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MotoGP leader Martin soars to victory in British GP sprint race

SILVERSTONE: MotoGP world championship leader Jorge Martin soared to victory in yesterday's sprint race at the British Grand Prix.

The Spaniard earlier set a new lap record on the Silverstone circuit with 1min 56.160sec on his way to pole position for both yesterday's sprint race and today's main race.

The Madrid native, the 2024 world champion, arrived at the first Grand Prix following the summer break as the leader, but on Friday he was overshadowed by his teammate Marco Bezzecchi. Bezzecchi had blitted to a lap record of 1min 56.280sec in practice on Friday despite fracturing a collarbone at the German MotoGP last time out.

"The bike is working really, really well. I've confidence in my team and in myself," said Martin ahead of Sunday's race.

Martin defended his pole position



Aprilia Racing's Spanish rider Jorge Martin celebrates on the podium after winning the MotoGP Sprint Race.

at the start of the sprint race and led for all ten laps to secure the victory in 19min 49.066sec, hitting speeds of up to 330 km/h.

Japan's Ai Ogura was second at 1.530sec on another Aprilia from the Trackhouse team with Bezzecchi third 3.974sec off the pace.

Bezzecchi, who is recovering from double surgery on his collarbone and knee following a heavy crash in Germany in July, revealed that he was still "suffering" immensely on "the left part of (his) body everywhere".

"On Sunday, I'll try to survive," he said with a smile, admitting that he had been "destroyed" by the exertion of Friday's performance.

Spaniard Raul Fernandez of Aprilia Trackhouse started second on the grid behind Martin but was forced to abandon the race after a fall.

The first Ducati to cross the finish line was that of Spaniard Alex Marquez (Ducati-Gresini), who finished fourth. Italian Fabio Di Giannantonio on another Ducati completed the top five. Reigning world champion Marc Marquez was ninth on his Ducati.

After winning the 2024 title as a Ducati-Pramac rider, the 28-year-old Martin endured a nightmare 2025

season in his debut with Aprilia, marred by persistent injuries and a failed attempt to leave the team.

This year, aided by a string of retirements for Bezzecchi and Marc Marquez missing several races due to injury, Martin has taken the championship lead thanks to his consistency.

"For sure it was nice to get an amazing feeling this weekend," said Martin.

"This was the most important thing for me more than the result to have my feeling again, to have my speed again.

"We're out of a bit of the hole we were in and this gives us a lot of motivation. I knew it was a matter of time to get out of that situation." Yesterday's victory gives him a 17-point lead over Ogura, his closest rival in the riders' championship.

Bezzecchi trails by 27 points, and Marc Marquez by a further two. — **AFP**



Action during the match between Qatar U-20 team and Austria's Kapfenberger.

Qatar U-20 crush Kapfenberger 7-0

THE PENINSULA

DOHA: Qatar U-20 team recorded a convincing 7-0 win over Austrian side Kapfenberger today in a friendly during their training camp in Slovenia.

The team is preparing for the AFC U-20 Asian Cup qualifiers, scheduled from August 25 to September 6, with the finals

set to be held in China in 2027. Qatar are in Group Five with Saudi Arabia, Oman and Hong Kong, with Doha hosting the matches.

The 32 teams in the qualifiers have been divided into eight groups. The eight group winners and seven best second-placed teams will join hosts China in the finals.

QSL clubs enter final phase of preparations

THE PENINSULA

DOHA: Qatar Stars League clubs are entering the final phase of their preparations for the 2026-2027 season, with most teams having completed their overseas training camps.

The camps provided clubs with an opportunity to improve fitness and tactical organisation, assess new signings and give young players valuable playing time in friendly matches.

Defending champions Al Sadd completed their camp in Austria and returned to Doha, while Al Duhail are due to finish their Netherlands camp on August 10.

Al Gharafa and Al Shamal have also completed their camps, with the latter strengthening their squad with the signing of Uruguayan defender Federico Bais from Nacional.

