walking around doing a lap of honour with the boys and a young fella came running out and he got smoked by the security guard, like full-on tackled him. I felt sorry for the little fella," Williams said at the time.

"If that was a younger brother or cousin I would have given the security guard a hiding. But I just picked the kid up and took him back to his old lady and tried to make the night more memorable for him. Better (for the medal) to be hanging around his neck than mine."

VERBAL WAR

'Down and dirty' All Blacks have tip for beaten Lions

'When they can score tries like that first one you're sitting there thinking they should be doing that more often'



Lions coach Warren Gatland (L) and New Zealand All Blacks coach Steve Hansen (R) shake hands at Eden Park in Auckland on Saturday.

AFP
Auckland

All Blacks coach Steve Hansen has fired up the verbal war with the British and Irish Lions again, suggesting they play New Zealand style to be competitive in the second Test in Wellington next week.

The world champion All Blacks put away their razzle dazzle to get "down and dirty" when they beat the Lions 30-15 in the first Test in Auckland on Saturday.

With the Lions outsmarted at their own game, and losing the

crucial forward battle, Hansen noted that when the recommended they run the ball more often because that was when they were at their most dangerous. They were a whisker away from scoring in the opening minute when they took the All Blacks by surprise and went wide only for Elliott Daly to be rolled on his back and forced into touch as he dived for the line.

The Lions then stunned Hansen with an 85-metre sweep featuring Liam Williams, Jonathan Davies and Daly before flanker Sean O'Brien finished the move with a try.

"When they can score tries

like that first one you're sitting there thinking they should be doing that more often," Hansen said.

"That was probably one of the best Test tries I've ever seen."

It was an observation taken on board by Gatland who regretted his Lions suffered from a lack of finishing skills.

"You could argue that Ben Te'o's an option to shift the ball and create an opportunity for an overlap chance," he said.

"You finish those chances and it changes the whole mindset and momentum of the game and unfortunately we created those and didn't quite finish them off."

Instead the Lions persisted with trying to prove their declared aim of being the best forward pack in the world and Hansen said they lost that battle too.

"Our tight five were very, very good. If your tight five do the job everyone else can play. Tonight's test was always going to be won in the tight five and I think we won that battle... we've got to be extremely proud of what they did," he said.

"I always find it amusing when everyone tell us they're going to beat us up in the tight five because we're not just a team that plays flashy rugby, we can play

down and dirty rugby if we have to, and I mean that in the most respectful way."

With the Lions needing to win the second Test in Wellington next week to keep the series alive, Gatland said his tourists now "know what to expect," but All Blacks assistant coach Ian Foster warned the world champions had not shown their full arsenal.

"We went into this game with a plan to combat them and we showed everything we needed to show," Foster said.

"There's some things we can improve, you've just have to wait and see."

SPOTLIGHT

Cheika believes Wallabies can tame All Blacks



Andries Van Schalkwyk (L) of Italy is tackled by Lopeti Timani of Australia during their match at Suncorp Stadium in Brisbane on June 24.

AFP
Brisbane

Coach Michael Cheika has raised eyebrows by claiming the Wallabies can upset the All Blacks in the Bledisloe Cup series following their shaky win over Italy. Australia, coming off a home loss to Scotland the previous week, made six changes as they scrambled to a 40-27 win over the Six Nations strugglers in Brisbane on Saturday.

The Wallabies held a tenuous 28-27 lead with four minutes remaining, but conjured two late tries to salvage victory over the Azzurri.

Wallaby back Karmichael Hunt reflected what many were thinking when he said after the final whistle: "We just can't afford to do that against the All Blacks in the Rugby Championship because they'll kill us."

Cheika took the opposite tack, talking up their chances of beating the world champions in Sydney on August 19.

"The performance (against Italy) wasn't up to winning that match, for sure," he told reporters after Saturday's game.

"We've got to get our work right in the next six to eight weeks that's left before that first Test (against New Zealand) so we don't play like that, we play much better."

Australia's players now return to Super Rugby for the last two weeks of the regular season, before reassembling to prepare for the All Blacks.

Cheika said he was confident they can pull off a major shock against a team that beat the British and Irish Lions 30-15 in Auckland on Saturday.

"I know everyone's having a laugh when I say that, but I believe with that clear goal we can go there and do that," he said.

"We've got to work extra hard

Boks find renewed belief in series sweep of France

Reuters, Johannesburg:

South Africa's revival in 2017 has been built on their intensity in defence and vigour at the breakdown, which was on display again in the dominant 35-12 victory over France at Ellis Park on Saturday that saw them sweep the home series 3-0.

The Springboks scored four tries to none and overcame the late withdrawal of captain Warren Whiteley to overpower their opponents and take the series with an aggregate of 109 points over the three Tests.

The past three weeks have been chalk and cheese with last year, when the Boks lost eight of their 12 Tests, including historic defeats to Ireland, Italy and Argentina, for the worst rugby season in the country's history.

The calls from the public for Coetzee's sacking were at times deafening, but the improvement in the side, specifically at the breakdown and on defence in particular, has been striking.

"It was great to see how we have turned things around. We've learned a lot since last year. There's a lot of belief in the side now," Coetzee told reporters.

and we've got to be prepared to work even harder once we come out of Super Rugby for that little (training) block to be ready because it's a key element to staying in the game."

Test footy." Wallabies winger Sefa Naivalu is in doubt for the Bledisloe Cup opener after suffering an ankle injury against Italy and will be out for up to seven weeks.

BOTTOMLINE

USA, Canada play draw in World Cup qualifier

AFP
Montreal

Mike Te'o and Nick Civetta each scored two tries for the United States as the Eagles played host Canada to a 28-28 draw Saturday in a 2019 Rugby World Cup qualifier.

South African-born D.T.H. van der Merwe scored two tries for Canada and Irish-born Shane O'Leary added two conversions and three penalty kicks, the last in the 78th minute to lift the hosts into a deadlock.

The dramatic result before 13,187 at the home of Canadian football's Hamilton Tiger-Cats sent the two-leg qualifying series into a winner-take-all

Argentina beat Georgia 45-29 despite poor final quarter

Buenos Aires: Argentina ended a run of five defeats with a 45-29 win over Georgia on Saturday which had Pumas coach Daniel Hourcade rueing the frequent dips in their game as much as praising their spells of brilliance.

The victory in Juju, in the far north-western corner of Argentina, was just their second in 11 tests and gave the Pumas a much-needed boost before the Rugby Championship kicks off on Aug. 19 away to South Africa.

"Winning is always important. But (a match) is 80 minutes and we're not

satisfied because there were 20 in which we should have played better," Hourcade told reporters. Argentina, building on four Nicolas Sanchez penalties early on, pulled away from Georgia with tries by hooker Agustin Creevy and fullback Joaquin Tuculet for a 26-8 halftime lead.

