



Lusail International Circuit to host Qatar's first-ever F1 Sprint at the Formula 1 Qatar Airways Qatar Grand Prix 2023

The Formula 1 Qatar Airways Qatar Grand Prix 2023 is less than 17 days away. Lusail International Circuit (LIC) is set to welcome teams and fans from across the globe for an unforgettable weekend. The event is scheduled to take place across three days from 6th - 8th October 2023.

As Formula 1 returns to Qatar for the first time since 2021, the new state-of-the-art circuit will host Qatar's first F1 Sprint. LIC joins Azerbaijan, Austria, Belgium, Austria, the United States and Brazil in hosting the F1 Sprint this season.

What is the F1 Sprint?

The F1 Sprint is a 100km high intensity dash introduced to feature the best Formula 1 has to offer - close and entertaining racing. The Sprint provides another opportunity for drivers and teams to score points for their respective championships, with the top eight drivers being awarded points - eight for the winner and one for the driver finishing in P8.



How is the grid determined for the F1 Sprint?

A special shorter qualifying session known as the Sprint Shootout will take place on Saturday to determine the grid for the F1 Sprint. Q1 will be 12

minutes, Q2 10 minutes and Q3 8 minutes. New tyres are mandatory for each qualifying round, with mediums for Q1 and Q2, and softs for Q3.

How does the race weekend

differ for an F1 Sprint?

Each day is geared to offer attendees something memorable, the new Sprint format promises fans action, competition, and exhilaration. Friday will feature a single Free Practice



session followed by the standard Qualifying session for the Grand Prix. Saturday will include Qualifying for the Sprint (Sprint Shootout) followed by the Sprint and Sunday will feature the Grand Prix race. The exciting Sprint and Grand Prix coupled with immersive entertainment

options will make this year's Formula 1 Qatar Airways Qatar Grand Prix 2023 an experience of a lifetime. Book your tickets on Lusail International Circuit's official website and explore all hospitality options on <https://hospitality.lcsc.qa/2023-f1-qatar-grand-prix> (TNN)

Boundedjah's penalty miss sees Sharjah FC hold Al Sadd to draw

TRIBUNE NEWS NETWORK
DOHA

QATAR'S Al Sadd were held to a frustrating goalless draw by Sharjah FC of the United Arab Emirates in their AFC Champions League opener at the Jassim Bin Hamad Stadium on Monday.

Al Sadd were the better side but Baghdad Boundedjah's missed penalty in the second half cost them dearly as Sharjah grabbed a valuable point in Group B clash.

Having Cosmin Olariu's side pinned in their own half, Al Sadd should have gone ahead in the third minute when Boundedjah teed up Akram Afif, who wasted his effort from just above the box.

Just minutes later, Afif once again found space in a similar position only for the forward to blast his curling effort high over the bar.

Sharjah barely troubled the Al Sadd backline with Miralem Pjanic the most threatening when he fed Ousmane Camara through on goal only for the Guinean to be flagged offside before trying it again with Firas Ben Arbi, garnering the same result.

Al Sadd came close to scoring just after the half-hour mark when Afif sent a delightful ball off a set-piece situation into the path of Mohamed Waad, who flicked his header just above the bar.

Afif kept Sharjah on their toes with his dangerous run-ins and set up Hassan Al Haydos nicely at the top of the six-yard box in the 39th minute, only for the Al Sadd captain to strike his effort straight into the arms of Sharjah keeper Adel al-Hosani.

Both sides continued to toil in front of goal with Sharjah's Caio Lucas coming within range when he angled his effort from distance over the bar, while Boundedjah failed to find



THE ONE THAT FLEW AWAY: Sharjah FC's goalkeeper Adel Al Hosani jumps for the ball as Al Sadd's Baghdad Boundedjah's penalty kick curls past the left post during their AFC Champions League Group B at the Jassim Bin Hamad Stadium in Doha on Monday. (AFP)



Al Sadd's forward #11 Baghdad Boundedjah vies for the ball with Sharjah FC's defender #18 Abdullah Ghanem at the Jassim Bin Hamad Stadium in Doha on Monday. (AFP)

the target from inside the box in first half added time.

Sharjah started the second half with more aggression and came close to breaking the deadlock in the 48th minute when Lucas steered his header

just wide off Pjanic's corner. Al Sadd wasted a golden opportunity to snatch the lead with Boundedjah smashing his spot-kick against the left post just before the hour-mark.

Sharjah should have scored



three minutes later when Ben Arbi sent a delightful ball into the box off a set-piece situation only for Konstantinos Manolas to miss his header from close range as both sides had to be content with a share of the points.

The result placed Al Sadd in second spot in the Group B standings with 1 point and behind leader Nasaf of Uzbekistan, who beat Al Faisaly of Jordan 1-0, with 3 points. Sharjah FC, also with 1 point, are second, and Al Faisaly fourth with no points.