Al Wakrah concluded their camp in France last week, while Al Arabi finished their preparations in Spain.

Al Sailiya and Al Khor also completed their overseas programmes, with Al Khor signing Gerard Hernández on loan from Al Arabi.

Qatar SC completed their camp in Spain and added Spanish midfielder Albert Ramis Luque to their squad.

Newly promoted Lusail have also completed their preparations ahead of their first top-flight season.

The club have signed North Macedonian Georgi Stoyanovski and Iranian defender Ali Nemati.



Al Gharafa players take part in a training session in Doha after returning from their training camp in Bratislava, Slovakia.

Al Shahania are completing their overseas preparations, while Al Ahli have unveiled a new identity ahead of the new campaign.

With most camps now completed, the clubs will return to Doha for their final preparations before the new season kicks off later this month.

Defending champion Shelton storms to Montreal win

MONTREAL: Ben Shelton threw down eight aces and produced three love games in the second set in dominating Zizou Bergs 6-3, 6-2 on Friday in reaching the fourth round of the ATP Montreal Masters.

Fifth seed Shelton, highest-ranked man remaining in a severely depleted field, improved his chance for a second straight title in Canada with the rout in 65 minutes.

The American profitted from foot faults and double-faults from his Belgian opponent in advancing to a round of 16 for the first time this season.

"It was a good day for me, I managed the match well," said 23-year-old Shelton.

"He came out serving extremely well. I had to make some adjustments.



Ben Shelton of United States plays a backhand against Zizou Bergs of Belgium.

"I found a way to break his serve and kept the foot on the gas when I got the lead."

Shelton play for a repeat spot in the last eight when he faces Brazilian teenager Joao Fonesca, who

defeated ninth seed Casper Ruud 7-6 (8/6), 6-3.

Fonseca recovered after a slow start, trailing the Norwegian 4-2 before fighting his way back into contention.

The youngster finished off the win after leading 5-2, claiming victory on a second match point winner into the empty court.

"It was not easy at the start. He was serving well," the Brazilian said.

"I fought to finally get the win."

Fonseca said he learned much after beating Ruud at Roland Garros: "Playing with the big guys this year was really important for my development.

Tallon Griekspoor followed up his defeat of top-seeded Roland Garros champion Alexander Zverev, with the Dutchman gaining late momentum and getting through a rough patch for a 3-6, 6-4, 6-3 defeat of Matteo Arnakdi.

The Italian French Open semi-finalist took early command before Griekspoor took motivation through player box

instructions from Swedish coach Thomas Hogstedt and turned the match on its head.

World number 66 Griekspoor went up two breaks in the deciding set against the 2024 Canadian semi-finalist, lost one of them but broke back for victory in his third match point after more than two hours.

Griekspoor will bid for a quarter-final place when he takes on Spaniard Daniel Merida, who put out Alex Michelsen 6-4, 6-7 (4/7), 6-1, saving two match points in the second set for the American.

Merida, who had never won a tour-level hardcourt match prior to this week, arrived in Canada after winning the Umag title on clay in Croatia last month.

Czech Jakub Mensik advanced past Terence Atmane 7-5 6-4, winning back-to-back matches for the first time since reaching the semis two months ago in Paris to break fresh ground in Canada.

He will next play Botic Van De Zandschulp, who beat Hubert Hurkacz 3-6, 7-6 (7/4), 7-5. — **AFP**

Vollering grabs Tour de France lead in Nice

NICE: Demi Vollering's late attack and solo break for victory earned the overall lead of the Tour de France Femmes yesterday as overnight leader Kasia Niewiadoma finished third on the day.

The Dutch rider now leads the Pole by eight seconds with a title struggle in the hills outside Nice ripe for a tense finale tomorrow's final stage with a series of four climbs of the steep seven-kilometre Col d'Eze.

