South Africa's Snyman takes lead on opening day in Doha


South Africa's Ian Snyman in action during the opening round of International Series Qatar.

FAWAD HUSSAIN
THE PENINSULA

DOHA: South Africa's Ian Snyman fired a confident seven-under-par 65 to take a one-shot lead on the opening day of the International Series Qatar at Doha Golf Club yesterday.

Snyman's round featured an eagle, seven birdies and a double bogey putting him ahead of a trio comprising compatriot Louis Oosthuizen, Spain's David Puig and Zach Bauchou of the United States, who each carded a 66.

The Spanish duo of Luis Masaveu and Eugenio Chacarra along with Thailand's Sadom Kaewkanjana and Japan's Tomoyo Ikemura are close behind with rounds of 67.

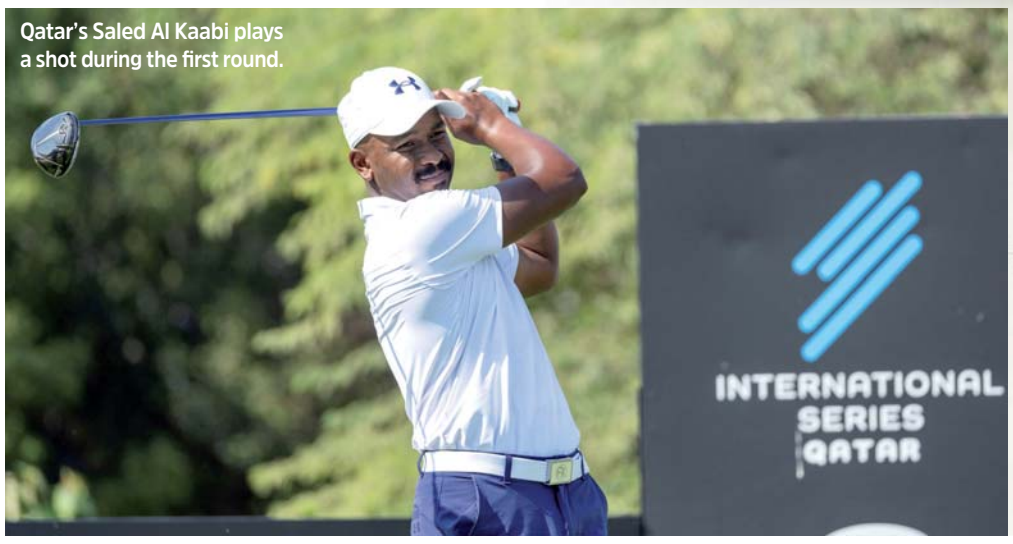
The $2.5m International Series Qatar, the penultimate event for both the International Series and the Asian Tour, holds significant importance ahead of next week's finale – the PIF Saudi International.

Chasing his first title on the circuit, Snyman got off to a stellar start and was well-positioned at eight under before a double bogey on the par-three 17th.

"I was over the ball, and they [the officials] were trying to calm some people down behind the tee box. Instead of restarting my routine, I walked straight into my shot. I think I was misaligned and pushed it way right of the green," he explained.



Spain's David Puig ended the day joint second.



Qatar's Saled Al Kaabi plays a shot during the first round.

Yesterday, America's John Catlin posted a 70 while compatriot Patrick Reed returned with a 71 in his first outing at the Doha Golf Club.

Catlin, who leads the Asian Tour Order of Merit and the International Series Rankings, aims to secure the Merit title in Doha.

Reed is looking to extend his winning streak following his triumph in Hong Kong last week.

Canada's Richard T. Lee, second in the Merit rankings, carded a 69, while third-ranked Ben Campbell of New Zealand opened with a 70.

Representing Qatar, Daniil Sokolov, aged 13, carded two-over 74 while Saleh Al Kaabi signed four-over 76.

"The course is playing tough but it was amazing seeing my name up there with some of the best players in the world, major champions, LIV Golf League players. I know I have prepared well for it. I know I have done all the preparation, so all I can do now is just play my game and see how it goes up against the best," said Sokolov.

