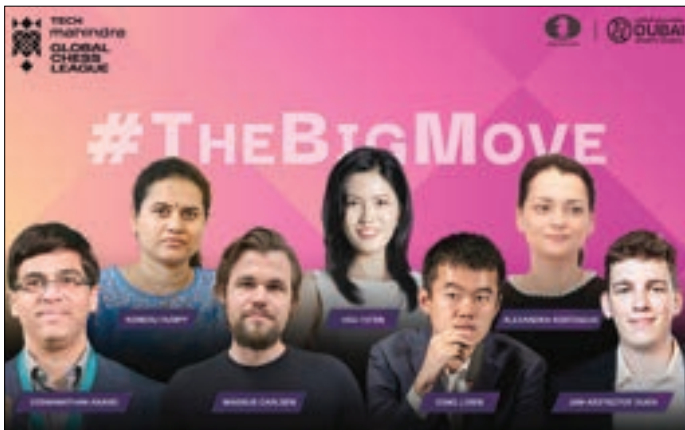




AL ARABI BEAT AL DUHAIL TO ENTER AMIR CUP HANDBALL SEMI-FINALS



Al Arabi defeated defending champions Al Duhail 32-30 to enter the semi-finals of the Amir Cup handball tournament on Tuesday. In the semi-final on Wednesday, Al Arabi will take on Al Ahli, who earlier beat Al Sadd 31-30 in extra time after the match had ended in a 27-all draw at regulation time. In the other semi-final, Qatar Cup champions Al Wakrah will take on Al Rayyan. Al Wakrah outplayed Al Khor 31-17, while Rayyan defeated Al Gharafa 29-28 in a penalty shootout, after the teams were tied 25-25 at full time. (TNN)



Liren, Carlsen, Anand and Yifan join Global Chess League

TRIBUNE NEWS NETWORK

THE Global Chess League (GCL), a joint venture between Tech Mahindra and FIDE, on Tuesday announced the complete list of players for the upcoming inaugural edition.

The first season of the Global Chess League will be held at the Dubai Chess & Culture Club from June 21st - July 2nd, 2023, in association with the Dubai Sports Council. It will feature reigning World Chess Champion Ding Liren, the world's top-ranked chess player and five-time World Chess Champion Magnus Carlsen, five-time World Champion Viswanathan Anand, and four-time Women's World champion Hou Yifan, among others.

Grandmaster Liren, said, "Global Chess League appeared to be a fantastic opportunity from the moment I heard about it, and I was eager to participate. Not only is it an interesting format, but also, as an ICON player, I get to contribute to an exciting concept that will change the face of the chess world for years to come. Further, knowing that GCL will see participation from players worldwide, it will be a strong field, and I look forward to meeting all the players."

Carlsen is the world's top-ranked chess player. A five-time World Chess Champion, and the reigning four-time World Rapid Chess Champion, Carlsen's peak FIDE rating has been the highest in chess history. Speaking about his association with the league, the world's top-ranked chess player Grandmaster Magnus Carlsen, said, "The Global Chess League will be a great new event in over-the-board chess that has never been done before. I am excited to be a part of this unique mixed-team format. Chess is played by many people worldwide, but it needs to catch up to other major sports as a spectator sport, and I am optimistic that GCL will contribute significantly to this."

All teams will compete in a one-of-a-kind joint team format at GCL, with each team consisting of six players a minimum of two women chess

players per team. To add to the thrilling level of competition, five more World Champions will be competing in the Global Chess League, including reigning World Chess Champion Ding Liren, 2021 World Rapid Chess Champion Nodirbek Abdusattorov, 2008 Blitz Chess World Champion Leinier Dominguez, three-time Blitz Chess World Champion Alexander Grischuk, and 2018 World Rapid Chess Champion Daniil Dubov.