Swiss rider Marlen Reusser who took the yellow jersey in Tuesday's time-trial and held on another day, is now in third place 1min 12sec off the pace, with Elisa Longo Borghini at 3min 05sec in fourth. — **AFP**

Rybakina advances while Andreeva exits at Toronto Masters

TORONTO: Reigning Australian Open champion Elena Rybakina advanced to the fourth round of the WTA Toronto Masters on Friday while French Open winner Mirra Andreeva was eliminated by Canada's Leylah Fernandez.

World number two Rybakina from Kazakhstan defeated American 28th seed Ann Li 6-2, 7-5 in 90 minutes, winning five of six break chances while saving two of four against her.

Rybakina, who also won the 2022 Wimbledon title, advanced to a last-16 meeting with Russia's Liudmila Samsonova, who outlasted Australian Maya Joint 7-5, 6-7 (3/7), 6-2.

Samsonova leads the career rivalry with Rybakina 4-2, but Rybakina has won their past two WTA meetings, most recently in last year's Strasbourg final.

Fernandez, the 30th seed, dispatched 19-year-old fifth-ranked

Russian Andreeva 6-1, 6-4 in 80 minutes, snapping a seven-match losing streak against top-10 opponents.

Fernandez last beat a player ranked so high when she downed fourth-rated Jessica Pegula on her way to last year's WTA Washington title.

The Canadian left-hander won 24 of 27 points on her first serve and captured 17 of 23 points on Andreeva's second serves to advance. Andreeva made 34 unforced errors to 17 winners.

Fernandez will next face four-time Grand Slam winner Naomi Osaka, the 11th seed from Japan who defeated Belgium's 20th-seeded Elise Mertens 6-1, 6-2 in 71 minutes.

Osaka fired seven aces and took four of eight break points while denying Mertens on her three break chances.

Fernandez and Osaka have split

two career meetings, the Canadian winning at the 2021 US Open on the way to a runner-up finish. Osaka won last year at Wuhan.

"It's tough because she's lefty," Osaka said. "Obviously there aren't many lefties on tour, so it takes me awhile to get used to that. She has a really good attitude. I've never seen her down. She always keeps fighting. I really appreciate that about her."

US fourth seed Coco Gauff, a two-time Grand Slam winner, advanced by defeating Greece's Maria Sakkari 6-1, 6-4 in 76 minutes.

Gauff cruised to a 5-1 lead in the second set before Sakkari rallied within two points of pulling level before winning five of the last six points, taking the match on a backhand volley winner and service winner.

Gauff will next face 19-year-old Russian Alina Korneeva, who ousted US

13th seed Iva Jovic 6-3, 6-4. Korneeva won seven of eight break points to reach the last 16 after 82 minutes.

Alexandra Eala, the 21-year-old Philippines left-hander who won her first WTA title Monday at Washington, reached the fourth round by defeating American Caty McNally 6-3, 5-7, 6-4.

Eala had her right ankle taped by a trainer leading 3-2 in the second set, was broken at love in the sixth game and pushed to a third set before taking the victory after two hours and 39 minutes.

World number 20 Eala next faces Swiss 12th seed Belinda Bencic, who outlasted American Taylor Townsend 6-7 (5/7), 7-6 (7/4), 6-4 after three hours and 24 minutes. — **AFP**



Elena Rybakina in action.

Duplantis bids for fourth European title as stars align in Birmingham

BIRMINGHAM: Serial world record setter Armand 'Mondo' Duplantis leads 10 world champions seeking glory when a high-quality European Athletics Championships get under way in Birmingham tomorrow.

Duplantis is joined by Isaac Nader (1,500m), Jimmy Gressier (5,000/10,000m), Mattia Furlani (long jump), Pedro Pichardo (triple jump), Daniel Stahl (discus) and Leo Neugebauer (decathlon) in men's events.

Femke Broeders-Bol (400m hurdles but contesting the 800m), Ditaji Kambundji (100m hurdles) and Maria Perez (20km and 35km race walk but contesting the half marathon race walk) are the female world champs.