Wing Ramiro Moyano, who was sin-binned early on for a dangerous aerial challenge, scored three tries early in the second half but Georgia replied with four, three in the final 28 minutes to reduce a deficit which had stood at 45-15 after an hour.

showdown next Saturday at San Diego, California. The winner books a 2019 berth in Japan while the loser faces another series against a South American rival to reach the next World Cup.

Te'o gave the Eagles their first lead with a try in the 40th minute and A.J. MacGinty's conversion put the Americans ahead 21-15 at half-time.

Canada pulled within 21-18 on O'Leary's penalty kick in the 46th minute after US hooker James Hilderbrand was sent to the sin bin for a high tackle on Phil Mack.

With Canada poised for a go-ahead try, Te'o intercepted an O'Leary pass and rambled 95 metres for a US try in the 52nd minute, MacGinty converting for a 28-18 Eagles lead.

Video replay wiped out what had

originally been called a Canada try in the 63rd minute, Andrew Coe being found to have knocked on before going over the line.

But Canadian cap record holder Aaron Carpenter found the corner in the 70th minute and O'Leary's conversion pulled the hosts within 28-25.

After a US penalty with Canada inches from the line, the hosts opted for an O'Leary penalty kick that created the final margin.

MacGinty missed a drop goal in the 80th minute and O'Leary missed a penalty kick at the death to leave the match deadlocked.

Canada leads the all-time rivalry 38-17 with two drawn, but the Eagles are now unbeaten in six consecutive matches against Canada, including a

51-34 victory earlier this year on the way to winning the Americas Championship.

The Canadians have not lost a qualifying match to the United States since 2009, but that was only the fifth time in 20 qualifying matches they failed to win.

Van der Merwe and Civetta, teammates next season on English Premiership side Newcastle, each scored two first-half tries.

Van der Merwe, who spent lengthy Pro 12 stints with Glasgow and Scarlets before joining the Falcons next season, took an offload from Andrew Cow and scored in the eighth minute.

Civetta answered in the ninth minute after Canada couldn't gather the kick-off as the visitors equalised 7-7.

GOLF

Spieth keeps PGA Travelers lead with late birdie binge

‘With a few feet to go it was going to have a chance and it curled right in the middle. That was a loud roar and those are really fun to experience’

AFP
Washington

Jordan Spieth birdied three of the last four holes, including the last with a dramatic 20-foot putt, to grab a one-stroke lead after Saturday's third round of the US PGA Travelers Championship.

Sixth-ranked Spieth, the 2015 Masters and US Open champion, shook off back-to-back bogeys at 13 and 14 with a sizzling finish, curling in his final putt for a four-under par 66 to reach 12-under 198 after 54 holes.

“With a few feet to go it was going to have a chance and it curled right in the middle,” Spieth told reporters. “That was a loud roar and those are really fun to experience.”

The 23-year-old American, who won earlier this year at Pebble Beach, could complete a wire-to-wire triumph and claim his 10th PGA title at TPC River Highlands near Hartford, Connecticut.

American Boo Weekley, who hasn't won a PGA title since 2013 at Colonial and hasn't finished in the top 25 this season, fired a 65 to stand second on 199 with compatriot Daniel Berger third on 201. Taiwan's C.T. Pan fired the day's low round, a 64, to join England's Paul Casey and Sweden's David Lingmerth in fourth on 202.

Spieth hopes to carry the momentum from his strong finish into the final round on Sunday.

“I'm going to go out there and play solid golf,” Spieth said. “That's what we've been doing. That's cliché, but a couple (birdies) a side on a round like today, I thought at the beginning of the week if you shot four under each day, you'd be right there. So I think that's the goal.”

Spieth began the day with a one-stroke edge and five opening pars solidified his spot. He found a bunker at the par-3 fifth but sank a clutch 15-foot par putt to stay ahead.

Spieth followed with birdies at the par-5 sixth and par-4 seventh. He blasted from a bunker to off the edge of the green then sank the birdie bid from 27 feet, then landed his approach inside three feet and sank the



Jordan Spieth of the United States high fives fans after putting on the 18th green during the third round of the Travelers Championship at TPC River Highlands in Cromwell, Connecticut. (Getty Images/AFP)

birdie putt to reach 10-under. But Spieth closed the front nine with a bogey for the second time in three days and seconds later Charley Hoffman completed an eagle-birdie-birdie run by sinking a five-foot birdie putt at 15 to seize the lead by one at 10-under.

Spieth responded with birdies from eight feet at the 10th and half that distance at the par-3 11th to reach 11-under, jumping back in front as Hoffman made double bogey at the par-3 16th and closed bogey-bogey.

A splashdown second shot for Spieth at the par-5 13th led to a bogey, trimming his edge to

one stroke over Daniel Berger. But Spieth missed the green on his approach at 14 and missed a six-foot par putt to fall into a share of the lead with Berger and Weekley. Again Spieth answered the challenge, firing his tee shot at the par-4 15th into a greenside bunker, then blasting out inches from the cup for a tap-in birdie to reclaim sole possession of the lead at 10-under.

Spieth then sank a five-foot birdie putt at the par-3 16th to share the lead with Weekley at 11-under after his rival's birdie-birdie finish, setting up his dramatic go-ahead birdie at 18.

Third-ranked Rory McIlroy, who made the cut on the number, switched to a half-mallet putter as he searched for better results on the greens. He shot 70 with two birdies and two bogeys to stand on 210.

Leading scores after third round

198 – Jordan Spieth 63-69-66
199 – Boo Weekley 66-68-65
201 – Daniel Berger 68-67-66
202 – C.T. Pan (TPE) 70-68-64
David Lingmerth (SWE) 67-70-65, Paul Casey (ENG) 68-68-66
203 – David Hearn (CAN) 67-70-66, Keegan Bradley 67-70-66,

Danny Lee (NZL) 68-67-68
204 – Jason Kokrak 71-67-66, Webb Simpson 70-68-66, Charley Hoffman 69-67-68, Chez Reavie 69-66-69, Patrick Rodgers 70-65-69
205 – Marc Leishman (AUS) 69-68-68, Bryson DeChambeau 67-72-66, Brian Harman 66-70-69, Ryan Brehm 68-68-69, Brendan Steele 68-68-69, Patrick Reed 67-66-72
206 – Rick Lamb 69-69-68, Morgan Hoffmann 67-70-69, Xander Schauffele 66-70-70, Padraig Harrington (IRL) 66-69-71, Bryce Molder 70-70-66, Chase Seiffert 68-66-72, Troy Merritt 65-68-73

BMW OPEN

Romero edges Garcia to Munich title

AFP
Munich

Andres Romero, the world number 837, fired a stunning seven-under-par final round of 65 to win his second European Tour title at the BMW International Open in Munich yesterday.