Global Chess League will also feature top female superstars, including Grandmaster (GM) Hou Yifan, a four-time Women's World Chess Champion and the second highest-rated female player of all time. She was a chess prodigy who was the youngest female player ever to qualify for the title of Grandmaster at the age of 14. Hou Yifan is accompanied by GM Koneru Humpy, GM Harika Dronavalli, GM Kateryna Lagno, GM Alexandra Kosteniuk, GM Tan Zhongyi, GM Nana Dzagnidze, GM Bella Khotenashvili, GM Nino Batsiashvili, GM Irina Krush, International Master Polina Shuvalova, and 2018 European Women's Champion in rapid chess, Elisabeth Pahtz.

GM Hou Yifan, four-time women's world chess champion, said, "Global Chess League has already sparked widespread interest, and it is amazing to witness such fervour for the game of chess. I am grateful to Tech Mahindra and FIDE for inviting me to participate in the league's inaugural season."

In addition to the renowned champions, the league will provide a stage for emerging talent from diverse nations, offering them an opportunity to compete against the very best in the world.

Six U21 players will also compete in the GCL, with the trio of Grandmasters, Praggnanandhaa R., Raunak Sadhwani, and Nihal Sarin, leading the pack of prodigies. Grandmaster Jonas Buhl Bjerre, Grandmaster Javokhir Sindarov, chess prodigy and Grandmaster Andrey Esipenko complete the list of players in the category.

CSK prevail over GT with ease to make their 10th IPL final

ANI
CHENNAI

MS Dhoni led Chennai Super Kings (CSK) to their tenth IPL final as their bowlers bundled out the batting lineup of Gujarat Titans (GT) to win by 15 runs in the Indian Premier League (IPL) 2023 Qualifier 1 at the MA Chidambaram Stadium on Tuesday.

CSK bowlers collectively weakened the GT's batting unit. Spinner Ravindra Jadeja was the pick of the bowlers, he dismissed two batters by conceding only 18 runs. Maheesh Theekshana, Matheesha Pathirana and Deepak Chahar also claimed two wickets each.

Chasing a total of 173, GT openers started slow and steady. However, CSK blowers got the first breakthrough early in the innings as Deepak Chahar cleared up Wriddhiman Saha in the 3rd over.

CSK's Maheesh Theekshana got the second wicket of GT when he dismissed skipper Hardik Pandya in the 5.5 overs. He scored 8 off 7 balls.

Trying to steer the innings after losing quick wickets, GT reached to 50-run mark in 7.3 overs.

As the required run rate kept on rising, the GT batter got under pressure to hit the boundary and in the process they lost another wicket in the 10.3 over. Ravindra Jadeja cleared up Dasun Shanaka who was batting at 17 off 16 balls.

CSK did not give any opportunity to GT for a comeback, they kept on collecting wickets at regular intervals of time. At 12.5 over, Jadeja again stuck the wicket and dismissed David Miller cheaply at 4 off 6 balls.

In the next over, Deepak Chahar got the massive breakthrough of in-form batter Shubman Gill. Shuman Gill scored a fighting 42 off 38 balls.

None of the GT batters were able to tough double digits. In the 14.3 over, Theekshana picked up the wicket of Rahul Tewatia who scored just 3 off 5 balls.

All-rounder Rashid Khan did hit a few boundaries to



Chennai Super Kings' Maheesh Theekshana (C) celebrates after taking the wicket of Gujarat Titans' skipper Hardik Pandya (R) during the Indian Premier League (IPL) first qualifier at the MA Chidambaram Stadium in Chennai on Tuesday. (AFP)

have the hopes alive but wickets are falling from the other sides. GT's last proper batter Vijay Shankar also returned to the pavilion after Pathirana dismissed him at 14 off 10 balls in 17.3 overs. In the next ball, Darshan Nalkande was dismissed on a golden duck after being run out by SP Senapati.

Rashid's fighting knock came to an end after Deshpande dismissed him. He scored 30 off 16 balls. GT batting bundled out as Mohammed Shami was dismissed by Pathirana on the last ball.

Earlier, put into bat, Chennai Super Kings lost opener Rituraj Gaikwad with only five runs on the board. Darshan Nalkande got the wicket of Gaikwad but his celebration was short-lived as umpire called it a no-ball.

