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Sport

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Raducanu cherishes win over Williams

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Emma Raducanu

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CRICKET: 1ST TEST, LORD'S - DAY 1 England 116 for 6 (Pope 61*, Nortje 3-43) vs South Africa - **TODAY:** Pakistan vs Netherlands (2nd ODI)

Fencing: Qatar win another bronze in Konya



Qatar's Lina Al Buenain, Haya Diyab and Sarah Diyab won the bronze in the women's foil fencing team competition at the Islamic Solidarity Games in Konya, Turkiye, yesterday. Qatar also claimed a bronze medal in men's foil fencing on Tuesday.

Venus Williams and Thiem handed US Open wildcards

REUTERS – LONDON

Former US Open champions Venus Williams and Dominic Thiem were handed wildcard entries into this year's final Grand Slam tournament, the United States Tennis Association (USTA) said yesterday.

Other Americans, along with Williams, getting Flushing Meadows wildcards were former Australian Open champion Sofia Kenin, CoCo Vandeweghe, Elizabeth Mandlik, Peyton Stearns and 17-year-old Eleana Yu.

American men gaining direct entry into the main draw via wildcards include Sam Querrey, Emilio Nava, JJ Wolf, Ben Shelton and Learner Tien.

This year's tournament will run from August 29 to September 11.

The 42-year-old Williams, twice champion at Flushing Meadows, returns to the US Open for the first time since 2020. Her sister Serena, the winner of 23 Grand Slam singles titles, could bring the curtain down on her remarkable career in New York.

Serena Williams announced her forthcoming retirement last week in Toronto, saying she was "evolving away from tennis", although she has not specifically said the US Open will be her final tournament.



Dominic Thiem

Coming back from an ankle injury that has sidelined her for much of the season, Kenin, the 2020 Australian Open winner, has seen her world ranking drop from number four to its current 412 and she has not competed at the US Open since 2020.

Austrian Thiem, who rallied from two sets down against Alexander Zverev to win the 2020 US Open, is also returning from a long injury layoff that has seen his world ranking drop to 228.

Tabata gives Al Sadd first win of QSL season; Al Shamal shock Al Gharafa

FAWAD HUSSAIN
THE PENINSULA

Captain Rodrigo Tabata scored a late winner as reigning champions Al Sadd edged gutsy Al Ahli 3-2 to secure their first victory of the QNB Stars League (QSL) season at the Ahmad Ali Stadium, yesterday.

Andre Ayew set up Tabata by countering three defenders inside the box as the captain just had to chip the ball in from a close range for a winning goal in the 87th minute.

Al Sadd, who suffered a shock defeat to promoted Al Markhiya in the opener and played a draw against Umm Salal, moved to four points after the win.

While Al Sadd controlled the game with a better ball possession and over a dozen of shots on target, the 16-time champions had to overcome a goal deficit twice in the match to claim victory.

Yazan Al Naimat fired Al Ahli ahead in the ninth minute, with Ahmad Mohamedd cancelling the lead in the 18th minute with a volley off a cross from Abdulla Badr.

Sofiane Hanni regained the lead for Al Ahli with a strike three minutes before half-time. Guilherme Torres, however, leveled the score again in stoppage time (45+3) of the first half by slotting the ball in after Baghdad Bounedjah's header off a cross hit the post.

The second half saw more attempts from Al Sadd, who were finally paid off with an all-important goal by Tabata, leaving coach Juan Manuel Lillo delighted.

"We needed this victory. It's an important win for us. We deserved it in the first two games as well, but we missed both our chances," he said.

"We played well and we were a better side [against Al Ahli]. We scored and created many chances and made mistakes as well, but we won well-deservedly."

"We will continue to work for the next match with full force and will not stop. We have great confidence in all the players, especially the young people who are developing from one game to another and helping the team a lot," he added.



Al Sadd captain Rodrigo Tabata in action during match against Al Ahli, yesterday. PIC: Abdul Basit

Al Shamal rally to stun Al Gharafa

Also yesterday, Yacine Bammou scored a second-half brace to help Al Shamal register an impressive 2-1 victory at the Al Thumama Stadium.

Al Gharafa star Yacine Brahimi gave them a lead in 24th minute, with Al Shamal returning strongly in the second half.

Bammou equalised in the 69th minute with a brilliant volley from an Ali Iyad Olwan cross and scored the winner eight minutes later with a header off a corner kick.