The Argentinian, 36, went into the final day three strokes adrift of Richard Bland and world number five Sergio Garcia, but ended up winning by one shot from that pair and Belgian Thomas Detry.

Romero, who has struggled with form and fitness in recent years, belied his lowly ranking with a fantastic performance to claim his first title on either the European or PGA Tours since 2008. Detry made the first move, with five birdies on the front nine to briefly take the lead.

A bogey on the par-four 10th put a halt to his charge, as the focus turned to the final group of Garcia and England's Bland.

The overnight leaders started slowly, with Bland playing his first eight holes in one over, while Spaniard Garcia was even par.

But both sprung into action around the turn, as the Englishman poured in three consecutive birdies to the Masters champion's two in three holes as the pair moved a stroke clear.

The previous four years had seen the winner score at least 17 under par at Eichenried, and Romero catapulted himself into a tie for the lead with six birdies in eight holes.

Detry also rediscovered his

groove with birdies at 14 and 16, leaving four players tied atop the leaderboard on 16 under with the last group having four holes to play.

The tournament took a dramatic twist, as after Detry had failed to find a birdie at the par-five 18th and signed for a 66, Romero did just that to set the clubhouse target at minus 17.

Bland and Garcia fell back with late bogeys, meaning that they both needed an eagle on the 72nd hole to force a playoff with Romero.

Garcia narrowly failed to chip in with his third shot, before Bland's 15-foot eagle putt slid past the right edge to confirm Romero's unlikely victory.

Leading final round scores

271 - Andres Romero (ARG) 67-71-68-65
272 - Richard Bland 67-69-67-69, Sergio Garcia (ESP) 66-70-67-69, Thomas Detry (BEL) 65-71-70-66
274 - Rikard Karlberg (SWE) 67-69-72-66
275 - Tommy Fleetwood 67-71-70-67, Renato Paratore (ITA) 70-70-67-68
276 - Hennie Otto (RSA) 68-69-70-69, Nacho Elvira (ESP) 72-70-68-66
277 - David Lipsky (USA) 71-69-67-70, Henrik Stenson (SWE) 67-69-72-69
278 - Kiradech Aphibarnrat (THA) 67-74-68-69, Scott Henry 69-72-66-71
279 - Joost Luiten (NED) 66-73-69-71, Joakim Lagergren (SWE) 69-66-69-75, Jamie Donaldson 70-71-68-70, Dylan Frittelli (RSA) 72-71-66-70, George Coetzee (RSA) 69-70-70-70, Pablo Larrazabal (ESP) 71-71-68-69



Andres Romero of Argentina smiles as he holds the trophy after winning the final of the BMW International Open golf tournament in Eichenried near Munich yesterday. (AFP)

MLB

Kershaw in rare form as Dodgers blank Rockies

By Mike DiGiovanna
Los Angeles Times

Dave Roberts could see this coming last Tuesday, the day after Clayton Kershaw gave up four homers in a game for the first time in his career during a shoddy 61/3-inning, six-run, six-hit effort against the New York Mets.

“I think Clayton's pretty good about turning the page,” the Los Angeles Dodgers manager said in the wake of Kershaw's brutal start, which the left-hander punctuated by kicking the dug-out bench in frustration.

“But I wouldn't want to be the Rockies come Saturday.”

The wrath of Kershaw was felt Saturday night in Dodger Stadium, where the three-time Cy Young Award winner allowed four hits across six shutout innings in a 4-0 victory over Colorado.

Kershaw survived a shaky 33-pitch first inning in which he escaped a bases-loaded, one-out jam.

He needed only 70 pitches to breeze through the next five innings to improve to 11-2 with a

2.47 ERA.

Kershaw struck out eight, walked one and kept the potent Rockies in the yard, no small feat for a pitcher who has been tagged for a career-high 17 homers in a season that hasn't reached its halfway point.

Relievers Brandon Morrow, Pedro Baez and Sergio Romo covered the final three innings for the Dodgers, who improved to 50-26, extended their win streak to nine and won for the 15th time in 16 games, a stretch in which they've outscored the Nationals, Reds, Indians, Mets and Rockies 108-57.

And to think, Kershaw barely survived the first inning.

Charlie Blackmon kicked off the game with a seven-pitch at-bat that ended with a line out to left field. DJ LeMahieu doubled to left, and Nolan Arenado capped a seven-pitch at-bat with an infield single to the shortstop hole.

Mark Reynolds fouled off three two-strike pitches en route to a nine-pitch walk to load the bases. That's when Kershaw broke out the heavy mettle.

With his 30th pitch, Kershaw struck out Ian Desmond with a sharp slider in the dirt. With



Los Angeles Dodgers starting pitcher Clayton Kershaw pitches against the Colorado Rockies in the first inning at Dodger Stadium. PICTURE: USA TODAY Sports

his 33rd pitch, he blew a 93mph fastball by Trevor Story for a called strike three, pumping his fist as he stepped off the mound. Threat defused.

The punch-outs started a string in which Kershaw retired 13 straight batters, seven by strikeout, before reliever Chris Rusin and Blackmon singled

with two outs in the fifth. LeMahieu lined out to third to end the inning.

Kershaw, mixing his 92-94 mph fastballs with a hard sliders

RESULTS

Dodgers	4	Rockies	0
Athletics	10	White Sox	2
Nationals	18	Reds	3
Angels	6	Red Sox	3
Astros	5	Mariners	2
Diamondbacks	9	Mariners	2
Cubs	5	Marlins	3
Twins	4	Indians	2
Braves	3	Brewers	1
Pirates	7	Cardinals	3
Mets	5	Giants	2
Royals	3	Blue Jays	2
Orioles	8	Rays	3
Padres	7	Tigers	3

and occasional looping curves, struck out the side in the fourth, Reynolds looking at 93 mph fastball, Desmond swinging at an elevated 92 mph fastball and Story swinging at a 75 mph curve.

His best pitch of the night may have come in the fifth, when he struck out Tom Murphy looking with a knee-high, 92-mph fastball on the outside corner. Kershaw retired the side in order in the sixth.

The Dodgers took advantage of two walks by Rockies starter Tyler Chatwood to score their first run in the second inning,

when Enrique Hernandez rolled an RBI single to left. Chatwood opened the third with a center-cut 94mph fastball to Joc Pederson, who did not miss it.

Pederson crushed a towering 421-foot drive to straightaway center for his sixth homer of the season and a 2-0 lead, yelling something toward the Dodgers dugout before beginning his home-run trot.

Sitting next to the Dodgers dugout in a wheelchair was Ziggy Lazaro, an 11-year-old from Los Angeles with spinal muscular atrophy who was named co-manager for the day as part of ESPN's Make-A-Wish program. Pederson and Lazaro met before the game.