After that Gaikwad and Devon Conway batted well and helped CSK put on 49 without the loss of any wicket in first six overs of powerplay.

The four-time champions went past the 50-run mark in

just 6.1 overs. Gaikwad looked in great touch and went onto notch-up his half-century in 36 balls.

The Gaikwad-Conway's opening partnership was finally broken as Mohit Sharma dismissed the right-hander for 60 from 44 balls as Chennai lost their first wicket for 87.

In the next over left-arm spinner Noor Ahmad dismissed Shivan Dube for 1 as CSK lost their second wicket for 90.

Conway along with Ajinkya Rahane took Chennai Super Kings beyond triple-figure mark in 13.1 overs.

Rahane looked in decent touch but was dismissed for 17 from 10 balls by Darshan Nalkande to reduce CSK to 121/3 in 14.5 overs.

In the next over CSK lost another wicket in the form of opener Conway as Mohammed Shami sent him packing for 40 to leave CSK in trouble at 125/4.

Ambati Rayudu and Ravindra Jadeja batted sensibly to take Chennai close to 150.

Rashid Khan then dismissed Rayudu for 17 from 9 balls as CSK lost their fifth wicket for 148.

After Rayudu's wicket there was a huge roar from Chennai crowd as Mahendra Singh Dhoni walked out to bat. Dhoni along with Ravindra Jadeja took CSK past 150-run mark in 18.2 overs.

The celebration was short-lived as three balls later MS Dhoni was dismissed for just one by Mohit Sharma caught by Hardik Pandya at covers as CSK lost their sixth wicket for 155.

Moeen Ali joined Jadeja and the duo took the Super Kings to 172/7 in 20 overs as Shami dismissed Jadeja for 22 off 16 balls on the last ball of the innings.

Moeen remained unbeaten on 9 from 4 balls.

Scores: CSK 172/7 in 20 overs (Rituraj Gaikwad 60 (44), Devon Conway 40 (34); Mohammed Shami 2/28, Mohit Sharma 2/31) **beat GT 157** (Shubman Gill 42, Rashid Khan 30, Ravindra Jadeja 2-18) **by 15 runs.**

Quick read



Qatar's Hamida wins pole vault gold at Arab U-23 Athletics Championship in Tunisia

Tunis: Qatari national team athlete Saif Hamida won gold medal in the pole vault competition of the Arab Athletics U-23 Championship being held in Tunisia.

The championship, in which 18 national teams are participating, will conclude on Wednesday.

Saif Hamida bagged the first place clearing a distance of 5.30 metres, ahead of Iraqi Amir Faleh Abdel-Wahed (4.90 metres), and his compatriot Amir Sobeih's 4.85 metres. (QNA)

Guardiola expects City's intensity to drop, warns of major challenges



Manchester City's Spanish manager Pep Guardiola watches the players from the touchline during the English Premier League match against Chelsea at the Etihad Stadium in Manchester recently. (AFP)

PA MEDIA/DPA
LONDON

MANCHESTER City manager Pep Guardiola expects an inevitable drop off in intensity from his players now the Premier League has been retained but warned them that major challenges still lie in wait.

A fifth title in six years was attained following Arsenal's defeat at Nottingham Forest on Saturday, which essentially gave City three 'free' games until the end of the domestic campaign.

They have already dispensed with Chelsea and Brighton follow on Wednesday before Brentford on the final day, but the bigger picture is the FA Cup final against Manchester

United and the Champions League final against Inter Milan.

"They have the party after the (Chelsea) game. I don't know how they feel," said Guardiola.

"They have to be ready to run a lot. The best way to prepare for the final is be ready. The players set the standards, they have to maintain it.

"It's normal the energy would drop. Arsenal play for just the Premier League, we have FA Cup, Champions League, the energy we spend is massive." Guardiola has plenty of options at his disposal in terms of being able to keep his players fresh, so there should be no excuse for a huge drop off in performance.