AlKaabi added: "It is a great experience for us to play against these big names. Every time I play one of these type of tournaments, you can see the levels getting better at each event."

Morocco's amateur star Adam Bresnu, who recently won the Pan Arab title in the UAE, impressed with a two-under 70 boosting his chances to make a cut.

"It is an honour for me to present my country and to present Arabs. My goal is just to show that as Arabs, we are here, we can compete against the best in the world, and we can do it," he said.

Doha ready to host Qatar Masters International Open

CHINTHANA WASALA
THE PENINSULA

DOHA: Qatar capital Doha is all set to host 300 players, including world's most prominent grandmasters in the fourth edition of the Qatar Masters International Open from December 2-12, the Qatar Chess Association (QCA) announced yesterday.

Regarded as one of the premier global chess tournaments, offering a prize purse of $108,000, the event is set to take place at Aspire Zone in Doha.

Speaking at a press conference at the Torch Hotel yesterday, the organisers confirmed that all preparations for the prestigious event have been finalised. QCA President Mohammed Al Mudhahka revealed that players from 25 countries will compete in the tournament which returns following its successful editions in 2014, 2015, and 2023, with India fielding the largest delegation of 110 participants this time.

Highlighting the star-studded lineup, Al Mudhahka noted the participation of Uzbekistan Grandmasters Nodirbek Yakubboev, the defending champion, and Nodirbek Abdusattorov who came second, along with Indian grandmasters Arjun Erigaisi and Dommaraju Gukesh, as well as Iranian Grandmasters Parham Maghsoudlou and Amin Tabatabaei will also compete.



Qatar Chess Association President Mohammed Al Mudahka (centre) and QCA Executive Director and Tournament Director Hamad Al Tamimi (right) during a press conference yesterday.

"The tournament will also feature regional stars, including Qatar's International Master Hussein Aziz and Emirati champion Salem Abdulrahman, who has claimed the Best Arab Player award four times," Al Mudhahka said.

"Other notable Arab players include Egypt's Adham Fawzy, ensuring a strong representation from the region," the QCA President said.

He also highlighted that top-ranked female players, International Grandmaster Divya Deshmukh, along with compatriot Vantika Agrawal will also compete.

However, Al Mudhahka said there will be two notable absentees this time, the World No. 1 Magnus Carlsen, who had been part of all three previous editions of the highly successful tournament, along with his American rival Hikaru Nakamura.

"We would be missing Carlsen, Nakamura and the Dutch-based Anish Giri due to prior international commitments, but efforts are on regarding the participation of some top-ranked players. All players are keen to confirm participation, with the winner set to receive $25,000," Al Mudhahka added.

The QCA President also revealed the hosting of the International B Championship that will be held simultaneously.

"The Qatar team will be represented by 20 players at the B Tournament. The organization of the tournament aims to provide an opportunity for many players to raise their level of classification and interact with different chess schools in the world," added Al Mudahka who thanked the Ministry of Sports and Youth for its support.

Real, Barca to turn back clock at KIS in 'Legends El Clasico'

KHALID ELSAWI
THE PENINSULA

DOHA: Former legendary players from the two biggest football clubs in Spain, and arguably the world, will face off in a thrilling match-up set to take place at the Khalifa International Stadium (KIS) today.

The Legends El Clasico, sponsored by Visit Qatar, will be, according to the organizers, a "celebration of the rich history, passion, and rivalry that have defined these two clubs for decades."

The list of former players participating in the Legends El Clasico carries some of the biggest names in the history of football. Ronaldinho, Clarence Seedorf, Rivaldo, Luis Figo, Iker Casillas, Patrick Kluivert are just some of the names included in this match which is set to kick off at 7:00pm.