“Joc was very happy that Ziggy pencilled him in at center field and hit him second,” Roberts said before the game.

“(Joc) said when I'm just the manager, he hits eighth. He was happy Ziggy was managing today.”

Pederson's shot gave the Dodgers homers in 16 straight games, tied for the third-longest streak in franchise history.

The last time the Dodgers homered in 16 straight games was July 24-Aug. 7, 1956.



BOXING

Pacquiao vows to leave Australia as world champ

AFP
Brisbane

Philippine boxing great **Manny Pacquiao** arrived in Australia ahead of his title fight with Jeff Horn and declared: "I will be going home as world champion."

The "Pac Man" touched down in Brisbane late Saturday from Manila with a large entourage for his World Boxing Organisation welterweight title bout at Suncorp Stadium in Brisbane next weekend.

"In all my years of boxing, I have never been as motivated and fired up as this fight," he told reporters at the airport.

"My team is very happy with my preparation. I am looking forward to this and I will be going home as world champion."

Pacquiao (59-6-2, 38 knockouts) is a clear favourite against

Horn, although the Filipino great has not stopped an opponent since his 12th round TKO of Miguel Cotto in 2009.

The eight-weight world champion has said he is using the bout as an opportunity to prove he remains a global force at the age of 38 as he juggles boxing with a full-time job as a senator in the Philippines.

"I'm so thankful for this great opportunity to be here in Australia and fight here, and the warm welcome of the people here," Pacquiao said.

"I think this is one of the biggest crowds that I'm going to fight to. I love the fans shouting and cheering for me, or for Horn. I like that, it's exciting."

Pacquiao, who briefly retired early last year before making a successful comeback against Jessie Vargas in Las Vegas in November, will need to be on song against the unbeaten Horn, who has won 16 of his 17 fights with

one draw.

A relatively unknown physical education teacher, the 29-year-old Australian has been dubbed the "fighting schoolteacher" by promoters, who say the 50,000-seat Suncorp Stadium is almost sold out.

"I consider him a tough opponent," Pacquiao said. "I never underestimate my opponent. He's undefeated, he's young. I like aggressive fighters."

"Training is good, we did a lot of hard work, I am very excited for the fans to give a good show to show my best and in boxing ring," he told Australian Broadcasting Corp. radio.

"Some reports coming out of the Philippines that I haven't been training hard are not true. It just happens that when some of our friends came around to our training camp, we weren't doing much and people assumed I wasn't training hard."

Roach, who has trained such

world champions as Mike Tyson, Oscar De La Hoya and Wladimir Klitschko, said Pacquiao intends to keep his world title.

"He has the best work ethic in the world. He trains hard every day and we do 48 boxing rounds every day non-stop just work, work," Roach said.

"We are here to win the fight, we don't take anyone lightly."

Pacquiao said outside the church that "this (religion) is my main priority, more than anything... Sunday is a worship day."

He said he planned to hold a light sparring session on Monday.

The 29-year-old Horn, 16-0-1, 11 by knockout, is a 2012 Olympian.

The fight is expected to attract a sellout crowd of about 50,000 at the outdoor Suncorp Stadium in Brisbane. It is scheduled for early afternoon next Sunday, which will be Saturday evening in the United States.



ATHLETICS

Harrison romps as Kendricks soars with season-best jump

'Six metres is a career point. Every great jumper in history has at least one six-metre jump under their belt. And I wanted to be part of that club'

AFP
Sacramento

Hurdles star **Ken Harrison** romped to victory at the US World Championships trials on Saturday as pole vaulter **Sam Kendricks** soared through the six-metre barrier with a season-best jump.

Harrison, the 100m hurdles world record-holder, blasted to a flawless win in 12.60 seconds in sweltering conditions at Sacramento's Hornet Stadium.

Olympic silver medallist **Nia Ali** was second in 12.68 with **Christina Manning** third in 12.70.

Afterwards, Harrison — who failed to qualify for last year's Olympics after a shock sixth-place finish at the US trials — said she believed American women could repeat their 2016 Olympic sweep of the medals at the World Championships in August.

"The Americans are really talented in this event and it's one of our strongest events so I think we can," she said when asked about the prospect of another 1-2-3.

The strength in depth was reflected in the fact that **Jasmine Stowers**, who set a season-best 12.47 in morning semi-finals, placed last in the final.

In the men's pole vault, 2016 Olympics bronze medallist **Sam Kendricks** posted the highest outdoor jump of 2017 after clearing 6.0m. It was the first time the 24-year-old US Army reservist had cleared six metres, a psychological benchmark that he said will give him the confidence to challenge for gold in London.

"Six metres is a career point," **Kendricks** said. "Every great jumper in history has at least one six-metre jump under their belt. And I wanted to be part of that club."

"Going for that gold in London is what I'm vying for. I have a personal best now that contends with any record or any championship"

Kerley cruises

Elsewhere Saturday, in the men's 400m, **Fred Kerley** underscored his status as the form one-lap specialist of 2017 with the second-fastest time of the year. **Kerley** produced a smooth burst of acceleration down the home straight to win in 44.03, with **Gil Roberts** second and **Wil London** third.

The 22-year-old Texas runner now owns the five fastest



Kendra Harrison clears a hurdle on the way to victory in the women's 100m hurdle final of the 2017 USA Track & Field Championships at Hornet Stadium in Sacramento, California, on Saturday. (Getty Images/AFP)

400m times of 2017, including a season-best 43.70 earlier this month.

In the women's 400m, **Quanera Hayes** clocked a world-leading 49.72 as she romped to victory. The 25-year-old's winning time beat Olympic champion **Shaunae Miller-Uibo's** season-best of 49.77 set in the Shanghai Diamond League meeting in May. **Phyllis Francis** was second in 49.96 with **Kendall Ellis** third in 50.00.

In heats for the men's 200m, **Christian Coleman** bounced back from his surprise defeat against **Justin Gatlin** to ease through to the semi-finals.

The 21-year-old rising star of American sprinting, stunned by veteran **Gatlin** in the 100m final on Friday, coasted into the next round of the 200m in 20.34.

The 200m also saw **LaShawn Merritt** confirm his fitness with a time of 20.74.

Merritt, who is already qualified for London by virtue of winning the 400m Diamond League crown last season, said he will skip the remaining rounds of the 200m. "I just needed to run something,

show fitness," the 2008 Olympic 400m champion said.

Centrowitz upset

Elsewhere, 2012 Olympic 200m champion **Allyson Felix** eased through her 200m heat.

Felix, a six-time Olympic gold medallist, won her heat in 22.95. The 31-year-old, who has a bye into the World Championships following her 2015 400m gold, plans to only run the one-lap event in London.

In the men's 110m hurdles, 2012 Olympic champion **Aries Merritt** sailed into the semi-finals, winning his heat in 13.41.