The victory took Al Shamal to third on the table with six points while Al Gharafa slipped to sixth with four points.

Meanwhile, Al Duhail coach Hernan Crespo expressed his delight on a 2-1 victory over Al Rayyan on Tuesday, saying claiming full points against a tough side was a good achievement from his team.

"We achieved an important victory over a strong opponent after an exciting match," Crespo said.

"Al Duhail are working to build a distinct identity and the approach may be new to the players, which creates a certain margin of error temporarily, so achieving positive results in this period is a very good thing," he added.

Crespo also thanked fans for their support in the important match.

"I am very grateful for the support that the team is getting from the fans, who have been supporting the team in a wonderful way."



Action during the match between Al Shamal and Al Gharafa, yesterday. PIC: Rajan Vadakkemuriyil

Billionaire Ratcliffe interested in buying Man United: The Times

REUTERS – LONDON

British billionaire Jim Ratcliffe is interested in buying Manchester United, his spokesperson told The Times yesterday, after Elon Musk said his plan to buy the Premier League club was all part of "a long-running joke".

Musk, the world's richest person, said on Twitter that he wanted to buy England's most successful club before clarifying that it was a joke and that he had no interest in purchasing any sports teams.

The club's owners, the American Glazer family, are under pressure with United sitting bottom of the Premier League after two games of the season. Bloomberg reported they would consider selling a minority stake, opening the door for Ratcliffe.

"If the club is for sale, Jim is definitely a potential buyer," Ratcliffe's spokesperson said. "If something like this was possible, we would be interested in talking with a view to long-term ownership."

Ratcliffe, head of chemical company INEOS, is from the Manchester area and a long-standing fan of the club.

"This is not about the money that has been spent or not spent. Jim is looking at what can be done now and, knowing how important the club is to the city, it feels like the time is right for a reset," the spokesperson added.

Ronaldo gets police caution for incident at Everton match



Cristiano Ronaldo

AP – LIVERPOOL

Cristiano Ronaldo has received a police caution after footage was posted online of the Manchester United forward appearing to knock a phone out of an Everton fan's hand at a Premier League match in April.

Merseyside Police said yesterday that "the matter has now concluded."

The 37-year-old soccer great was interviewed by officers in relation to an allegation of assault and criminal damage following the incident at Goodison Park on April 9.

Merseyside Police launched an investigation after a clip was circulated online of Ronaldo appearing to knock the supporter's mobile phone on to the ground as he walked toward the tunnel following United's 1-0 loss.

"We can confirm that a 37-year-old man voluntarily attended and was interviewed under caution in relation to an allegation of assault and criminal damage," Merseyside Police said in a statement yesterday.

"The allegation relates to an incident following the Everton v Manchester United football match at Goodison Park on Saturday April 9. The matter has been dealt with by way of conditional caution."

Under British law, a caution is essentially a warning given out by police for a minor crime if the person admits to the offense. A conditional caution means the person must also fulfil a certain obligation, such as replacing damaged property.

After the incident, Ronaldo issued a social media apology for his "outburst" and invited the supporter to watch a game at Old Trafford "as a sign of fair play and sportsmanship."

Merseyside Police launched an investigation after a clip was circulated online of Ronaldo appearing to knock the supporter's mobile phone on to the ground as he walked toward the tunnel following United's 1-0 defeat.

FIFA World Cup in Qatar is a dream come true: Al Habsi

QNA — DOHA



Qatar Legacy Ambassador Ali Al Habsi

Former goalkeeper of the Oman national team and Qatar Legacy Ambassador Ali Al Habsi has said that hosting of the forthcoming FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 to be held from November 20 to December 18 highlights that dreams can turn into reality.

"When I started playing football, the idea of organising the World Cup here in the Middle East was a dream for us," Al Habsi said in an interview to FIFA.

"Therefore, when we witness the tournament being held in Qatar, it shows that dreams can turn into reality."

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>
> *Ali Al Habsi*

With preparations for the launch of the largest sporting event in the world almost complete and with less than 100 days to go, Al Habsi expressed that Qatar's organisation of the 2022 World Cup as the first version of the World Cup in the Middle East will have a clear impact on the game in the region and will inevitably leave a distinguished legacy in the region especially for the younger players.

He added that hosting the World Cup in the Middle East is a huge step, expressing his confidence that Qatar's hosting of the World Cup will have a significant impact on the development of football in the region.