Al Duhail players with coach Hernan Crespo in Dushanbe on Monday, the eve of their AFC Champions League match against Istiklol.

Al Duhail to meet Istiklol in Dushanbe

TRIBUNE NEWS NETWORK
DOHA

TAJIKISTAN champions Istiklol will have to be at their best to stop Qatar Stars League giants Al Duhail in their opening AFC Champions League Group E match in Dushanbe on Tuesday.

Both know a win is important if they are to challenge Group E's others teams - Persepolis of Iran and Saudi Arabia's Al Nassr. Istiklol, appearing in the tournament for the third consecutive edition, will not be lacking confidence after a stellar domestic season which saw them achieving the treble.

Their 2022 challenge ended in the group stage and the Dushanbe-based side will be determined to impress despite the daunting task they face. Al Duhail, who have started their 2023/24 season on a good note with two wins and a draw in the Qatar Stars League, will be on a mission to go all the way after suffering an agonising defeat in last year's AFC Champions League.

Jubilance at qualifying for the semi-finals for the first time was replaced by a 7-0 defeat to Saudi Arabia's Al Hilal SFC and Al Duhail will be determined to redeem themselves despite being drawn in a tough group.

Al Duhail coach Hernan Crespo said it will be a tough encounter against the hosts, but was confident of a positive result. "We are here at the start

of our campaign in the Champions League and we know that we will face a difficult opponent who will be armed with the presence of their fans and support from the stands, but my team is ready for this match and we will work to emerge from it with a positive result," Crespo said at pre-match press conference held at the Central Republican Stadium in Dushanbe yesterday.

Argentinean confirmed former Barcelona and Liverpool star Philippe Coutinho will not make his debut for the club today. "Philippe Coutinho joined us recently and he is happy to join the team. We are also happy, but he will not be with us in the match. There is more than one player who will be absent due to injury, but I have confidence in the players and in their ability to provide what is required of them," Crespo said.

"In the last edition, we reached the semifinal round and succeeded in performing well after topping our group, and this time we will go into the matches with increased ambitions, despite the loss of a number of players including Edmilson. The competition is strong, and it is for the champion clubs, and there will be no easy match. We, for our part, will work to provide what is required to qualify to the next round of the competition. The team has a diverse group of players who can cover any absence, and our collective performance.



Quick read

Mumbai City FC lose 2-0 to Iran's Nassaji Mazandaran in home game at Pune

Pune: Mumbai City FC lost 2-0 to Iranian Club Nassaji Mazandaran in their first AFC Champions League group stage game at home. The Islanders showcased immense attacking prowess but were unable to find the finishing touch. Des Buckingham put out a balanced team for the Islanders' first AFC Champions League 2023/24 group stage game against Iranian side FC Nassaji Mazandaran. Ehsan Hosseini (34') and Mohammed Reza Azadi (62') got the goals for Nassaji Mazandaran. Phurba started in goal; Tiri played alongside Rostyn Griffiths in Mumbai City FC's back-line. Rahul Bheke and Akash Mishra occupied the full back-back positions. The prodigious Apuia Ralte was paired up with the influential Greg Stewart and Yoell van Nieff in the Islanders' midfield. The Islanders had the electric duo of Lallianzuala Chhangte on the right and Bipin Singh on the left wing in attack. Jorge Pereyra Diaz was leading the line for the Islanders through the centre against FC Nassaji Mazandaran. Mumbai City FC was formed in August 2014 and is a club competing in the Hero Indian Super League. The Islanders, as the club is fondly known, is the only team in India to have won the unique 'double', winning the Hero ISL League and the Playoffs in the 2020-21.



Julian Draxler (R), who has moved from Paris Saint-Germain, underwent a medical examination on Sunday.

Al Ahli sign Draxler for two years

TRIBUNE NEWS NETWORK
DOHA

AL Ahli on Monday announced the signing of a two-year contract with Germany international Julian Draxler while unveiling the midfielder at Al Thumama Stadium.

Draxler, who has moved from Paris Saint-Germain, underwent medical examination on Sunday.

"We welcome Julian Draxler, who is a great addition to our club," said Chairman of the Board of Directors of Al Ahli Club Abdullah Yusef Al Mulla after signing the contract.

He hoped the new recruit would boost Al Ahli's campaign in the ongoing season. The Brigadiers suffered an abysmal start losing all their first three games in Qatar's top flight.

"Draxler's inclusion means a lot for Al Ahli as we are looking for best results to make our fans happy. I would like to thank the authorities who helped in his transfer," Al Mulla added.

Draxler thanked the club for a warm welcome, hoping to give his best for the side.

"I will make all-out effort to add quality in our performance and help my team achieve the desirable results," said Draxler, who will turn 30 tomorrow.

A World Cup winner with Germany in 2014, Draxler became the third player to move to Qatar from PSG after Marco Verratti and Abdou Diallo, who recently made moves to Al Arabi from PSG.

Al Ahli will face Umm Salal in their next QSL match on September 23.