Against Chelsea he made nine

changes, allowing him to be able to bring on the likes of 52-goal striker Erling Haaland, playmaker Kevin De Bruyne, Rodri and John Stones while not even using Jack Grealish or the in-form Ilkay Gundogan.

That meant a first Premier League start for Kalvin Phillips, who has had a difficult debut season since arriving from Leeds.

Guardiola insists all his squad still have a part to play.

"Everyone can have influence, sometimes five minutes is as important as the rest," he added.

"Everyone has been important, everyone has been involved in the fact we are where we are." The City boss, however, remains wary of Brighton, who are riding the crest of

a wave having qualified for Europe for the first time in their history.

Guardiola is a huge fan of the work done by Roberto De Zerbi since taking over from Graham Potter.

"Congratulations for Brighton for this incredible achievement for the Europa League," he said.

"Pay attention to what I'm going to say. I'm pretty convinced I'm right in what I'm saying; I think Roberto is one of the most influential managers in the last 20 years.

"There is no team playing the way they play, it's unique. I have the feeling when he arrived the impact he would have in the Premier League would be great - I didn't expect them to do it in this short space of time."



Bukayo Saka (centre).

Saka signs new long-term Arsenal deal

PA MEDIA/DPA
LONDON

ARSENAL forward Bukayo Saka has signed a new long-term contract.

The 21-year-old England international has scored 14 goals in all competitions this season as well as providing 11 assists.

Saka told the club website: "I'm just really happy. There's been a lot of talking and it's been a while, but I'm here now. I think this is the right club, the right place to make the next step. It's a beautiful club - look where we are.

"I think I have everything I need to become the best player I can be, and that's why I'm happy to stay here and be here for the future, because I really believe that we can achieve big things." Saka made his Gunners debut in November 2018 and has made 178 appearances in red and white.

He added: "I have seen a lot of change. I've seen this team and the club grow, and one thing that everyone around us can be excited about is that we are going in the right direction.

"It's been too long since this club has had Champions League football. I'm really looking forward to Tuesday and Wednesday nights in this stadium, the atmosphere is going to be special." Saka joins goalkeeper Aaron Ramsdale in signing a new deal in the last few days.

Boss Mikel Arteta said: "It's great for the club that Bukayo has extended his contract. Retaining our best young talents is key to our continued progress and Bukayo represents such an important part of our squad now and for the future.

"As well as being a fantastic talent, Bukayo is a special person, he's loved by us all and he is a credit to himself and his family for the hard work and commitment they have all made to get to this level today."

La Liga demands greater powers to punish racism after Vinicius abuse

PA MEDIA/DPA
LONDON

LA Liga will request greater jurisdiction to punish clubs whose fans are guilty of racist abuse after feeling "powerless" at the lack of current sanctions in the wake of the latest Vinicius Junior incident.

The Spanish league is engulfed in a racism scandal after Real Madrid forward Vinicius was allegedly subjected to racist chants during Sunday's game at Valencia and later claimed it was an example of "continuous episodes spread across several cities in Spain." La Liga, according to the country's law, can currently only identify and report incidents, and punishment is

rarely handed out.

Now it wants legislation changing so that it has the power to impose punishment such as forcing games to be played behind closed doors or financial penalties.

It said in a statement: "La Liga will request more sanctioning powers, with the aim of being more agile and effective in the fight against violence, racism, xenophobia and intolerance in sport, where La Liga has been leading the identification and reporting of such behaviour in football stadiums for years, but feels powerless when observing how its reporting ends.

"Despite its intense and continuous fight against violence and racism to the full

extent of its powers (currently, according to Spanish legislation, limited to identifying and reporting the facts that occur), La Liga feels tremendous frustration at the lack of sanctions and convictions by the sports disciplinary bodies, public administrations and jurisdictional bodies to which it reports.