Merritt, 31, told AFP he is now fully recovered from the after-effects of his 2015 kidney transplant and a groin injury last season that scuppered his bid to make the Olympic team.

"It has been a few years since I felt as good as this," **Merritt** said.

In the men's 1,500m final, 2016 Olympic champion **Matthew Centrowitz** was upset after being pipped for victory by the fast-finishing **Robby Andrews**. **Andrews** won in 3:43.29 with **Centrowitz** second in 3:43.41.



Sam Kendricks leaps to victory in the men's pole vault final of the 2017 USA Track & Field Championships at Hornet Stadium in Sacramento, California. (Getty Images/AFP)

SPOTLIGHT

McLeod sets Jamaican mark in 110m hurdles

AFP
Kingston, Jamaica

Olympic gold medallist **Omar McLeod** set a Jamaican national record in the 110m hurdles on Saturday with a blistering time of 12.90 seconds during the 2017 Jamaican track and field championships.

McLeod says he is dedicating the next few weeks to setting sights on **Aries Merritt's** world record of 12.80 seconds which he hopes to break before the London World Championships in August.

"I did not get it, so I am going after it next time," said **McLeod**, who has races in Paris and Budapest meets before travelling to London.

McLeod's time on Saturday eclipsed the previous Jamaican record of 12.94 seconds set by **Hansle Parchment** in 2014 in Paris. **McLeod** has been having a fantastic last two seasons where he won the World Indoors 60m and Olympic games gold medals five months apart.

He also shaved .07 seconds off his previous personal best time. Indeed, **McLeod** now has the top four times in the world so far this year and lowered his previous career best of 13.01 seconds.

He is tied for fifth best all time with American **Dominique Arnold** and trails only **Merritt**, **Cuba's Dayron Robles**, **China's Liu Xiang** and American **David Oliver**.

The sky is the limit for **McLeod** who will be seeking to make up for his disappointing 2015 World Championships in Beijing, China where he finished sixth.

Ronald Levy, the second fastest in the world so far, was second in 13.13 seconds while **Parchment**, running with



Omar McLeod sets a new Jamaican national record in the men's 110m hurdles final during the Jamaica National Track & Field trials in Kingston Jamaica on Saturday. (AFP)

an injury, took third place in 13.19 seconds. **Speedster Yohan Blake** is on course for the sprint double after qualifying the 200m finals on Sunday, winning his semi-final heat in 20.30 seconds in his first 200m race of the season.

Commonwealth Games champion **Rasheed Dwyer** was the fastest qualifier after he won his heat in 20.16 seconds while World and Olympic medallist **Warren Weir** also advanced.

Discus thrower **Fedric Dacres** retained his Jamaican title with 66.52 metre toss while London Olympian **Traves Smikle** was second with 63.26m. Both 400m finals are set for Sunday with all the top contenders qualifying for the deciding races.

Demish Gaye is unbeaten all year and has dropped his times significantly as he won his semi-final heat in 45.26 seconds Saturday while **Nathon Allen** also won his heat in 45.49 seconds.

SAILING/ AMERICA'S CUP

USA claw back a win over New Zealand

AFP
Hamilton

Defenders Oracle Team USA seized a vital victory over the previously perfect Emirates Team New Zealand in the 35th America's Cup on Saturday.

Team USA, skippered by **Jimmy Spithill**, will be hoping their first victory will be the start of a comeback like the one they staged in 2013 — when they roared back from 1-8 down to beat the **Kiwis** 9-8 in San Francisco.

But at 1-4 down in the first-to-seven points series they remain in a tough spot.

Since New Zealand swept the first four races last weekend, the USA had worked feverishly to find more speed in their foiling catamaran.

They appeared to have found it, but two penalties for **Spithill** and his crew in the

opening race helped New Zealand stretch their lead to 4-0.

But in a closely fought second race it was Team USA who emerged the winner by 11 seconds. They'll be trying to narrow the gap further in two more races.

"That was exactly what the boys needed," **Spithill** said. "We fought hard and kept our composure even though we lost the lead."

"We worked very hard over the past five days. We did a lot of work on the shore and a little more tonight with a little improvement in sailing technique and I'm confident we can pick up a couple more wins tomorrow."

Team New Zealand helmsman **Peter Burling** said he welcomed the challenge.

"We're just excited about the battle ahead," **Burling** said. "We knew it was going to be hard. We were set up for a battle and it's good to see that they're giving us one."

TENNIS / ATP GERRY WEBER OPEN

Federer thrashes Zverev to win ninth Halle title

'After my long break, I'm feeling excellent... I'm fit for Wimbledon'

AFP
Halle, Germany

Swiss great Roger Federer thrashed Alexander Zverev to win his ninth title at the Wimbledon warm-up tournament in Halle yesterday.

The top seed lost his first match of the grass-court season last week in Stuttgart to Tommy Haas, but was in imperious form all week at Halle, culminating in the 6-1, 6-3 final victory over the home favourite Zverev.

Federer will head into Wimbledon, which starts on July 3, as favourite to win an outright record eighth title.

Italian Open champion Zverev had won all three of his previous finals this season, but was blown away by a vintage performance from the 18-time major champion in only 53 minutes.

"I played great, I felt good from the start," said Federer.

"It was by far my best match of the week. After my long break, I'm feeling excellent and it's a pleasure to be back and I'm fit for Wimbledon."

The 35-year-old, who skipped the entire clay-court season, has still only lost two matches this year en route to four titles, including the Australian Open in January

The 35-year-old, who skipped the entire clay-court season, has still only lost two matches this year en route to four titles, including the Australian Open in January.

"My goal was to keep myself 100% for the grass season," he added.

"I now hope that I'll stay healthy in this second part of the season and we'll see what happens."

Federer raced out of the blocks and broke serve twice to reel off the first four games of the match.

The home crowd tried their best to get behind the world number 12 Zverev, and even though he got on the board in game five, Federer broke again to wrap up the opening set in just 23 minutes.

Zverev, 20, battled hard to stay with his illustrious opponent at the start of the second set, but failed to make any inroads into the Federer serve.

The 18-time major champion was in irresistible form and he brought up two break points after a scintillating rally.

A trademark forehand passing shot and a comfortable service game moved Federer to within a game of victory.

And he confidently served it out to wrap up the 92nd ATP Tour title of his career, which moves him to within two of second-placed Ivan Lendl on the all-time list.



Roger Federer poses with his trophy after winning his final against Alexander Zverev in Halle, Germany, yesterday. (AFP)

Lopez crowned king of Queen's

AFP
London

Feliciano Lopez won the Queen's Club title in dramatic fashion as the Spaniard saved a match point before defeating Marin Cilic 4-6, 7-6 (2), 7-6 (8) yesterday.