Qatar Stars League, Ooredoo launch 'Welcome to the Stadium' initiative

TRIBUNE NEWS NETWORK
DOHA

THE Qatar Stars League (QSL) and Ooredoo, a leading telecom company, announced the launch of 'Welcome to the Stadium' initiative at a press conference on Monday at the company's headquarters in the presence of a number of officials and representatives from both entities.

The initiative comes in line with the joint efforts between QSL and Ooredoo, and in accordance with the previous announcement about the development of combined strategy.

The initiative includes working on marketing, promotion and development of a plan to motivate fans to come to the stadium, improve match-day experience through many competitions and events, in addition to allocating a number of prizes and gifts to the fans. A number of matches have been identified to activate the initiative.

On the occasion, Hassan Rabiah Al Kuwari, Executive Director of Sales, Marketing & Communication at QSL, said, "As previously announced and in continuation of our joint efforts work with Ooredoo company, we're pleased to announce the 'Welcome to the Stadium' initiative, which includes a number of events for fans in accordance with a specific plan. In this regard, I would like to extend my sincere thanks and appreciation to Ooredoo for the continued support and co-operation in our endeavour to develop the work pattern at various levels."

Sabah Rabiah Al Kuwari, Director PR, Sponsorship and CSR at Ooredoo, said, "We're proud of our participation in the 'Welcome to the Stadium' initiative with QSL. This is considered as a continuation of our



joint co-operation and consolidation of our strong partnership that began years ago. It's also an affirmation from our side to the importance of sup-

porting sports and athletes as well as motivating fans to attend league matches through a number of distinguished initiatives with which we seek to

enhance the league matches. We also thank QSL for its confidence in Ooredoo as a leading communications company in supporting sports in Qatar."

'Calm' Enrique accepts PSG form underwhelming, vows improvement

STATS PERFORM/DPA
BERLIN

PARIS Saint-Germain boss Luis Enrique has admitted his team's start to the season has not been good enough as they prepare to host Borussia Dortmund in their Champions League opener on Tuesday.

PSG have won just two of their opening five league games and suffered their first defeat on Friday when they were beaten 3-2 at home by Nice, leaving the reigning champions three points behind leaders Monaco.

Having taken charge in the summer, Enrique admits he is still getting used to his new side so has no cause for concern about developments so far, and promised that improved performances and results will start to come. He told a press conference: "It is true it hasn't been a great start, but when I start coaching a club, there is a lot of information I take in, a lot of situations to bear in mind.

"I have a very receptive team that is full of desire to take on new ideas, I am delighted with the conduct of the players and the team.

The fans are fantastic, bringing total unconditional support, despite not so good results.

"It is a long process and from my experience I know it takes time. I am not wasting time because I already know how this works. I am very calm here, we will certainly be playing good football and getting good results." PSG have been among the favourites to win the Champions League in recent seasons but will be without some notable



Paris Saint-Germain's Spanish head coach Luis Enrique gives a press conference in Poissy, west of Paris, on Monday. (AFP)

names this time around, with star forwards Lionel Messi and Neymar having left this summer while experienced midfielder Marco Verratti joined Al-Arabi last week.

The perennial Ligue 1 champions have yet to win the competition but came close in 2020, losing 1-0 to Bayern Munich in the final. They also reached the semi-final the following year but since then the big-spending French giants have fallen short of expectations with round of 16 exits in successive years.

Enrique still holds hope of bringing the trophy back to Paris but does not want to become obsessed over the idea.

He added: "We will have to see how the competition goes, football is a marvellous sport.

"Any result is possible, and in theory, any team can win. You can play well and lose. You might play badly and win. As a club we are convinced and motivated in every competition we are taking part in.

"The aim is to go as far as possible and try to win all of them. That is the objective of this club, it is ambitious.

"When a person or a team or club is obsessed with something, it is not a good sign. You need to be excited, you have to have hope and ambition. But being obsessed doesn't work in any part of life.

"So we are excited and motivated. We are full of desire to put on a show for our fans, and we are looking forward to the start of this competition." En-

rique thinks their defeat to Nice has little to do with their upcoming European encounter with Dortmund, who are unbeaten themselves in the league so far.

Edin Terzic's men are seventh in the Bundesliga with eight points from four games, sitting two points behind leaders Bayer Leverkusen following Saturday's 4-2 win at Freiburg.

The Spaniard said: "The Nice game has nothing to do with the Dortmund game. They are different games in different competitions.

"There are many areas for improvement and many things of the team are doing well. I think the most important thing is what the fans can see, which is the team's attitude. We don't give up."

Spain name majority of World Cup winners in new squad but Hermoso left out

PA MEDIA/DPA
LONDON

JENNI Hermoso has not been included in Spain's first squad since lifting the Women's World Cup but 15 of her title-winning team-mates have been called up despite announcing a boycott last month.

A group of 81 players, including all 23 members of the World Cup squad, indicated three weeks ago that they would not play for Spain again while Luis Rubiales remained Spanish football federation (RFEF) president as a result of his behaviour at the final.