Duplantis is also Olympic champion, alongside Jakob Ingebrigtsen (5,000m), Miltiadis Tentoglou (long jump), Keely Hodgkinson (800m), Yaroslava Mahuchikh (high jump) and Yemisi Mabry (shot put).

Duplantis, Ingebrigtsen, Tentoglou and Norway's 400m hurdler Karsten

Warholm are all targeting their fourth successive European titles. Mahuchikh and Hodgkinson are eyeing a hat-trick of golds.

Duplantis makes his return to competition after a scare that saw him withdraw from the London Diamond League meet with a left thigh problem after clearing 5.95 metres.

"No sign of injury after a professional examination that also included an MRI and x-ray," his agent Daniel Wessfeldt told AFP.

"His planned competition programme stays firm. Next meet the European championships in Birmingham."

The double Olympic and triple world champion has broken the world record 15 times, first with 6.17m back in 2020. His most recent mark was 6.31m in Sweden in March.

Ingebrigtsen focus on 5,000

Norway's Ingebrigtsen is also returning to the track in Birmingham, having not raced at all in 2026 after surgery on his Achilles tendon in January.

"I can confirm he will run. He is looking forward to

being back. It is a great relief, and he is looking forward to it." Ingebrigtsen's spokesman Espen Skoland said. Ingebrigtsen, unbeaten at the Euros having swept the 1,500/5,000m titles at the last three editions dating back to Berlin 2018 when he was just 17, will skip the shorter event in Birmingham to focus on the 5,000m.

"If you're waiting for the perfect preparation, perfect conditions, perfect timing, you'll be waiting your whole life," said the Norwegian.

The defence of his titles in Rome two years ago saw him become the first male athlete in European Athletics Championships history to win six gold medals.

"Anyone who has watched me race over the years will know that competition is what drives me. I am healthy, training has been going well and after discussing with my team, we reached the conclusion that there is no reason not to race," he said.

"What better way than to return to the European



Armand 'Mondo' Duplantis

championships, where I have so many golden memories."

The championships, the first Euros to be held in Britain, will also feature a host of home hopes, notably Olympic 800m champion Keely Hodgkinson, her training partner Georgia Hunter Bell and 2022 world 1,500m champion Jake Wightman.

Their teammate Dina Asher-Smith, the two-time 100m champion, could overtake the seven golds of Croatian discus thrower Sandra Elkasevic with another blue riband victory, to become the most successful athlete in the history of the championships.

In all, athletes from 49 nations will compete for 50 gold medals, including a mixed 4x100m relay for the first time.

The 10 leading performances of the August 10-16 champs will each also be rewarded with a cheque for 50,000 euros. — AFP

Head crowned Australia's cricketer of the year

SYDNEY: Star batsman Travis Head (pictured) has won Australia's top cricketing honour for the second year in a row, edging Alex Carey to claim the Allan Border Medal.

The opener polled 153 votes, one ahead of wicketkeeper and South Australia teammate Carey, and three clear of fast bowler Mitchell Starc.

Fellow players, the media and umpires select the player of the year, with the awards handed out at a function in Brisbane on Friday evening.

Head played 30 matches across all three formats during the 2025-26 international season, blasting 1,437 runs. The left-hander's highlight was a brilliant 123 off 83 balls on day two of the Ashes Test against England in Perth which helped Australia claim an eight-wicket win.

He went on to score two more big Ashes centuries. "To think that I've got two medals and my kids can look at them and I can tell them (about it) in 20 years' time is pretty cool," said Head.

Head was only the fifth player to win back-to-back Allan Border Medals, following in the footsteps of Ricky Ponting, Michael Clarke, David Warner and Shane Watson.

Starc's remarkable durability through Australia's 11 Tests last season, including 31 Ashes wickets, saw him recognised as Australian Test player of the year.

Mitchell Marsh was named ODI player of the year while Tim David took the Twenty20 honour.