"Faced with this serious situation, in the coming days La Liga will formally request the amendment of Law 19/2007 of July 11, against violence, racism, xenophobia and intolerance in sport and Law 39/2022 of December 30, on sport." It comes on the day three people were arrested over the Valencia abuse and four people were held in

Madrid after being suspected of hanging an effigy of Vinicius off a bridge in January.

An inflatable doll dressed in a Vinicius shirt was hung from the railings with a banner that read 'Madrid hates Real Madrid' ahead of Real's Copa del Rey game with city rivals Atletico at the start of the year.

The arrests follow the latest racism scandal that has engulfed Spanish football, with Vinicius targeted by racist chants during Sunday's LaLiga game with Valencia.

The Brazil international threatened to leave the pitch in the second half after being subjected to alleged monkey chants at the Mestalla.

Real Madrid said the abuse

constituted a "hate crime" and filed a complaint with the Spanish State Attorney General's Office.

Valencia on Tuesday confirmed that police have identified three fans suspected of racial abuse, but denied their fan base is racist.

In a statement, the club said: "The match against Real Madrid was broadcast live and it is totally false that the entire stadium was shouting racist remarks.

"There has been a lot of confusion and misinformation in the last few days. Valencia demand a responsible and serious approach to the matter.

"Racism has no place in football or in our society. Valencia strongly condemn

racism."

Vinicius tweeted on Monday night: "Every round away from home is an unpleasant surprise. And there were many this season. Death wishes, hanged doll, many criminal screams. All registered.

"But the speech always falls on 'isolated cases', 'a fan'. No, these are not isolated cases. They are continuous episodes spread across several cities in Spain (and even in a television programme).

"The evidence is there in the video. Now I ask: how many of these racists had names and photos exposed on websites? I answer to make it easier: zero. None to tell a sad story or make those fake public apologies."

Newcastle back in Champions League with Leicester draw

PA MEDIA/DPA
LONDON

GOALKEEPER Nick Pope ensured Newcastle booked their Champions League place with a game to spare as he denied Leicester a priceless victory in their bid for Premier League survival.

The Magpies' £10 million (\$12.4 million) summer signing kept out Timothy Castagne's volley in the second minute of stoppage time with his first save of the game to secure a 0-0 draw on a night when the home side battered at the door but were unable to find a way through.

Newcastle forward Callum Wilson and midfielder Miguel Almiron were both denied by the woodwork, but a point was all their team needed to ensure their place among the continent's big boys for the first time in 20 years.

By contrast, Leicester, who are still two points adrift

of safety, will head into their final-day clash with West Ham knowing their fate is not in their own hands.

Eddie Howe's men were lauded by a crowd of 52,152 on the final whistle, having secured Champions League football for just the third time in the club's history and way ahead of the schedule drawn up by the club's Saudi-backed owners when they took control in October 2021.

In some senses it proved to be a frustrating 90 minutes - it might have been more so had key midfielder Bruno Guimaraes seen red rather than yellow for a poor early challenge of Boubakary Soumare - but it was ultimately the bigger picture which mattered.

Howe was forced to make a last-minute change when, after he had taken part in the warm-up, midfielder Joellinton was unable to start and was replaced by Elliot Anderson.

Any fears the reshuffle



Newcastle United's teammates celebrate at the end of the English Premier League match against Newcastle Leicester at St James' Park in Newcastle-upon-Tyne on Monday. (AFP)

might unsettle his team proved unfounded as they took the game by the scruff of the neck amid a party atmosphere at St James' Park, although Gui-

maraes was perhaps fortunate to escape with only a booking for his studs-up ninth-minute clash with Soumare.

The Magpies dominated

possession, but in the early stages were unable to find a telling final ball.

Almiron, who had made another high-octane start, fired over after cutting inside from the right and Anderson tested goalkeeper Daniel Iversen for the first time with a curling attempt.

Alexander Isak was seeing plenty of the ball down the left but sliced a long-range effort well wide as the Magpies piled forward repeatedly without ever really being able to summon up the required precision to make the pressure tell.

