Rohit and Krunal's exploits fashion India's series victory



The propeller: Rohit Sharma's innings took the Men in Blue to a match-winning total. • AFP

The opener provides the fireworks while the all-rounder chips in with vital runs and wickets

INDIA IN WI

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA LAUDERHILL (USA)

Rohit Sharma's sublime innings and Krunal Pandya's all-round show powered India to a series-clinching 22run win over West Indies in the rain-affected second T20I here on Sunday.

Batting first, India scored 167 for five and then had West Indies reeling at 98 for four in the 16th over when lightning and thundershowers struck. The Duckworth-Lewis par score at that point was 120, leaving India winner by 22 runs.

Final flourish

Rohit top-scored with 67 off 51 balls before Krunal (20 off 13 balls) and Ravindra Jadeja propped up the innings, smashing 20 runs in the final over bowled by Keemo Paul.

Krunal hit the first two balls of the 20th over for sixes before Jadeja smashed another.

During the course of his innings, Rohit became T20I's most prolific six-hitter, going past Chris Gayle's record of 105. He struck six fours and three sixes in this match.

India was off to a quick start, crossing 50 in the seventh over with Rohit doing the bulk of the scoring. The

Next match

August 6, third T20I, Providence, 8 p.m. IST

India vice-captain found the gaps with ease, clipping Paul off his pads for a six over deep midwicket. The highest scorer in the World Cup then swept him for a four as the Indians upped the tempo.

Paul gave West Indies the breakthrough when he bowled Shikhar Dhawan. India was 67 for one in the eighth over at that stage.

Breaking free

Two quiet overs followed as India skipper Virat Kohli joined Rohit. The latter broke the shackles with a six over deep midwicket off Sunil Narine and brought up his 17th T20 half-century with a single to long-off.

Kohli, at the other end, hit a six off left-arm spinner Khary Pierre to get going. Rohit then smashed Carlos Brathwaite for a six and four as India's 100 came up in the 13th

It took a fine catch from Shimron Hetmyer to bring an end to Rohit's stay. The Indian opener departed in the 14th over.

Rishabh Pant (5) perished quickly, top-edging Thomas into the hands of Kieron Pol-

lard at third man.

Sheldon Cottrell then took the prize scalp of Kohli, sending the middle-stump cartwheeling with a perfectly-executed yorker and performing his trademark salute.

In reply, West Indies was off to a disastrous start with both openers Evin Lewis and Sunil Narine back in the hut with just eight on the board in the third over.

Rovman Powell and Nicholas Pooran lifted the team with a 76-run stand for the third wicket before Krunal again got into the act, removing both batsmen in the space of three balls in the 14th over. Just as things were getting tougher for the hosts came the showers followed by lightning.

STAT SPHERE Rohit has the most runs in followed by Kohli (2310/69). He also has the highest number Rohit (107) has overtaken Gayle (105) to top the list of six-hitters in T20Is. Guptill is Kohli (8416) leads the list of Indian batsmen with the most runs in T20 cricket, surpassing Raina (8392), Rohit (8291) is third Match referee Jeff Crowe becomes in a century of T20Is, edging past Ranjan Madugalle (99). Chris Broad, with 92, is third three T20I series dating back to November 2018

SCOREBOARD INDIA VS WEST INDIES, SECOND T20 INTERNATIONAL

Rohit Sharma c Hetmyer b Thomas 67 (51b, 6x4, 3x6), Shikhar Dhawan b Paul 23 (16b, 3x4), Virat Kohli b Cottrell 28 (23b, 1x4, 1x6), Rishabh Pant c Pollard b Thomas 4 (5b), Manish Pandey c Pooran b Cottrell 6 (8b), Krunal Pandya (not out) 20 (13b, 2x6), Ravindra Jadeja (not out) 9 (4b, 1x6); Extras (lb-3, w-7): 10; Total (for five wkts. in 20 overs): 167.

FALL OF WICKETS 1-67 (Dhawan, 7.5 overs), 2-115

raised about the general

standard of doubles game in

India may have been an-

swered with this perfor-

mance," chief national

coach P. Gopi Chand told

"The best part is they are

young and have many wea-

pons in their armoury. We

always believed that they

had the potential and this

win could not have come at a

The Hindu.

better time."

4-132 (Kohli, 16.2), 5-143 (Pandey, 18.3.).