He pointed out that Qatar's organization of the Arab FIFA Cup 2021 Qatar at the end of last year showed the world the extent of readiness.

"The country is ready to organise the biggest tournament and for the whole world to witness," he stressed.

Al Habsi also said that Arab football is full of stars who play in the major leagues of the world and have succeeded in winning major championships such as Egyptian Mohamed Salah and Algerian player Riyad Mahrez.

"It is time that Arab teams would be in contention to go beyond the group stage of the tournament," he opined.

Ali Al Habsi is considered a football legend in the Arab world, given that he was the first Omani player to play in Europe.

He starred on the charming football fields of Norway and England, was part of the Wigan Athletic team that won the FA Cup in 2013.

He was also the goalkeeper and captain of his country until he retired in 2020, having represented Oman in 136 matches.

QFA nominates Khaled Al Kuwari for Gulf Cup's Media Committee

QNA — DOHA



Qatar Football Association (QFA) has announced the nomination of Director of QFA's Marketing and Communications Khaled Mubarak Al Kuwari **(pictured)** for the membership of the media committee in the 25th Arabian Gulf Cup (Gulf 25) to be hosted by Iraq in January 2023 in Basra.

Al Kuwari's nomination stems from the experiences that he possesses in the marketing and media field as he participated in various national and international competitions.

Also, he participated in and was present in the media committees of the Arab Gulf Cup tournaments, 24th Qatar, 23rd Kuwait, 22nd Riyadh, 21st Manamah, 20th Aden, and 19th Muscat.

The media committee specialises in various tasks, including drawing up a unified media policy for the tournament and transmitting its activities through various media by urging the media in the participating countries to promote the tournament in line with its lofty sporting goals and marketing the necessary publicity for it.

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The committee has the right to determine the number of media delegations for each country participating in the tournament.

The committee also handles holding media awareness sessions and seminars accompanying the tournament's activities, especially for media professionals, and setting up a program of press conferences for coaches before and after the session, in addition to naming media coordinators for the matches.



Anrich Nortje celebrates after taking the wicket of Ben Stokes.

Nortje stars as SA reduce England to 116-6 before rain ends opening day

REUTERS — LONDON

Anrich Nortje took three wickets as South Africa's seamers tore through England's top order to leave the home side teetering on 116 for six before rain brought a premature close to day one of the first Test at Lord's yesterday.

England looked as though they would be bowled out for a low total before the weather intervened just six overs after the lunch interval and no more play was possible.

Ollie Pope produced a lone resistance to the visitors' relentless onslaught and is unbeaten on 61. He will resume the innings on the second morning with Stuart Broad, who has yet to score.

The tale of the first day has been South Africa's aggressive and accurate fast bowling rather than England's swashbuckling 'Bazball' style that had brought the home side four excellent Test wins in a row earlier in the summer.

According to CricViz, 34% of deliveries on day one resulted in a false shot, the second highest percentage at this point in a Test innings for England since 2006.

South Africa won the toss and elected to bowl under overcast skies, with England captain Ben Stokes conceding he would have done the same.

Kagiso Rabada (2-36), who was an injury doubt going into the game, made an excellent start, dismissing both England openers cheaply to catches behind the wicket.

Alex Lees (5) went too hard at a delivery just outside his off-stump and was caught comfortably by wicketkeeper Kyle Verreynne, while Zak Crawley (9) edged to a diving Aiden Markram at second slip.

The match is the first of three Tests in the series, with fixtures also to be played at Old Trafford (Aug. 25-29) and The Oval (Sept. 8-12).

Raducanu cherishes win over Williams

REUTERS — CINCINNATI


Emma Raducanu reacts to a point in her match against Serena Williams.

Britain's Emma Raducanu said her victory over 23-times Grand Slam champion Serena Williams at the Cincinnati Open on Tuesday has given her confidence a boost just ahead of her U.S. Open title defence.

Teenager Raducanu, who has not won a tournament since capturing last year's title at Flushing Meadows as a 150th-ranked qualifier, put in a dominant display against Williams, wrapping up a 6-4, 6-0 win in just over an hour.

American Williams announced her forthcoming retirement last week, saying that she was "evolving away from tennis", before suffering an early exit at the Canadian Open.

Raducanu, 19, described being drawn against Williams as a "gift".

"The chances to play her may be one of the last opportunities I get to play her," she said. "You have to cherish the moment, and you're going to have this memory for the rest of your career."