Trailing by a set to the big-serving Cilic, Lopez held his nerve in a gripping finale to overwhelm the world number seven and secure his first ATP title since Gstaad in July 2016. It was a sweet moment for world number 32 Lopez, who held a championship point in the 2014 Queen's final before losing in three sets to Grigor Dimitrov.

The 35-year-old avenged that painful loss by beating Dimitrov in the semi-finals on Saturday and now he has his hands on the trophy at last. It is Lopez's third title on grass after winning Eastbourne in 2013 and 2014, earning him a cheque for 395,690 euros (\$442,915).

"Wow. I can't believe I finally won this trophy. I've been waiting so long," Lopez said.

"I thought until the end that I wouldn't make it, but I was a little bit lucky and it went my way.

"It was so difficult to handle my nerves when I was serving for the



match."

Lopez is the oldest Queen's champion in the Open era. Having reached the Stuttgart final last week before losing to Lucas Pouille, Lopez has now won nine of his 10 matches on grass this year, raising hopes of a strong run at Wimbledon, which gets underway on July 3.

"It's hard to believe I'm playing my best tennis at 35, but yes I am," he said. "There's no better situation than to go into Wimbledon after

winning here."

It was a frustrating defeat for former US Open champion Cilic, who came agonisingly close to adding a second Queen's title to the one he won in 2012.

His blistering serve had been virtually unplayable over the last week and, in four matches en route to the final, he was broken just once. Lopez couldn't find a way to break him in the final, but the Spaniard came up trumps in the crucial tie-breaks.

TENNIS / WTA AEGON CLASSIC

Kvitova sends Wimbledon warning with title in Birmingham

Reuters
London

Petra Kvitova showed she will be a serious contender for a third Wimbledon title after beating Australian Ashleigh Barty 4-6 6-3 6-2 to win the Aegon Classic in Birmingham yesterday in just her second tournament since returning from a knife attack injury.

The Czech, who won Wimbledon in 2011 and 2014, suffered a knife attack during a robbery at her home in December that left her with a damaged hand and sidelined her until last month's French Open.

The 27-year-old not only looked untroubled by her hand this week but also looked back to her best with her explosive serve often too much for Barty as she produced 13 aces.

Kvitova served out for the title in emphatic fashion — to love and ending with an ace — before celebrating, in her typically understated style, with a broad smile.

Her last final on grass had been her triumph at Wimbledon three years ago against Eugenie Bouchard and while her talk on arrival at Edgbaston was purely about her delight to be playing again, she clearly has bigger goals now. "I like to play finals on grass. I wish I

could have more. I won't be sad if it is in a couple of weeks (at Wimbledon) but there is still a lot of work to be done," she said in her on-court interview.

"It was an amazing week, an amazing tournament. From my first hits on the grass I felt great, it was encouraging to get into the grass season.

"I came to play, to improve my game, I didn't really have any expectation. I wanted to play my best which I showed today and I hope I can keep doing that," she added.

Barty, who three years ago took time out from the sport to play in Australia's domestic women's cricket competition, had pulled off an upset in the semi, beating Spain's Garbine Muguruza, the 2015 Wimbledon runner-up.

Her punchy and tenacious approach was effective again, as she lost one point in her first four service games and took the first set with some comfort.

But Kvitova settled into her rhythm in the second, taking a 5-1 lead before stuttering a little at the end of the set with two double-faults handing her opponent a break.

But the Czech kept her composure and took the contest into a third set, where she broke in Barty's first service game.

The Australian was in no mood to surrender however, breaking back for 2-2, only for Kvitova to respond in kind and then run away with the match.



Czech Republic's Petra Kvitova (centre) celebrates with the trophy and her coach Jiri Vanek (right) after winning the final against Australia's Ashleigh Barty at the WTA Aegon Classic in Birmingham yesterday. (Reuters)

After Ostapenko, Sevastova strikes another blow for Latvia

Anastasija Sevastova won her first trophy since 2010 yesterday when she captured the Mallorca Open, becoming the second Latvian in two weeks to clinch a title after Jelena Ostapenko's Roland Garros triumph.

The 27-year-old world 19 defeated Germany's Julia Goerges 6-4, 3-6,

6-3 to add the Mallorca grass court crown to her maiden title at Estoril seven years ago.

Sevastova had finished runner-up at the Spanish event in 2016, losing to Caroline Garcia, but she avenged that loss against the Frenchwoman in the semi-finals this year.

SPOTLIGHT

SA see off Pakistan in Women's WC

AFP
London

South Africa made a winning start to their Women's World Cup campaign with a three-wicket victory over Pakistan in Leicester yesterday.

They laid the foundations in the field by holding Pakistan to 206 for eight in their full 50 overs.

The total, and Bibi Nahida's top-score of 79, were both Pakistan records at a Women's World Cup.

But targets of around 200 now rarely present problems for leading women's sides, although this one did leave South Africa with a national record World Cup chase.

They were well on their way to victory, however, when World Cup debutant Laura Wolvaardt (52) and Lizelle Lee (60) shared an opening stand of 113.

The loss of six wickets for 49 runs, including three run-outs, gave Pakistan hope of an improbable success.

But Shabnim Ismail struck three fours in the penultimate over as South Africa won with six balls to spare.

"I looked calm but I was very nervous out there," said Ismail. "I just wanted to get it over and done with."

Pakistan captain Sana Mir added: "I



Pakistan's Bibi Nahida raises her bat after reaching 50 runs during the Women's World Cup match against South Africa in Leicester yesterday. (Reuters)

think it was a great effort by the girls, the way they fought it out. We lacked in all three departments though.

"We were 20 runs short but the bowlers came chipping in with wonderful overs but there were a couple of missed catches."

Saturday saw India launch the 11th Women's World Cup with a surprise 35-run win over tournament hosts and three-time champions England in Derby.

Meanwhile New Zealand thrashed Sri Lanka by nine wickets at Bristol.

Reigning champions Australia begin their bid for a seventh World Cup crown against the West Indies — the team that beat them in last year's World Twenty20 final — in Taunton on Monday.

All the eight teams involved will play each other the once, with the top four contesting the semi-finals. The final takes place at Lord's on July 23.

CRICKET / WI VS IND, 2ND ODI

Rahane ton propels India to 310-5

AFP
Port of Spain

Ajinkya Rahane's third hundred and a blistering assault by captain Virat Kohli lifted India to a formidable 310 for five against the West Indies in the second one-day international at the Queen's Park Oval in Trinidad yesterday.

In a match reduced to 43 overs per side due to early morning rain and a two-hour delayed start, Rahane's well-paced 103 in another dominant opening partnership with Shikhar Dhawan (63) set the tone for the tourists after they were put in to bat in heavily overcast and damp conditions.