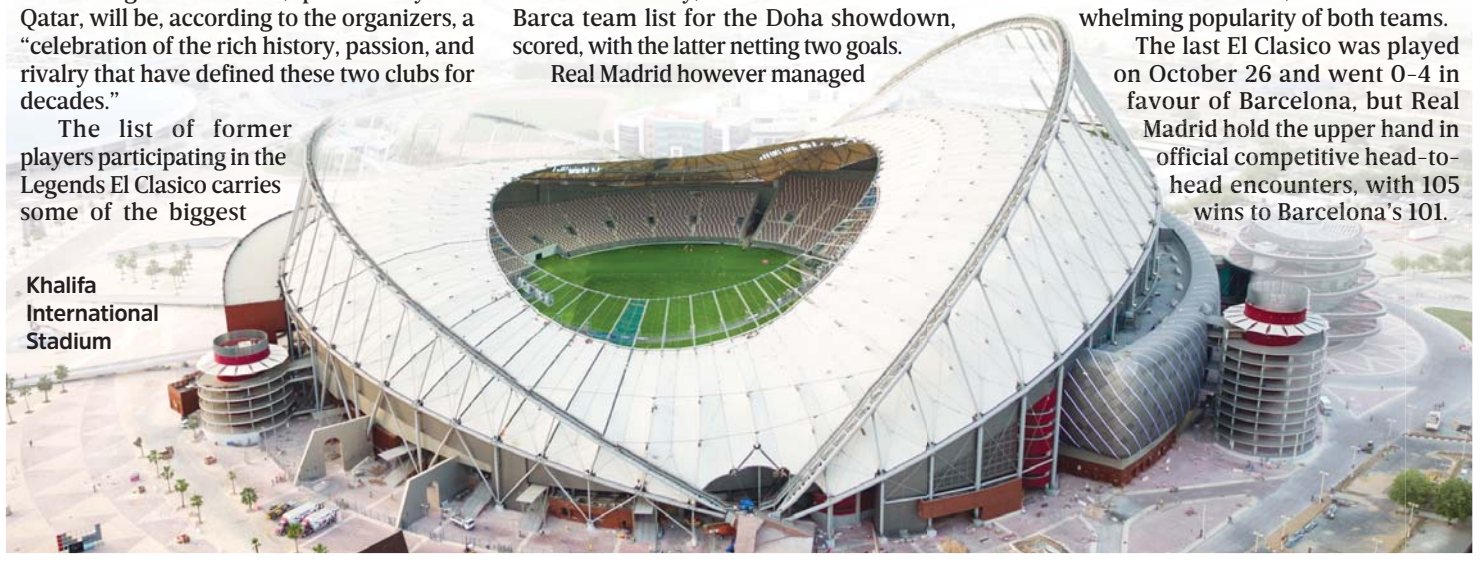
This is the third game in the Legends El Clasico series, with Barca having edged Madrid 3-2 in their first match back in 2017. Simao and Ludovic Guily, who is also included in the Barca team list for the Doha showdown, scored, with the latter netting two goals.

Real Madrid however managed to avenge their defeat in 2021 in a match that ended with the same score line, but this time in the Merengue's favour.

Goals from Pedro Munitis, Alfonso Perez, and Ruben de la Red sealed the victory for the Real Madrid legends.

El Clasico – an annual fixture in Spain's La Liga – is considered to be the biggest football match in the world, due to the overwhelming popularity of both teams.

The last El Clasico was played on October 26 and went 0-4 in favour of Barcelona, but Real Madrid hold the upper hand in official competitive head-to-head encounters, with 105 wins to Barcelona's 101.


Khalifa International Stadium

ACL Two: Al Wakrah reach knockout stage after Tractor FC draw

THE PENINSULA

DOHA: Al Wakrah were held 3-3 by Tractor FC of Iran in a thrilling fifth round Group A match of the AFC Champions League (ACL) two for 2024-2025 season at the Al Rashid Stadium in Dubai yesterday.

The result however saw Al Wakrah join Tractor FC in the knockout stage of the tournament though they still have a group stage match remaining against Tajikistan's FC Ravshan next week.