Rubiales caused a huge controversy after kissing midfielder Hermoso on the lips during the medal ceremony following the team's 1-0 victory over England. Hermoso insists she did not consent to the kiss.

"We stand with Jenni," new head coach Montse Tome told a press conference.

"We believe that the best way to protect her is like this, but we are counting on Jenni. It's the start of a new phase, the clock is ticking. There is

nothing behind us and we really want to connect with these players." Amid increasing pressure, Rubiales finally resigned from his post last week but 39 players, including 21 of Spain's World Cup winners, released a statement on Friday saying that was not enough to trigger their return to national-team duty.

The players said they were not yet "in a safe place" to return and that the problems at the RFEF ran far deeper than Rubiales.

Rubiales has been banned from going within 200m of Hermoso as the national court in Madrid considered a complaint of sexual assault.

However, new Spain coach Tome - who had been due to name her squad on Friday after replacing the sacked Jorge Vilda - has now included 15 of the world champions in her 23-player squad for the upcoming Nations League matches against Sweden and Switzerland.

It is not clear whether those players will accept their call-ups.



New coach of Spain's female football team Montse Tome (L) is flanked by Spanish football federation (RFEF) acting president Pedro Rocha in Las Rozas de Madrid on Monday. (AFP)

Quick read

AC Milan's Tomori relishing clash with former team-mate Tonali

Milan: England international Fikayo Tomori has warned Sandro Tonali that friendship will go out of the window when AC Milan and Newcastle head into Champions League battle on Tuesday night. The two men were team-mates last season as Milan made it to the semi-finals of the competition and finished fourth in Serie A, but they will be on opposing sides at the San Siro following midfielder Tonali's summer switch to St James' Park. Former Chelsea defender Tomori, 25, admits it will be god to see his former colleague again - but only after the final whistle. He told a press conference: "Obviously it will be nice to see him again. We played a lot of games together. "It will be nice to see him again so soon after he left, but we are professionals. When the game starts, friendships go out of the window. We want to win." (PA Media/DPA)



Red Bull Racing's Dutch driver Max Verstappen during the first practice session at the Singapore Formula One Grand Prix night race at the Marina Bay Street Circuit in Singapore on Friday. (AFP)

Verstappen expects return to winning ways in Japan

PA MEDIA/DPA
SINGAPORE

MAX Verstappen believes he will be back on top at the Japanese Grand Prix following Red Bull's off-colour showing in Singapore.

Red Bull have ruled the Formula One roost all year - with 14 victories from 14 prior to Sunday's round in the city state, while Verstappen had been unbeaten in his last 10 appearances, setting a new record of consecutive wins along the way.

But the Dutch driver and Red Bull finally met their match at the unique, low-speed, high-downforce Marina Bay Circuit.

Verstappen qualified 11th before driving back to fifth, taking the chequered flag 21 seconds behind Ferrari's Carlos Sainz - the Spaniard becoming the first non-Red Bull winner of the year.

However, Verstappen, victorious at 12 of the 15 rounds so far, expects the fast-flowing Suzuka track will see him return to winning ways next weekend.

"Yes, that is the target," he said. "This track is so different to Suzuka and it doesn't relate."

"We have learned a bit from today, and have a few ideas with what we got wrong yesterday. I cannot go into details but I feel good about Suzuka."

Verstappen finished three places ahead of team-mate Sergio Perez to extend his championship lead from 145 points to 151.

Verstappen can no longer secure his third world title at next weekend's race in Japan, with the Qatar Grand Prix on October 8 a possible destination for his coronation.

Red Bull's failure to win ends their bid to become the first team in history to go through a season unbeaten.

"We never expected it," Red Bull team principal Christian Horner said. "To have got through 14 races, in multiple conditions, is beyond our wildest imaginings. It is a hell of a run."

"We knew it had to come to an end at some point. Max has won 10 in a row and that is insanity."

"The only driver who has done nine is Sebastian (Vettel) in one of our cars so to have the first and second most winningest drivers in F1 is great - even if statistics apparently don't matter. This kind of dominance is testimony to everyone involved."

His statistics comment was a dig at Mercedes team boss Toto Wolff, who said recently that Verstappen's record was "irrelevant."

Mercedes boss Wolff to miss Japanese GP due to knee surgery

PA MEDIA/DPA
LONDON

MERCEDES boss Toto Wolff will be absent from this weekend's Japanese Formula One Grand Prix as he undergoes knee surgery.

The 51-year-old is set to have an operation in his native Austria to restore the anterior cruciate ligament in his left leg.

Wolff damaged his knee a number of years ago and blamed it for a cycling accident during Formula One's summer break which left him with a fractured elbow.

Wolff's role will be divided between a number of the team's staff - including driver development director Jerome D'Ambrosio, the Belgian who took part in 20 F1 races in 2010 and 2011, and Mercedes' long-serving British chief communications officer Bradley Lord - often seen shadowing Wolff at the back of the garage. It is understood Wolff will be on the team's intercom across the weekend.