For their part, Leicester attempted to hit Jamie Vardy and Kelechi Iheanacho long and early and, although they achieved a measure of success, they met with stubborn resistance from Fabian Schar and Sven Botman.

Wilson twice went close to his 19th goal of the season four minutes before the break when he stabbed a shot against a post

and then saw Wilfred Ndidi clear his follow-up header off the line, while Almiron was similarly denied by the woodwork before Isak steered the rebound wide seconds later.

Wilson headed over from a Kieran Trippier corner in stoppage time after Iversen had misjudged the flight and the half ended goalless.

James Maddison entered the fray at the break as a replacement for Iheanacho, but the traffic continued to head very much in the direction of his team's goal, with Isak and Almiron menacing out wide, although the massed ranks of blue held impressively firm.

Iversen had to turn a 59th-minute Isak snapshot over his crossbar and block Sean Longstaff's 76th-minute drive with a foot, but it was the Foxes who almost snatched victory at the death when Pope was forced into his first save of the game to keep out Castagne's stoppage-time volley.

Thomas beaten by Almeida on Giro stage 16 but regains race lead

PA MEDIA/DPA
ROME

JOAO Almeida edged out Geraint Thomas to claim victory on stage 16 of the Giro d'Italia on a summit finish as the Welshman moved back into the Maglia Rosa leader's jersey.

Following Monday's rest day, racing resumed over a tough 203-kilometre mountain course from Sabbio Chiese to Monte Bondone on Tuesday.

A group of around 25 riders had made an initial breakaway from the front of the peloton as the course headed on to the category three climb of Passo Bordala.

Jumbo-Visma continued to push at the front of the peloton, with Ineos-Gren-

adiers' Pavel Sivakov later dropped on the Matassone ascent where Astana duo Vadim Pronskiy and Christian Scaroni launched an attack.

With around 52km left of stage 16, the front pair were caught by the chasing group, which held a lead of just over four minutes over the peloton approaching the final climb of the day on Monte Bondone.

As the pace was picked up, the breakaway were again reeled in as Almeida and Thomas made their move along with Jumbo-Visma's Sepp Kuss and Primoz Roglic in the general classification group.

Heading into the last 4.5km, Thomas launched his own attack as he and Almeida dropped their rivals.

It was Portuguese rider



UAE Team Emirates's Portuguese rider Joao Almeida (L) sprints to win ahead of INEOS Grenadiers's British rider Geraint Thomas during the 16th stage of the Giro cycling race near Cavedine, on Tuesday. (AFP)

Almeida, though, who had the most left in the tank to sprint clear in the final 150 metres to claim victory for UAE Team Emirates and pick up maximum bonus seconds.

Slovenian Roglic finished third, which saw him drop 25 seconds in the GC standings, ahead of Ireland's Eddie Dunbar (Jayco-AlUla), who moved up to fifth overall as a result.

Bruno Armirail (Groupama-FDJ) saw his hopes of retaining the Maglia Rosa fade as he dropped back heading into the final 10km.

Thomas now has an 18-second lead over Almeida, with Roglic third, now 29 seconds off the pace.

However, Ineos Grenadiers confirmed Sivakov had followed Tao Geoghegan Hart and Filippo Ganna in dropping out of the race after failing to shake off the impact of a crash during a wet 11th stage.

"It was a very tough day, a lot of climbs, I am happy with

how it went. I found myself in front with Almeida, he was better in the sprint," said pink jersey holder Thomas.

"It would have been nice to win the stage, but I had to keep riding - didn't want to be caught playing cat and mouse with Joao with Roglic behind.

"It is nice to be back in pink and gain some time, but it's obviously not great to lose a team-mate (Sivakov)." Almeida hailed his maiden Giro stage victory as a "dream come true."

He said: "I was feeling well and the whole team was extraordinary. I try to improve day by day to become the best version of myself."

Wednesday's 17th stage will be a flat 195km course from Pergine Valsugana to Caorle.