While Ricardo Gomes (4th minute), Almahdi Ali Mukhtar (51st minute) and Jacinto Dala (69th minute scored for Al Wakrah, Amirhossein Hosseinzadeh (45th minute), and Mehdi Hashemnejad (75th and 87th minute) did so for Tractor FC.

Al Wakrah, who needed just a point to join Tractor in the Round of 16, made a super start as Farid Boulaya won a battle for the ball against Shojae Khalilzadeh and set up Ricardo Gomes with a fine pass to make the finish from close range.

Gomes nearly doubled the tally two minutes later as he broke free of his marker before striking a low drive which was saved by Tractor keeper Alireza Beiranvand.

In the 17th minute, Gomes gave the Iranian shot-stopper a scare but his glancing header pulled just wide of the right post.

Tractor got the equaliser just before the break after Ricardo Alves sent a well-timed long ball to Hosseinzadeh, who muscled his way lifting the ball over custodian Mohammed Al Bakri.

Al Wakrah came back fighting and retook the lead six minutes after the restart from a set-piece situation with Almahdi Ali steering Dala's set-up into the back of the net.

Al Wakrah scored again in the 69th minute as this time Dala himself found space inside the area before finishing with a curling effort. For Tractor FC, Hashemnejad cut the deficit after finishing a fine team move in the 75th minute.

A lapse in concentration paved way for the Iranian side to draw level a second time as Hashemnejad made a clinical finish in the 87th minute.

Al Ettifaq edge Al Arabi


Al Ettifaq secured a 2-1 victory over Al Arabi in Group B of the Gulf Club Champions League at Al Thumama Stadium yesterday. Karl Louis (Koko) Ekambi scored a brace for Ettifaq in the 18th and 76th minutes while Ibrahima Diallo pulled one back for Al Arabi in 45+3rd minute. The Saudi side cemented their top spot with a third consecutive group win, while Al Arabi remained at the bottom with just one point.

Qatar's Al Attiyah wins silver as World Military Equestrian Championship begins





The World Military Equestrian Championship kicked off yesterday with an impressive opening ceremony at Al Shaqab's Longines Indoor Arena. Hosts Qatar picked a silver medal in the first event with First Lieutenant Hamad Ali Al Attiyah finishing runner-up with a flawless 32.11 secs in the 120/125 class. Romania's Captain Schumann-Raducanu Norbert topped the event clocking 31.43 secs while Ecuador's Captain Mosquera Salgado Xavier Alejand finished third with a time of 34.52 secs. Action continues today with the event culminating on Saturday following a rest day tomorrow. As many as 15 nations comprising three riders each are taking part in the competition hosted by Qatar Military Sports Association under the auspices of the International Military Sports Council (CISM). Major Sheikh Ali bin Khalid Al Thani and First Lieutenant Salman Mohammed Al Emadi are other members of Qatar's squad.

Mbappe misses penalty as Liverpool exact revenge on holders Real Madrid



Cody Gakpo (second right) celebrates after scoring Liverpool's second goal against Real Madrid at Anfield yesterday.

LIVERPOOL: Kylian Mbappe saw a penalty saved as Liverpool beat Real Madrid 2-0 yesterday to inflict a third Champions League defeat in five matches on the holders.

Alexis Mac Allister and Cody Gakpo scored the goals in the second half as the Reds maintained their perfect record to return to the top of the table.

Mohamed Salah also fired wide from the spot, but it mattered little as Liverpool secured a 17th win in Arne Slot's first 19 games in charge.

Slot has already achieved what Jurgen Klopp could not as Liverpool boss by slaying the Spanish giants.

Liverpool had a score to settle with Madrid, who were unbeaten in eight previous meetings between the sides, including Champions League finals against Klopp's men in 2018 and 2022.

Defeat sends Carlo Ancelotti's side tumbling down to 24th in the table.

Only the top 24 progress to the knockout stage with the top eight advancing directly to the last 16.

Liverpool are well on course to do just that and the confidence coursing through a side also eight points clear at the top of the Premier League was in evidence throughout in front of a highly-charged Anfield crowd.