Mercedes will head to Suzuka perhaps fearing that their best shot at victory this year may have escaped them following Carlos Sainz's triumph at the Singapore Grand Prix.

Ferrari's Sainz became the first non-Red Bull driver to win this season - ending the world champions' unbeaten streak and Max Verstappen's record run of 10 consecutive victories.

Lewis Hamilton finished third, just 1.2 seconds behind Sainz, after George Russell - who at one point looked likely to win following Mercedes' roll of the strategy dice - crashed out on the final lap.

Verstappen qualified 11th and finished fifth, 21 seconds adrift of Sainz. But Hamilton fears Red Bull's lack of speed on the streets of Singapore is because they have already turned their attention to next season.

While Verstappen can now not be crowned champion of the world for a third time in Japan, it is possible he could clinch the title in Qatar on October 8 with five rounds still left.

beIN Sports announces comprehensive broadcast plan for 19th Asian Games

THE long-awaited 19th Asian Games, that was postponed for 12 months because of the COVID-19 pandemic, finally gets underway on Tuesday 19 September in Hangzhou, China, and beIN SPORTS (beIN), the leading sports and entertainment broadcaster, is preparing to take fans in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) closer than ever to the action across the next three weeks.

beIN's live broadcast will start with the preliminary events from 19 September, before its broad and comprehensive coverage begins when the event officially opens on 23 September until 8 October, with a special focus on the 12 participating Arab teams.

The 19th Asian Games are expected to feature delegations from 45 countries competing in 482 events across 40 sports, including - for the first time - baseball, softball, karate, sports climbing, breakdancing, and esports.

beIN's coverage of Hangzhou 2022 Asian Games

Broadcasting its fifth Asian Games, beIN will provide its viewers and subscribers with extensive and exclusive coverage that amounts to more than 2000 hours of premium live events and supporting programmes.

Up to 96 hours of live coverage from the tournament will be broadcast across 15 beIN SPORTS channels each day in Arabic and English, from 03:00 until 18:00 MECCA.

Starting on 23 September, viewers can tune in to a six-hour live studio from 12:00 midday until 18:00 MECCA for 16 consecutive days. beIN SPORTS' free-to-air news channel will also broadcast live



96 hours of daily coverage across 15 channels. Six hours of live studio coverage kicks-off on 23 September and runs for 16 days straight providing viewers insights from all 482 events across 40 sports - including football, handball, high jump, and weightlifting.

coverage daily starting at 10:00 MECCA.

As ever, beIN's live coverage will feature an expert broadcast team made up of more than 50 leading presenters, analysts, commentators, reporters, and former athletes. Presenters Mohammad Kidan, Asya Abdullah, Nirvana Elabd, and Jamal Al Hasni will lead the studio coverage, which will feature insights from across all arenas and competitions, plus provide viewers with a guide to which games are being broadcast on which channels.

Mohammed Al Bader, Managing Director of beIN's MENA Channels, said: "The Asian Games is one of the most revered and watched multi-sports tournaments in the world and our comprehensive coverage plans have been designed to showcase the importance and magnitude of this

prestigious quadrennial event. With Doha winning hosting rights for the 2030 edition, it also represents a perfect early chance to whet MENA viewers' appetites a little for what is coming to the region in the future."

beIN's special focus on the 12 Arab teams will be sure to include the Men's Football tournament, which doubles up as preparation for next April's AFC U23 Asian Cup in Qatar and provides five qualifying spots for the 2024 Paris Olympics.

Likewise, Kuwait, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, and reigning gold medalists Qatar will all be looking to secure a place on the handball podium and claim one of the three sports at Paris 2024 that comes with it.

As part of a 180+ delegation from Qatar, Olympians Fares Ibrahim and Mutaz Barshim

will be determined to shine for their country once again in weightlifting and high jump respectively after securing gold medals at the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games. Nasser Al Atiyah, bronze medalist in Men's Skeet shooting at London 2012, is also travelling to Hangzhou and likely to be joined by Hamad Al Marri, who took bronze at the 2018 Asian Games in Palembang.

beIN is committed to giving the men's and women's games equal exposure this year, branding its coverage of female sports under its beIN-SPIRED initiative. In addition to covering all the women's games, beIN will be shining the spotlight on female talent from the region such as Kuwait's Sarah and Shahad Al Hawal, Bahrain's Winfred Yavi, Iraq's Fatima Saad and Jordan's Julyana Al Sadeq.

Japan through to quarter-finals with win over Qatar, join New Zealand

TRIBUNE NEWS NETWORK
DOHA

JAPAN join New Zealand in clinching direct ticket to quarter-finals of the FIBA U16 Asian Championship after 93-68 win over hosts Qatar at the Al Gharafa Hall on Monday.