Nuggets sweep Lakers to reach NBA Finals for first time

STATS PERFORM/DPA
BERLIN

NIKOLA Jokic had 30 points, 14 rebounds and 13 assists as the Denver Nuggets advanced to the NBA Finals for the first time in franchise history with a 113-111 comeback win over the Los Angeles Lakers on Monday to complete a four-game sweep of the Western Conference finals.

Top-seeded Denver overcame a 15-point half-time deficit to claim its first Western Conference title in its 47-year existence and will face either the Miami Heat or Boston Celtics for the league championship.

The eighth-seeded Heat own a 3-0 lead in the East finals.

Jokic made history as well by recording his eighth triple-double of this year's playoffs to break a tie he shared with Hall of Famer Wilt Chamberlain for the most in a single post-season. The two-time NBA MVP also hit the eventual game-winning shot when his layup with 52 seconds remaining snapped a 111-111 tie.

The Lakers had built a seemingly comfortable 73-58 half-time lead behind 31 points from LeBron James, his highest scoring total in a half in a play-off game in his illustrious career.



Jamal Murray #27 of the Denver Nuggets celebrates after the series clinching victory against the Los Angeles Lakers in game four of the Western Conference Finals in Los Angeles, California on Monday. (AFP)

Los Angeles came out cold in the third quarter, however, making just one field goal over the first 4-and-a-half minutes as the Nuggets steadily cut into their deficit. Denver outscored the Lakers 28-10 to start the second half and grabbed an 86-83 lead on Michael Porter's tiebreaking 3-pointer with

3:34 remaining in the period.

Jokic's 3-pointer with 2:50 left to play extended Denver's advantage to 110-104, but the Lakers' Austin Reaves answered with a triple on the ensuing possession to spark a 7-1 run that tied the game at 111-111 entering the final minute.

After Jokic's layup put the

Nuggets back in front, James missed a 20-footer and had his final attempt blocked by Aaron Gordon right before time expired.

James finished with 40 points, 10 rebounds and nine assists but shot just 4 of 12 from the field in the second half.

STATS PERFORM/DPA
BERLIN

LEBRON James cast doubt on his future with the Los Angeles Lakers after their season-ending defeat by the Denver Nuggets.

The 38-year-old, the top scorer in NBA history, even sparked rumours of retirement following the 113-111 loss in game four of the Western Conference finals.

"We'll see what happens going forward," James said at his post-game press conference.

"I don't know. I don't know. I've got a lot to think about, to be honest. Just for me personally going forward with the game of basketball, I've got a lot to think

about.

"It was a very challenging season for me, for our club. It was a pretty cool ride, but I don't know.

"I don't get a kick out of making a Conference appearance. I've done it a lot and it's not fun to me to not be a part of getting to the (NBA) finals." James scored 40 points against the Nuggets but missed two shots to tie the game in the dying seconds.

He has previously revealed a desire to play alongside his son Bronny, 18, who currently plays college basketball for the University of Southern California and will be eligible for the NBA next year.



File photo of LeBron James (AFP)

Men's Cricket World Cup 2023: ICC releases warm-up fixtures for Qualifier

ANI
DUBAI

THE warm-up fixtures have been confirmed ahead of the upcoming ICC Men's Cricket World Cup Qualifier tournament in Zimbabwe by ICC.

All 10 teams will play a total of two warm-up matches ahead of the start of the Qualifier on June 18, with sides to get some valuable match practice in prior to the commencement of the crucial event.

Every team will be in action on Tuesday, June 13 for the opening day of warm-up fixtures, with a second set of games set to take place during the same week on Thursday June 15 as per ICC.

The 10 sides in Zimbabwe for the Qualifier are battling it out for two places at the 2023 World Cup at the end of the year, with the top two teams at the completion of the Super Six stage progressing through to the final and earning a place at the 50-over showcase.

ICC has also announced the fixtures for the Qualifier matches of the upcoming ICC Men's Cricket World Cup 2023.

Two-time winners West Indies and 1996 champions Sri Lanka are in different groups for the upcoming ICC Men's Cricket World Cup Qualifier that will take place in Zimbabwe between June 18 and July 9.