Madrid were hamstrung by a lengthy injury list and made the trip to England without Vinicius Junior, Rodrygo, Dani Carvajal, Eder Militao, Aurelien Tchouameni and David Alaba.

Young centre-back Raul Asencio has been pressed into action by those absences and he made a vital goal-line clearance on four minutes.

Darwin Nunez was sent in behind the Madrid defence by Salah and after his shot produced a fine save from Thibaut Courtois, Asencio reacted smartly to prevent the rebound bouncing off him and into his own net.

Courtois was Liverpool's scourge with a man-of-the-match performance in the final two years ago as Madrid prevailed 1-0 in Paris.

The Belgian was at his best again as he blocked another big Nunez chance from point-blank range as the Liverpool pressure built without reward before the break. Courtois was in sparkling form again at the start of the second period to parry Conor Bradley's downward header.

But Liverpool were not to be denied as Bradley was this time the provider for Mac Allister, who manufactured the space for a shot into the far corner on 52 minutes.

YESTERDAY'S RESULTS

Red Star Belgrade **5-1** Stuttgart
Sturm Graz **1-0** Girona
Aston Villa **0-0** Juventus
Bologna **1-2** Lille
Celtic **1-1** Club Brugge
Dinamo Zagreb **0-3** Borussia Dortmund
Liverpool **2-0** Real Madrid
Monaco **2-3** Benfica
PSV **3-2** Shakhtar Donetsk

The visitors were relying on Mbappe for a moment of magic in the absence of Vinicius, but the Frenchman was well-marshalled by his international teammate Ibrahima Konate and Virgil van Dijk.

His chance to silence his critics arrived on the hour mark when Andy Robertson was harshly adjudged to have tripped Lucas Vazquez inside the area.

Caoimhin Kelleher has excelled in the absence of the injured Alisson Becker and leapt to his left to save Mbappe's spot-kick.

Salah sparked a furore ahead of the game by declaring his disappointment with Liverpool's failure to offer him a contract renewal.

The Egyptian has been in sparkling form this season and his pace and trickery fooled Ferland Mendy into a mistimed challenge.

Salah, though, gave Madrid a lifeline by firing his penalty off the outside of the post.

Liverpool had to wait just six more minutes for the cushion of a second goal as substitute Gakpo rose highest from a corner to power a header past Courtois. — *AFP*

QOC launches registration for Kick Smash Padel Master 2024

THE PENINSULA

DOHA: The Qatar Olympic Committee (QOC) has officially opened registration for the highly anticipated Kick Smash Padel Master 2024 for Men, set to run from December 15 to 21 at the Padel In courts in Aspire Zone and City Center.

During a press conference held at the QOC headquarters, the announcement was made in the presence of key figures, including Tournament Director Mohammed Abdulsalam, Padel In General Manager Khalid Saadon Al Kuwari and Chief Referee Abdulrahman Al Mulla.

The fifth edition of the tournament will feature a diverse lineup of categories, including men, youth, juniors, and a family category, as highlighted by Abdulsalam. He also encouraged enthusiasts to register through the QOC's digital platforms, emphasizing the tournament's accessibility and inclusivity.

Abdulsalam also underscored the QOC's commitment to fostering a culture of padel in Qatar and inspiring the community to embrace healthier lifestyles. He described the Kick Smash Padel Master 2024 as a flagship event in the QOC's community sports calendar.



The connections of Dubawi Spectre celebrate after winning the Doha Cup. QREC Racing Manager Abdulla Rashid Al Kubaisi crowned the winners. PIC: Juhaim/QREC

Dubawi Spectre caps stellar day for Ghazali and Casamento with Doha Cup triumph

THE PENINSULA

DOHA: Dubawi Spectre, owned by Mansoor Ebrahim S. I. Al Mahmoud, captured the Doha Cup at Al Rayyan Racecourse yesterday marking a fourth victory for trainer Jassim Ghazali and a third for jockey Marco Casamento.