Earlier this year, Annabel Sutherland claimed her second consecutive Belinda Clark Award, which recognises Australia's best woman cricketer. — AFP



Inter Milan players celebrate after scoring a goal against Juventus in Perth, yesterday. PIC: @InterMilanFRA

Dimarco stars in Inter Milan's 2-1 friendly win over Juventus

PERTH: Star Federico Dimarco continued his strong pre-season form and Frenchman Andy Diouf hit the target as Serie A champions Inter Milan defeated Juventus 2-1 in Perth yesterday.

Dimarco opened the scoring in the 20th minute in front of 50,325 fans in brisk conditions, before 23-year-old Diouf doubled Inter's advantage in the second half.

Francisco Conceicao produced a late highlight for Juventus when he finished superbly in the 85th minute.

The 28-year-old Dimarco is rounding into top gear, having also scored Inter's only goal in their 1-1 draw with rival AC Milan on the same ground on Wednesday.

Having impressed in goal against AC Milan, new signing Ivan Provedel kept a clean sheet before being substituted midway through the second half.

Juventus rued sloppy finishing and their methodical style of play did not trouble Inter, who bagged the Italian domestic double last season.

Juventus, who finished sixth in last season's Serie A, entered unbeaten in the pre-season, which included beating Chelsea 1-0 in Hong Kong on Wednesday. Rising Turkish winger Kenan Yildiz started, having come off the bench against Chelsea amid reports that he has been battling a knee injury. In what has become their brand under coach Luciano Spalletti, Juventus were patient in the early exchanges and played along the flanks.

But Inter were not flustered and made their move when Dimarco tapped in a sharp cross from Ange-Yoan Bonny.

Inter took control only to be denied by goalkeeper Michele Di Gregorio, who completed several outstanding saves.

After a quiet start, Yildiz attempted to spark his side before the interval but his bullet from outside the box was off target.

Both coaches rang the changes at the break, including Dimarco after he played the entire game against AC Milan.

Inter continued to press and were rewarded in the 62nd minute when Diouf hit the back of the net after finishing off a crisp pass from Pio Esposito, who is reportedly being courted by Manchester United and Arsenal.

Juventus attempted a late rally when Conceicao scored, but it wasn't enough.

They round out the Perth friendlies against Serie B team Palermo on August 11, while Inter wrap up their pre-season against Real Betis in Bari on August 15.

The Serie A season starts on August 22. — AFP

Guimaraes eager to 'make history' at Arsenal after £75m move

LONDON: Bruno Guimaraes said he wanted to "make history" at Arsenal after joining the Premier League champions from top-flight rivals Newcastle for a reported fee of £75m (\$101.2m) yesterday.

The Brazil midfielder spent four-and-a-half seasons with Newcastle and became captain of the Magpies.

Arsenal, who ended a 22-year wait for a top-flight English league title last season, did not disclose the exact length of Guimaraes's "long-term" deal.

But British media reports said he had signed a four-year contract with a further one-year option.

"I feel good, I feel amazing. I'm glad for the opportunity," Guimaraes told Arsenal's media channels.

"We have tough games to play this season so the squad is going to be very, very important and I'm hopeful we can achieve our dreams." The 28-year-old said he'd been enthused about joining Arsenal right from his initial contacts with sporting



Bruno Guimaraes with Arsenal manager Mikel Arteta.

director Andrea Berta and manager Mikel Arteta.

"Since the first time I spoke to Berta and Mikel I was excited," said Guimaraes.

"I just felt inside of me that I need

a new challenge in my life and I think to be an Arsenal player is going to be an exciting challenge in my life.

"I think after playing two World Cups, I'm at the point of my life, I think I need a challenge like this.

Kenyan Commonwealth silver medal winner suspended over doping

NAIROBI: Kenya's Commonwealth Games 10,000m race walk silver medallist Stephen Ndangiri Kihu has been provisionally suspended for a doping violation, the Anti-Doping Agency of Kenya (ADAK) said.