West Indies drawn in Group A alongside tournament hosts Zimbabwe, Netherlands, Nepal and USA. And Sri Lanka is in Group B with the island nation scheduled to play matches against Ireland, Scotland, Oman and the UAE.

Warm-up fixtures:

- Tuesday, 13 June
 - West Indies v Scotland
 - Zimbabwe v Oman
 - Nepal v UAE
 - Sri Lanka v Netherlands
 - Ireland v USA
- Thursday, 15 June
 - Nepal v Oman
 - West Indies v UAE
 - Zimbabwe v Scotland
 - Ireland v Netherlands
 - Sri Lanka v USA

Boris Becker thinks tennis leads other sports in gender equality

DPA
BERLIN

BORIS Becker sees no need for tennis to catch up in terms of equal treatment of male and female players, saying the sport he used to play professionally is a role model for others.

But female players at the recent Italian Open in Rome do not agree. They criticized the parallel men's and women's tournaments because prize money for the men was more than double that for the women.

But Becker believes tennis is ahead of other sports.

"If we look at the other sports, we are almost pioneers when it comes to equality. Most major tournaments have equal



prize money, and the match schedules are also almost identical," said the 55-year-old Euro-sport pundit.

"Basically, tennis is an example of how equality works in sport." The Italian open pay differences are supposed to be rectified in 2025, when premiums in Rome are set to be the same. The clay-court events belong to the second-highest tournament category. At the Grand Slams, prize money for male and fe-

male players is already the same. Scheduling of evening matches at last year's French Open also drew criticism; nine of the 10 matches played in the night session were men's singles.

"You have to leave it up to the tournament organizer to decide when to schedule whom," Becker said just under a week before the start of the Grand Slam French Open at the Stade Roland Garros in Paris.

"What is also decisive is how the spectators accept it. In Rome, I saw empty stands a few times for the women's matches. It was almost always full for the men's." Due to weather-related delays in the Italian capital, the women's final started late in the evening.

Doping case hearing delay is 'contrary to my rights': Simona Halep

AGENCIES

FORMER world number one Simona Halep has accused tennis' doping authority of "publicly stating one thing while privately doing another" by requesting a further delay to her hearing.

Halep was charged with a second doping offence last week over "irregularities" in her biological passport.

The Romanian, 31, has been suspended since October after testing positive for a banned

substance at the US Open.

The second charge is separate to the one for which she is already suspended.

In a statement on Twitter, 2019 Wimbledon champion Halep said the International Tennis Integrity Agency (ITIA) had requested a third delay.

Halep, who denies the charges, said she was "extremely shocked and disappointed by the ITIA's attitude".

"While the ITIA via their representative Nicole Sapstead was publicly stating three days

ago that the ITIA 'has remained committed to engaging Mrs Halep in an empathetic, efficient and timely manner', they were at the same time officially requesting the tribunal to delay my hearing... for the third time," Halep said.

"The ITIA publicly states one thing while privately doing another, I have repeatedly asked for my hearing and the ITIA has repeatedly sought to delay it.

"When is it going to stop? I ask the question once again.



Simona Halep

I am entitled to a quick hearing. Acting this way is contrary to my rights." Halep's coach, Patrick Mouratoglou, said the

ITIA had played a "double game" from "day one".

An ITIA spokesperson said: "We have proposed that both charges are heard together to avoid multiple hearings. To do this, we wish to provide all parties (including the independent tribunal) sufficient time to consider the significant materials associated with the latest charge."

"Ultimately it is a decision for the independent tribunal. Ms Halep also has the opportunity to make her represen-

tations to them." Halep's suspension last year was imposed after she tested positive for roxadustat, an anti-anaemia drug which stimulates the production of red blood cells in the body. She denies knowingly taking the banned substance.

The investigations into failed tests by the ITIA are often complex, particularly when a player denies taking a substance knowingly.

It is not uncommon for cases to take months to be resolved.