The 2022 finalists came out of the gates looking to run and gun and immediately jumped out to a 37-point first quarter. Qatar were able to slow the pace down a bit, but the gap created in the first quarter was too big to overcome.

Japan had to withstand some runs made by Qatar but were able to counter by staying level headed with their balanced offense. Five players scored in double-digits for the victors, led by the hot-handed Ginga Sembo (17 points).

Hats off to another big game by Mohamed Massamba Ndao who had 32 points, 15 rebounds, 2 assists, and 2 steals for 33 EFF.

The win is the second straight for undefeated Japan, who now clinch the top spot in Group B. As the top team in the group, Japan are directly qualified for the Quarter-Finals which will be played on 22 September.

New Zealand also clinched the top spot in Group C after



Action from the Qatar vs Japan FIBA U16 Asian Championship clash at the Al Gharafa Hall on Monday.



Japan players rejoice after their win.

their win over Jordan and Korea's win over Bahrain, giving them a direct spot in the Quarter-Finals as well.

Standout player: Ken-ichiro Benedict's game isn't "loud" but he gets things done. He was one of the two players who recorded a double-double in this game for Japan with 15 points and 11 rebounds. His versatility was on display as well as he also recorded 3 assists, 2 blocks, and a steal while shooting 7-12 from the field - good for 27 EFF.

The other player to score a double-double was Chusonjaku Shiratani, Japan's youngest player and the second young player in the competition, who had 11 points, 10 rebounds, and 3 assists.

Turning point: Qatar had some momentum towards the end of the third quarter, cutting down the lead that was as big as 29 points down to almost 20. Then, with 1:35 minutes left, Ndao was subbed out for the first time in the competition and Japan went off for an 8-0 run to close the quarter, giving them their biggest lead in the game.

Stats don't lie: Few teams can outshoot Japan. Qatar tried. Japan went 11-34 from beyond the three-point line. Qatar went 5-24.

Guardiola challenges City to win back-to-back Champions League titles

PA MEDIA/DPA
LONDON

MANAGER Pep Guardiola has challenged his Manchester City side to achieve something special and win back-to-back Champions League titles.

The treble winners begin the defence of their European crown as they host Red Star Belgrade at the Etihad Stadium on Tuesday.

City finally put years of near-misses behind them to win the competition for the first time last season but, while Guardiola is proud of their achievements, he feels their mission is not yet over.

The City manager said at

a press conference: "I'd like to say that for our club to win the Champions League is incredible - the first time in our history - but, in perspective, how many teams have won the Champions League once? A lot have won two, three, four, five. In perspective, we did nothing special. It's just one."

"Let's go. Let's try to win tomorrow against a team so aggressive, so fast up front." Guardiola is viewing the challenge as nothing different to past seasons, although he accepts the pressure of trying to defend the trophy will be easier than when trying to win it for the first time.



Manchester City's Spanish manager Pep Guardiola attends a press conference in Manchester on Monday. (AFP)

"It's most difficult to win the first one," he said. "But every season we start the competition in the first game with the target to win the first game, then the group stage, then try to win the Champions League. Nothing changes from before."

"The same for Red Star tomorrow. It depends on our performance and our level."

"We're incredibly happy to defend this crown but this competition doesn't allow you mistakes. But always we were so strong at home, nine points from nine. When that happens you can win just one game away and you qualify. Tomorrow is the first step." City reached the

European summit, and capped a glorious treble, when they beat Inter Milan 1-0 in the final in Istanbul in June.

Yet the club have not sat back and dwelt on their success, adding the UEFA Super Cup and starting the new Premier League campaign with five successive wins.

Guardiola admits he has not even watched back the final, which was won with a single goal from Rodri.

He said: "People say we won it and it's done. It's not done. They're happy, we're happy. Every time we come here, people take pictures with the four trophies."

Qatar has made good strides in developing cricket: ICC chief

QNA
DOHA

THE International Cricket Council (ICC) President Greg Barclay has praised Qatar's hosting of the inaugural T20i Gulf Championship which is being played at the WestEnd International Stadium.

The tournament continues until September 23 with the participation of six teams: Qatar, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Oman, United Arab Emirates and Bahrain.

In an interview with Qatar News Agency (QNA), the ICC president said: "I am very impressed with everything I have seen in Doha since my arrival until now in terms of interest in cricket, as well as the good and quality organization of the Gulf championship."

He added that the entire Gulf region is considered a real growth area for this enjoyable sport, noting that Qatar has made good strides to develop and spread this sport and form a large base of practitioners.

He explained that holding the Gulf Cricket Championship in its first edition with the participation of six teams will help increase the spread and



Qatar Cricket Association President Sheikh Abdulaziz Saoud Al Thani with ICC President Greg Barclay (right) and ICC Chief Executive Geoff Allardice.

growth of the game in the region over the years, thanking the Qatar Cricket Committee

and all those involved in holding this tournament, which is considered a great opportunity for cricketers and fans in the region.