The four-year-old son of Dubawi came with a late, yet big, run on the outside in the final 300m to hit the lead, kick away and take the 1700m race Thoroughbred Handicap by three lengths over Al Shaman. Qatar Racing and Equestrian Club's (QREC) Racing Manager Abdulla Rashid Al Kubaisi crowned the winners.

It was a fabulous day for Ghazali and Casamento at QREC's 7th Al Rayyan Race Meeting with both teaming up to secure a hat-trick in the last three races.

Hazm Al Sulaimi handed them the Local Purebred Arabian Handicap 55-75 (Class 5) title while Kassir De Carrere earned second win for the duo with win in the Purebred Arabian Novice Plate (3yo only) (Class 5).

Ghazali registered his first win yesterday when Alberto Sanna guided Shellbrook to Thoroughbred Handicap 45-65 (Class 6) victory.

Nirond (Purebred Arabian Handicap 60-80, Class 4), Awaayid (Local Thoroughbred Maiden Plate, Class 6), Proud Samaritan (Thoroughbred Maiden Plate - 2yo only, Class 6) and Tomorrownevercomes (Thoroughbred Handicap 45-65, Class 6) also bagged wins in the eight-race meet.

7TH AL RAYYAN RACE MEETING - DOHA CUP

WINNERS: (Horse, Tariner, Jockey)

Doha Cup - Thoroughbred Handicap 85-105 (Class 2) Dubawi Spectre, Jassim Ghazali, Marco Casamento
Purebred Arabian Novice Plate (3yo only) (Class 5) Kassir De Carrere, Jassim Ghazali, Marco Casamento
Local Purebred Arabian Handicap 55-75 (Class 5) Hazm Al Sulaimi, Jassim Ghazali, Marco Casamento
Purebred Arabian Handicap 60-80 (Class 4) Nirond, Ahmed Kobeissi, Arnaud De Lepine
Thoroughbred Handicap 45-65 (Class 6) Shellbrook, Jassim Ghazali, Alberto Sanna
Local Thoroughbred Maiden Plate (Class 6) Awaayid, Zuhair Mohsen, Soufiane Saadi
Thoroughbred Maiden Plate (2yo only) (Class 6) Proud Samaritan, Hamad Al Jehani, Bauyrzhan Murzabayev
Thoroughbred Handicap 45-65 (Class 6) Tomorrownevercomes, Rashid Mohammed Alathba, Maikon De Souza

Second edition of Qatar-UAE Super Cup expands to four games

THE PENINSULA

DOHA: The organising committee of Qatar-UAE Super Cup announced the launch of its second edition with four tournaments.

With the participation of eight teams – four from Qatar and as many from the UAE – the first tournament, Challenge Shield, will be played between Al Rayyan, runners-up in Qatar league, and Shabab Al Ahli, runners-up in ADNOC Pro League, on January 16, 2025, in Doha.

In Super Cup, Al Nasr, runners-up in President's Cup, face Qatar SC, runners-up in Amir Cup, on January 17, 2025, in Dubai.

Super Shield will pit Qatar league champions Al Sadd against ADNOC Pro League champions Al Wasl on January 18, 2025, in Doha.

Abu Dhabi Islamic Bank Cup champions Al Wahda will match wits with Qatar Cup champions Al Wakrah in Challenge Cup on January 19, 2025, in Abu Dhabi.

The first edition featured the Qatar-UAE Super Cup and the UAE-Qatar Super Cup Shield.

Qatar National Arabian Horse Show begins







The 27th Qatar National Arabian Horse Show, organised by the Qatar Racing and Equestrian Club (QREC), began yesterday. The event will span four days at the outdoor arena of the Qatar Equestrian Federation. The Show features 300 horses representing numerous Qatari studs and farms, including Al Shaqab (a member of Qatar Foundation), Al Nasser, Umm Al Udham, Al Sraiya, Al Jood, Al Thamer and Al Jumail, alongside entries from individual owners. PICTURES: Juhaim/QREC