While Raducanu said the opposition was always of a high standard at this level, beating Williams required something special.

"Playing Serena and managing to win, I'm obviously really proud of myself, and it does give me confidence," she told reporters.

"Each of those wins kind of build confidence regardless of the level you're playing, every single win counts. But of course this one more so, because you're playing like the greatest.

"But I'm not trying to get too high or too low right now," she said.

Raducanu next faces another Grand Slam winner in the shape of Belarusian Victoria Azarenka, and the Briton said that it was another opportunity for her to learn from "a great champion."

"I remember more recently when she was playing in the US Open and made the final in 2020. I was studying for my exams," she added.

"I hadn't played tennis in months, and I was just dreaming that one day I'm going to play on Ashe, and one day I'm going to be at that level and playing these great players myself. Everything felt so far away."

Medvedev gets US Open prep back on track with victory in Cincinnati

REUTERS — CINCINNATI



Daniil Medvedev **(pictured)** looked like he had a point to prove as the Russian got preparations for his US Open title defence back on track with a 6-4, 7-5 win over Botic van de Zandschulp in the second round of the Cincinnati Open on Tuesday.

Medvedev had been building momentum ahead of the year's last Grand Slam at Flushing Meadows by winning a tune-up event in Los Cabos without dropping a set but was beaten by Nick Kyrgios in the second round of the Canadian Masters in Montreal last week.

The Russian starting strongly against Dutchman Van de Zandschulp with an immediate break before going on to win the first set.

The second set posed more of a challenge, with the world number one having to save a set point, but he capitalised on several double-faults from Van de Zandschulp before wrapping up the match.

"The second set was going not that bad," Medvedev said in an on-court interview. "He was not serving especially well today, doing a lot of double faults. So I tried to keep pressure, use my chances.

"Two breaks on these fast courts is enough to win and I should have done a little bit better on my serve. But the first match is tricky and I'm happy that I managed to go though, and hopefully I will raise my level in the next matches."

Injured Monfils ruled out of US Open

REUTERS — LONDON

Gael Monfils has been ruled out of the US Open due to a foot injury the Frenchman suffered last week in Montreal, the world number 22 said yesterday.

The 35-year-old returned to the Tour last week for the first time since May after undergoing a small operation for a right foot injury.

He won two matches at the Canadian Masters last week before his injury problems resurfaced against Britain's Jack Draper and he was forced to retire mid-match.

Santiago 2023: ICSS to provide technical assistance to Chile

THE PENINSULA — SANTIAGO

The International Centre for Sport Security (ICSS) and its partners the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT) and the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute (UNICRI) along with Organization of American States (OAS) convened a kick-off meeting to provide technical assistance for Chile on sport security.

The meeting which took place in Santiago, Chile from August 9 to 11, brought together representatives from the Chile Olympic Committee, (COCH) the National Police, security planners for the Pan American Games 2023 and other entities.

It comes within the ongoing preparations for the Santiago 2023 Pan American Games, the first Pan American Games ever held in the South American nation, taking place from October 20 to November 5 in the capital of Santiago.

During the three-day meeting, partners have discussed International, regional and national best practices and a joint needs analysis was conducted, paving the way for future integrated workshops and training in preparation for the Games.

This significant step forward is part of the implementation of the Global Programme on Security of Major Sporting Events (MSE)and the Promotion of Sport and its Values to Prevent Violent Extremism (PVE) launched by UNOCT, ICSS, UNICRI and the UN Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC), and the official participation of UN Counter-Terrorism Executive Directorate (CTED) and INTERPOL.

The Global Programme is aimed at strengthening the protection of MSE through enhanced international cooperation and sustainable security approaches while promoting the values of sport as a powerful means to counter terrorism and prevent violent extremism.

Dale Sheehan Director, Capacity Building and Executive Education of the ICSS, said: "This event is a unique and timely opportunity to start providing a range of technical assistance to Chile, the host country of the Santiago 2023 Pan American Games, through the transfer, adaptation, mobilization and utilization ofskills, knowledge and technology in sport security and the use of sport to provide violent extremism."

"Since its inception in February 2020, the Global Programme's partners provided assistance in this field to several UN member states such as Cameroun, Costa Rica, El Salvador, and Maldives. We are committed now more than ever to continue to collaborate closely to support our mission."


Dale Sheehan, Director Capacity Building and Executive Education, ICSS