Barclay expressed his great

admiration for Qatar's success in organizing many important international cricket tournaments during the recent period such as the Legends League Masters, considering that the Qatar Cricket Committee plays an important role in spreading this sport and they have great enthusiasm and a great vision.

Regarding organizing the Gulf T20i tournament annually, alternating between different Gulf countries, Barclay said that this matter is up to the organizers from the Gulf countries, especially since they are looking forward to organizing this event every two years, in addition to that they may be looking into organizing a special tournament for women in the coming years.

He believed that the continuation of holding the Gulf Cricket Championship every two years is a wonderful thing and he will work to develop it as a regional and local tournament that includes six countries, expecting it to yield positive results in terms of spreading and developing the game in the region over time.

He pointed out that the ICC has plans to spread and develop this sport in areas where it is not

very popular, which is what it is currently doing by supporting the Gulf championship and providing all assistance and expertise to the organizers, especially from a technical standpoint.

Regarding the most prominent tournaments on the International Cricket Council's calendar for the current year, he explained that during the current session, the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup will be held in India within a few weeks and the Women's World Cup in Bangladesh.

He continued that the International Cricket Council is looking forward to organizing the Men's World Cup next year between the United States and the Caribbean, pointing out that it is wonderful to start the new season by entering a new region such as the United States, as the ICC is looking forward to developing the regional areas and spreading this sport there.

Barclay confirmed that the ICC is also looking forward to moving its events and competitions to new regions such as the Gulf region, pointing out that this matter will be discussed for the calendar for the next session.

Young sensation forces his way into England's World Cup squad

AGENCIES

ENGLAND have confirmed their final 15-member squad for the 2023 Cricket World Cup starting next month with one change from the provisional squad announced last month.

England had made a few strong choices in their provisional squad announced last month with all-rounder Ben Stokes returning and young batter Harry Brook and star quick Jofra Archer missing out.

But with back spasms seeing Jason Roy miss the four-match series against New Zealand, Brook has made a return to the ODI squad. The 24-year-old had an ordinary series against New Zealand, making scores of 25, 2 and 10, but his rapid progress as an international cricketer has seen him force the way into the squad.

Roy has two hundreds from six ODIs in 2023 and could be added to the squad that takes on Ireland later this week. The final date for squad changes for the World Cup is 28 September.

Stokes, meanwhile, enhanced his reputation after reversing his ODI retirement with a stellar 182 off 124 balls against New Zealand, the highest score by an England men's player in ODIs.

Dawid Malan also cemented his place in the XI in the New Zealand series by topping the run charts, knocking off his fifth ODI hundred as well.

Adil Rashid, who played only one game in the New Zealand series, is also cleared to make the squad. Rashid experi-



Harry Brook.

enced cramps in his only match and did not play the remainder of the series. Meanwhile, seamer Mark Wood is recovering from a sore heel at the end of the Ashes and is yet to play any competitive cricket since the final Ashes Test.

England Men's National Selector, Luke Wright, said: "We have selected a squad we are confident can go to India and win the World Cup."

"We are blessed with an incredibly strong group of white-ball players which was underlined by the performances in the series win against a very good New Zealand team."

"The strength of the group has meant that we have had to make some tough decisions on world-class players with Jason Roy missing out and Harry Brook coming into the squad."

England's squad for the World Cup: Jos Buttler (captain), Moeen Ali, Gus Atkinson, Jonny Bairstow, Harry Brook, Sam Curran, Liam Livingstone, Dawid Malan, Adil Rashid, Joe Root, Ben Stokes, Reece Topley, David Willey, Mark Wood, Chris Woakes.

Mirza's all-round show in Qatar's thrilling 1-run win over Kuwait

TRIBUNE NEWS NETWORK
DOHA

Adnan Mirza displayed an all-round show to help hosts Qatar secure a thrilling 1-run win over Kuwait in T20i Gulf Cricket Championship at the WestEnd International Cricket Stadium on Monday.

After being put into bat first, Qatar scored 156-3 with wicketkeeper Imal Liyanage being the top scorer, hitting 49 from 36 balls.

Mirza smashed 30 from 23 balls and put up 52 runs opening-wicket partnership with Saqlain Arshad, who scored 32 runs off 25 deliveries.



Adnan Mirza scored 30 from 23 balls and later claimed three wickets to star in the home team's second win of the T20i Gulf Cricket Championship at the WestEnd International Stadium on Monday.

Mohammed Tanveer (39) also played a handy 35-ball knock.

Mirza returned to the field grabbing three wickets as Qatar restricted Kuwait for a tight

win with captain Muhammad Murad defending 12 runs in the final over.

Ashwin recalled to ODI mix after a year as India name squad for Australia series

AGENCIES

INDIA have named two separate squads for the ODI series at home against Australia before the commencement of the 2023 ICC Men's Cricket World Cup.