Kohli then picked up the pace even further when Dhawan departed after a first-wicket partnership of 114, the left-hander being deceived by Ashley Nurse to be stumped. It was the off-spinner's only success of the innings although Nurse was by far the best of the West Indies bowlers, conceding just 38 runs off nine overs.

Rahane eventually reached three figures with a boundary off Miguel Cummins.

However the medium-pacer got his revenge in the same over when the bats-



men attempted an ungainly heave and was bowled for 103. Rahane's innings occupied 104 deliveries and was embellished by two sixes and ten fours.

Having dominated a 97-run second-wicket partnership with Rahane, Kohli took centre stage in the final assault and seemed destined to reach another ODI hundred to the delight of a decent contingent of visiting Indian fans when he was caught at long-off by Nurse off Alzarri Joseph for 87 off 66 balls in the penultimate over, a thoroughly entertaining effort highlighted by four towering sixes and four fours.

West Indies' indiscipline in the field added to the challenge and their woes were encapsulated by a horrific final over of the innings delivered by their captain Jason Holder.

He conceded 20 runs, bowled three no balls and had to be pulled out of the attack with one ball left in the innings because two of those no balls were delivered over waist-high to the batsman on strike.

It was left to Jonathan Carter to complete the over and the innings and encapsulated a shoddy effort overall by the home side.

CRICKET / ENG VS SA, 3RD T20I

Debutant Malan sets up England T20 series win

Malan makes 78 in England's 19-run win against South Africa



England's Dawid Malan plays a shot during the third T20 international against South Africa in Cardiff, Wales, yesterday. (AFP)

AFP
Cardiff, United Kingdom

Dawid Malan became England's top-scoring Twenty20 international debutant as they beat South Africa by 19 runs at Cardiff yesterday to seal a 2-1 series win despite resting regular skipper Eoin Morgan.

Malan, playing in place of fellow Middlesex left-hander Morgan, made 78 in a total of 181 of eight after England were sent into bat by South Africa captain AB de Villiers.

South Africa then collapsed to 86 for five, with leg-spinner Mason Crane taking the prize scalp of de Villiers (35) for his first wicket at this level.

They rarely threatened England's total, despite some big-hitting late on from Mangaliso Mosehle (36) and Andile Phehlukwayo (27 not out).

The Proteas' fate was effectively sealed when Tom Curran, in just his second match at this level, conceded just seven runs off the penultimate over on his way to two for 22.

Man-of-the-match Malan's impressive 44-ball innings featuring 12 fours and two sixes, surpassed the 46 made by Paul Collingwood in England's very first match at this level – a 100-run win over Australia at Southampton in 2005.

"It was awesome. I definitely wasn't expecting that," Malan told Sky Sports at the innings break.

"It's always nice to contribute and get a score under your belt. "My legs were shaking first ball so I got the old school leave out, then I tried to do what I do best."

Alex Hales and Malan shared a second-wicket stand of 105 in 10.3 overs.

But from 166 for three, England lost their next five wickets for 14 runs. Dane Paterson, who was twice on a hat-trick, led South Africa's attack with four for 32.

Jason Roy, dropped on nought, fell for eight when caught behind trying to ramp fast bowler Morne Morkel. His exit brought in Malan.

Born in London but brought up in South Africa, Malan got off the mark in style by pulling Morris for six over midwicket.

Meanwhile Hales suffered a painful blow on eight when he bottom edged a pull off pace man Paterson onto an unprotected knee.

Hales should have been out on 10 when he mistimed a drive off Morris only for Phehlukwayo to make a complete hash of a routine catch, with England 49 for one in the seventh over.

Meanwhile Malan kept the runs coming, the 29-year-old driving fast bowler Morkel straight back over his head for a six that

soared out of the ground and into the River Taff.

But he also showed touch as well as power in flipping leg-spinner Imran Tahir over short fine leg for a four that saw him to fifty.

The stand was broken when Hales (36) holed out to deep midwicket where David Miller took a good catch and Malan fell soon afterwards caught at long-on off Tahir.

England's innings then petered out as Paterson helped himself to some cheap wicket.

Durban-born paceman Curran, carrying on from where he left off on debut in a three-run defeat at Taunton on Friday, dismissed Reeza Hendricks for a duck.

De Villiers, in his last match of the tour – he is not staying on for the Test leg as he takes a break from the demands of playing all three international formats – looked in good touch as he twice hoisted Crane for legside sixes in the 11th over.

But the last ball of that over saw him fail to get enough height and the tall Hales take a well-judged catch on the boundary edge.

And when the dangerous Miller was caught behind down the legside by stand-in captain Jos Buttler off Jordan, the Proteas were 86 for five in the 12th over.

BRIEF SCORES: England 181 for 8 (Malan 78; Paterson 4-32) **beat South Africa 162 for 7** (Mohsehle 36, Jordan 3-31) **by 19 runs**

BADMINTON / AUSTRALIAN OPEN

Srikanth stuns Rio champ Chen in final

AFP
Sydney

India's **Kidambi Srikanth** claimed a first victory over Olympic and two-time world champion Chen Long to win the Australian Open Superseries final in Sydney yesterday.

The 11th-ranked Srikanth outgunned the sixth-ranked Chinese star 22-20, 21-16 in 46 minutes for his second successive Superseries title after winning the Indonesia Open earlier this month.

It was Srikanth's first win in six encounters against the Rio Olympic champion, with Chen defeating the Indian at the Sudirman Cup on Australia's Gold Coast last month.

"I was not

thinking of winning or losing. I missed competitive badminton during my break last year and wanted to enjoy the match," Srikanth said.

"These conditions are such that you can't really attack, it's a bit slow, you have to be prepared for a long match.

"In all the breaks today I had the advantage, (coach) Mulyo told me to keep it going, not to make simple mistakes and allow him back into the match."

Indians have now won four of the six Superseries this year. Srikanth is in career-best form after returning from injury in April.

He made it to the Singapore Open final and won the Indonesia Open ahead of the Australian event.

Chen is on the comeback trail from a long-lasting injury and has not won a Superseries title since the 2014 Denmark Open.

Chen, who had played two long matches before the final, said he was still recovering from gastroenteritis.

"As a whole I played

very well, but since I arrived in Sydney I have had gastroenteritis and diarrhoea, so I haven't been at my best physical condition," he said.

"But since I made the final, I wanted to continue to play as well as I could."