Kihu, 20, broke the national 10,000m race walk record when he won silver behind Australia's Isaac Beacroft at the recently concluded Commonwealth Games, with Canada's Evan Dunfee taking bronze.

ADAK said Kihu tested positive for erythropoietin (EPO), a banned blood-boosting substance that increases red blood cell production and oxygen delivery to muscles.

The tests were conducted on June 30 while the Kenyan team was training for the July 23-August 2 event.

The provisional suspension took effect on August 5, and he could face a four-year ban if found guilty.

Kenya has provisionally suspended about 21 athletes for doping-related offences in 2026 alone, according to a list published by ADAK.

More than 140 Kenyan athletes, mainly long-distance runners, have been suspended by the Athletics Integrity Unit (AIU) since 2017 -- more than those from any other country. — AFP

Atletico will not sell Alvarez, says Simeone

MADRID: Atletico Madrid will not allow forward Julian Alvarez to leave the club during the current transfer window despite interest from Barcelona, coach Diego Simeone said yesterday.

Last month, Atletico filed a complaint to FIFA over Barcelona allegedly tapping up Alvarez.

The Argentina international has also been linked with a possible move to Premier League champions Arsenal and was the subject of a rejected 150-million-euro (\$173.4m) bid from Real Madrid in June.

"I think the situation is very clear. The club has made a decision that (CEO) Miguel Angel (Gil Marin) has explained very well," Simeone told reporters ahead of a pre-season friendly against Manchester City in Seoul.

"From a sporting perspective, we're very happy to have a footballer like Julian..."

"We will help him continue to grow, continue to improve and continue delivering the best -- which has been a tremendous amount -- that he has given us over the last two years."

Alvarez is due to rejoin the Atletico squad in two days' time after taking a break following Argentina's World Cup final loss to Spain.

While on World Cup duty, the 26-year-old said he "believed a transfer is best for everyone", but did not confirm his preferred destination.

Alvarez has scored 49 goals for Atletico since signing from Manchester City two years ago. "We don't want to transfer him. We didn't accept the 100-million-euro offer, nor will we accept one for 150 million or 200 million," Gil Marin told the club's in-house media channel.

"I have no doubt that Atletico is the right place for Julian and that Julian is the centre-forward for Atletico Madrid. We want to keep him." When asked about how Alvarez might be received by Atletico fans following the transfer speculation, Simeone pointed to Antoine Griezmann.

The Frenchman made a big-money move to Barcelona before returning to Atletico.

He was initially met with some hostility, but won the supporters back over and departed last season a club legend.

"We went through a period with Antoine in recent years where he had to leave, come back, and prove his quality and stature on the pitch," said Simeone.

"I see no other path than focusing on the sporting side of things, doing our part and helping him (Alvarez), just as we have done over the last few years."

Atletico get their La Liga campaign under way on August 19 with a home match against newly-promoted Malaga. The capital club finished fourth last season, 25 points adrift of champions Barcelona. — AFP

Bangladesh crash to heavy defeat ahead of Australia Tests

DARWIN: Bangladesh folded for just 54 Saturday to lose their only warm-up game ahead of a two-Test series against top-ranked Australia by an innings and 38 runs.

The tourists were skittled by young quick Campbell Thompson, who claimed a stunning 8-25 off 11 overs as a Cricket Australia XI romped to victory before lunch on the third and final day in Darwin.

It does not bode well for Bangladesh, who face a full-strength Australia spearheaded by pace trio Pat Cummins, Mitchell Starc and Josh Hazlewood in the same city next week.

Opener Tanzid Hasan was the only batter to reach double figures with 22.

Bangladesh made 263 in their first innings with the CA XI responding with 355.

"To clean it up this morning, I had a clear process -- just try to use the new ball, swing it and hit the stumps," said 22-year-old Thompson, who had played just one previous first-class match.

"I was lucky enough to get a few wickets." — AFP