India have recalled veteran off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin to the ODI squad for the three-match series against Australia right before the 2023 ICC Men's Cricket World Cup that begins early next month. Ashwin, who last played an ODI in January 2022, comes in as the third spinner behind Kuldeep Yadav and Ravindra Jadeja.

Notably, the off-spinner wasn't a part of the initial 15-member World Cup squad India announced and did not make it to the Asia Cup either.



Ravichandran Ashwin.

The two ODIs against South Africa in 2022 were his first in five years (since 2017) in the fifty-overs format for India before he was sidelined again.

KL Rahul will lead the team in the first two games with regular skipper Rohit Sharma and

Virat Kohli rested. The duo return for the final ODI with Rohit leading the side again.

Washington Sundar, who flew to Sri Lanka for the Asia Cup final, is also retained in both squads. Axar Patel, who injured himself ahead of the final, is recovering and will participate in the third ODI subject to fitness.

Rohit Sharma had revealed in the press conference after the Asia Cup that he was in talks with Ashwin.

"As a spinner-all-rounder, Ashwin is in line, I have been talking to him on the phone," Rohit said on Sunday. Ajit Agarkar confirmed that it was Ashwin's experience that gave him the edge despite the lack of recent ODIs.

Shreyas Iyer, who missed

a part of the Asia Cup with an injury, will play the entire series according to Agarkar.

India squads for Australia ODIs: Squad for first two ODIs: KL Rahul (c), Shubman Gill, Ruturaj Gaikwad, Shreyas Iyer, Ishan Kishan, Suryakumar Yadav, Ravindra Jadeja, Shardul Thakur, Jasprit Bumrah, Mohammed Siraj, Mohammed Shami, Tilak Varma, Prashidh Krishna, R Ashwin, Washington Sundar.

Australia squad: Pat Cummins (c), Sean Abbott, Alex Carey, Nathan Ellis, Cameron Green, Josh Hazlewood, Josh Inglis, Spencer Johnson, Marnus Labuschagne, Mitchell Marsh, Glenn Maxwell, Tanveer Smith, Matt Short, Steve Smith, Mitchell Starc, Marcus Stoinis, David Warner, Adam Zampa.

Hayaakum Festival at Al Shaqab

TRIBUNE NEWS NETWORK
DOHA

THE eagerly anticipated Equine Education edition of the Hayaakum Festival is set to take place on September 22-23, 2023, at the prestigious Al Shaqab Longines Arena. From 4pm to 8.30pm, this two-day extravaganza promises an array of activities that cater to horse enthusiasts of all ages and backgrounds.

Equine Education edition takes the festival to a whole new level, offering an immersive and educational experience that celebrates the magnificent world of horses.

Attendees can look forward to a thrilling lineup of events, including: gymkhana, pony rides, lead rein riding sessions, bouncy castles, archery, arts and crafts, play station, vaulting and many more.

And that's not all! In addition to these engaging activities, a diverse range of food and beverage vendors will be



on hand, offering a wide selection of delicious treats to satisfy your cravings. From savoury to

sweet, there's something to delight every palate. The Equine Education edi-

tion of Hayaakum Festival is not just about fun and entertainment; it's an opportunity to learn about and appreciate the majestic world of horses. Immerse yourself in the world of equestrianism and gain valuable insights into these incredible animals.

As a special highlight, the second day of the event will kick off with a training show starting at 3pm, featuring talented riders and their equine partners in a captivating display of skill and coordination.

This Equine Education edition of Hayaakum Festival promises an unforgettable experience for the whole family. Mark your calendars for September 22-23, 2023, from 4pm to 8.30pm at Al Shaqab Longines Arena for a weekend filled with excitement, education, and equestrian wonder.

For more information and registration details, please visit <https://alshaqab.com/en/hayaakum-al-shaqab-1>

Injury woes strike S Africa's pace attack ahead of World Cup

AGENCIES

AS the 2023 ICC Men's Cricket World Cup draws near, South Africa's crucial pace duo set to face a fitness test to ascertain their readiness for the marquee event.

The participation of pacers Anrich Nortje and Sisanda Magala in the World Cup remains uncertain, as they are yet to demonstrate their fitness ahead of South Africa's departure for India on 23 September.

Both the players were named in South Africa's 15-member squad for the blockbuster event, however, since then, they both featured in only one out of the five home ODIs against Australia – a series that the hosts won by a 3-2 margin.

Nortje featured in the second ODI and bowled only five overs before walking off the field due to back spasms. He returned to the field in the second innings, scoring 10 runs with



Sisanda Magala.

the bat while batting at No. 10 during the run chase. His back injury subsequently ruled him out for the remainder of the series.

South Africa's initial World Cup squad: Temba Bavuma (c), Gerald Coetzee, Quinton de Kock, Reeza Hendricks, Marco Jansen, Heinrich Klaasen, Sisanda Magala, Keshav Maharaj, Aiden Markram, David Miller, Lungi Ngidi, Anrich Nortje, Kagiso Rabada, Tabraiz Shamsi, Rassie van der Dussen