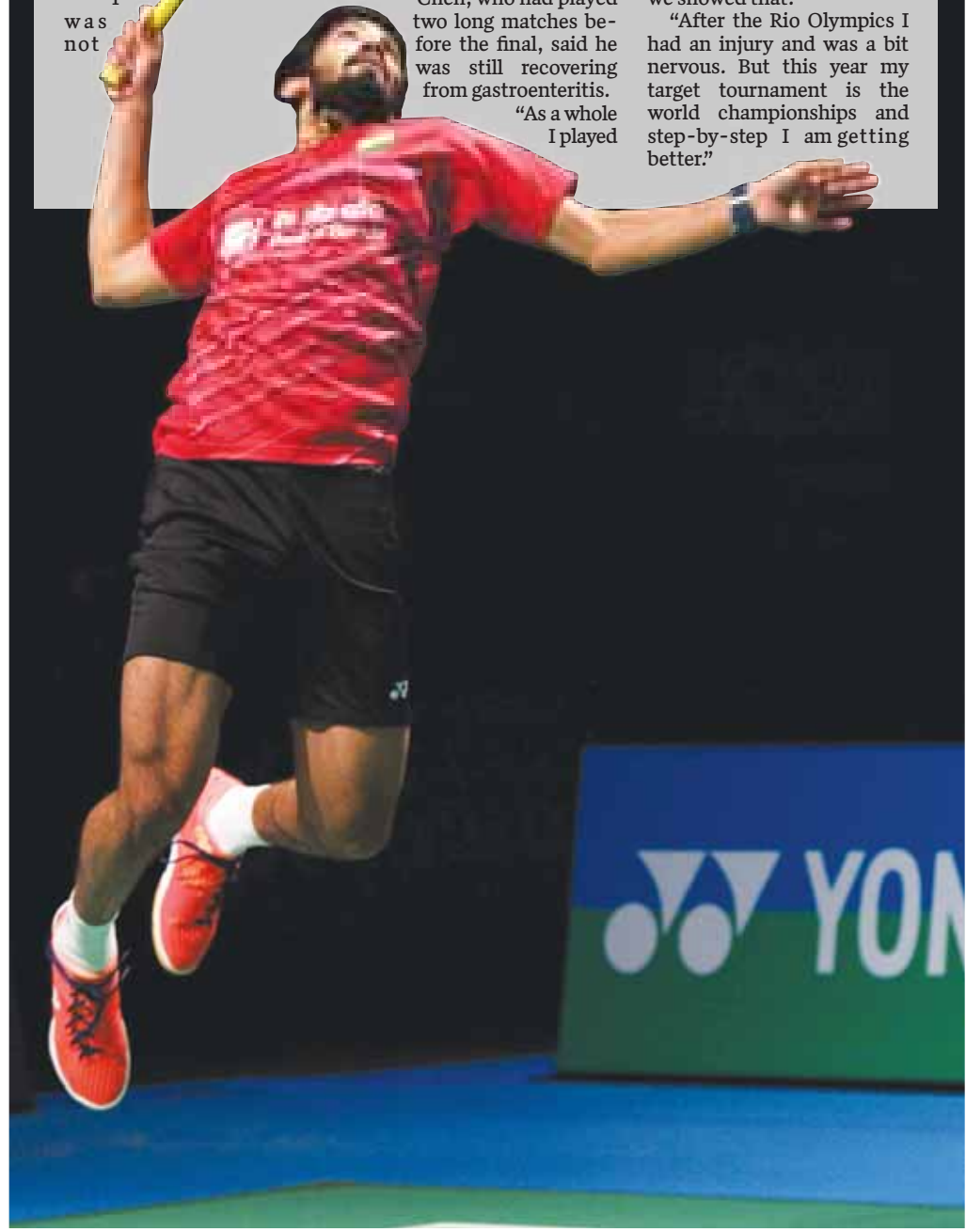
Olympic bronze medalist Nozomi Okuhara earlier downed Akane Yamaguchi 21-12, 21-23, 21-17 in an all-Japanese women's final.

Okuhara won her first World Superseries title since the All England last year, displaying the full extent of her indefatigable retrieving style in getting the better of Yamaguchi.

"This morning my home town had an earthquake so I wanted to send good news to them," Okuhara said.

"I said yesterday that I wanted to show that women's singles in Japan is at a high level so in this match, when Akane Yamaguchi really fought in the final game, we showed that."

"After the Rio Olympics I had an injury and was a bit nervous. But this year my target tournament is the world championships and step-by-step I am getting better."



HORSE RACING / ROYAL ASCOT REVIEW

Qemah keeps Al Shaqab Racing colours flying at Ascot

Agencies
Ascot

Qemah bagged a prestigious success in Al Shaqab Racing colours on the second day of the Royal Ascot meeting last week.

On Wednesday, the Gregory Benoist-ridden filly followed up her Coronation Stakes (Group 1) victory from last year with a win in the Duke of Cambridge Stakes (Group 2). Jean Claude Rouget's ward is now expected to defend her title in the Prix Rothschild at Deauville.

However, the highlight of the day was the success of Highland Reel in the Prince of Wales's Stakes (Group 1). The Coolmore representative won his sixth Group 1, less than three weeks after his win in the Coronation Cup. The Al Shaqab Racing-owned Mektaal finished sixth, lacking experience against the more experienced rivals than him.

On Day One of the royal meeting, American sprinter Lady Aurelia was an easy winner of the King's Stand Stakes (Group 1), one year after her success in the Queen Mary Stakes (Group 2). Barney Roy and Ribchester, for the Godolphin silks, won both the two other Group 1s of the day – St James's Palace Stakes and Queen Anne Stakes.

Day Three saw the tussle for supremacy between Big Orange and Order of St George in the Gold Cup (Group 1). Eventually Big Orange defied Order of St George for the win. Coronet, ridden by Olivier Peslier, imposed herself in the Ribblesdale Stakes (Group 2). The filly stayed



Jockey Gregory Benoist (right) rides Al Shaqab Racing's Qemah to victory in the Duke of Cambridge Stakes (Group 2) at Ascot on Wednesday.

on a fifth place in the Oaks at Epsom. Bless Him, owned by Qatar Racing, won the Britannia Stakes (Heritage Handicap). The three-year-old son of Sea the Stars has been improving and is expected to be seen again at the Group level.

Penultimate day of the meeting turned out

to be a big one for trainer Aidan O'Brien. The champion Winter, already a winner of the British and Irish Guineas (Group 1), added another trophy to her collection by winning the Coronation Stakes. Winter led a sweep for O'Brien, whose wards Roly Poly and Hydrangea finished



James Doyle celebrates winning the Gold Cup (Group 1) on Big Orange at Ascot Racecourse on Thursday. (Reuters)

second and third respectively. Another O'Brien charge, sprinter Caravaggio, succeeded in the Commonwealth Cup (Group 1).

The closing day of the meeting, Saturday, was marked by the sprint in the Golden Jubilee Stakes (Group 1). The Tin Man, trained by James Fan-

shawe, won the race in front of Tasleet and Limato, the favourite. The one horse that left a lasting impression the day is two-year-old September, who won the Chesham Stakes (L) for Coolmore. She is already being considered as one of the top favourites for the 2018 Guineas and Oaks.