WEST INDIES BOWLING Thomas 4-0-27-2, Cottrell 4-0-25-2, Narine 4-0-28-0, Paul 4-0-46-1, Brathwaite 2-0-22-0, Pierre 2-0-16-0.

WEST INDIES (target 121 in 15.3 overs)

Sunil Narine b Washington 4 (12b), Evin Lewis c & b Bhuvneshwar O (2b), Nicholas Pooran c Pandey b Krunal 19 (34b, 1x4), Rovman Powell lbw b Krunal 54 (34b, 6x4, 3x6), Kieron Pollard (not out) 8 (8b, 1x4), Shimron Hetmyer (not out) 6 (4b, 1x4); Extras (lb-1, nb-1, w-5): 7; Total (for four wkts. in 15.3 overs): 98.

FALL OF WICKETS

1-2 (Lewis, 1.2), 2-8 (Narine, 2.6), 3-84 (Pooran, 13.2), 4-85 (Powell, 13.5).

INDIA BOWLING

Washington 3-1-12-1, Bhuvneshwar 2-0-7-1, Khaleel 3-0-22-0, Saini 3-0-27-0. Krunal 3.3-0-23-2. Jadeia 1-0-6-0. Toss: India. MoM: Krunal

India won by 22 runs (DL

Smith proves unstoppable again

THE ASHES

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE BIRMINGHAM

Steve Smith hit his second century of his comeback Test on Sunday as Australia set England a daunting 398 to win the Ashes opener at Edgbaston.

Ashes-holder Australia, bidding to win its first Test series away to England in 18 years, made 487 for seven declared in its second innings as it capitalised on the absence from the home side's attack of the injured James Anderson.

That left England needing 398 for victory – the most it has made in the fourth innings to win a Test was 332 tor seven against Australia at Melbourne back in 1928/29.

Australia captain Tim Paine's declaration late on the fourth day left England with an awkward seven overs to bat before stumps.

Rory Burns, fresh from his maiden Test century in the first innings, and Surrey teammate Jason Roy saw England to 13 for no loss at the close.

Smith made 142 following his 144 in the first innings of the match – the former Australia captain's first Test

Extra special! Steve Smith marked his return to Tests with another memorable knock. • AFP

since the end of a 12-month ban for his role in last year's ball-tampering scandal in South Africa.

He is just the fifth Australian to score hundreds in both innings of an Ashes

Matthew Wade marked his first Test for nearly two years with a fine 110.

Smith, having reached lunch on 98 not out, went to three figures in style when he cover-drove England paceman Stuart Broad for his 10th four in 147 balls faced.

On the double

List of Australian players who have scored centuries in both innings of an Ashes Test

Warren Bardsley	136 and 130	The Oval, 1909
Arthur Morris	122 and 124 not out	Adelaide, 1946/47
Steve Waugh	108 and 116	Manchester, 1997
Matthew Hayden	197 and 103	Brisbane, 2002/03
Steve Smith	144 and 142	Birmingham, 2019

Australia - 1st innings: 284. England - 1st innings: 374. Australia - 2nd innings: Came-

ron Bancroft c Buttler b Moeen 7. David Warner c Bairstow b Broad 8, Usman Khawaja c Bairstow b Stokes 40, Steve Smith c Bairstow b Woakes 142, Travis Head c Bairstow b Stokes 51, Mathew Wade c Denly b Stokes 110, Tim Paine b Moeen 34, James Pattinson (not out) 47, Pat Cummins (not out) 26; Extras (b-11, lb-2, nb-6, w-3): 22; Total (for seven wkts. decl. in

112 overs): 487. Fall of wickets: 1-13, 2-27, 3-75, 4-205, 5-331, 6-407, 7-409. England bowling: Broad 22-2-91-1, Woakes 13-1-46-1, Moeen 29-1-130-2, Root 12-1-50-0, Stokes 22-5-85-3, Denly 14-1-

England - 2nd innings: Rory Burns (batting) 7, Jason Roy (batting) 6; Total (for no loss in seven overs): 13.

Australia bowling: Siddle 2-0-4-0, Lyon 3-0-7-0, Pattinson 2-

The move to have Satwik play at the front paid off

India's leading men's combination of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty served a reminder that they were not far behind when it comes to winning a Super Series title.

It was the Malaysian doubles coach Tan Kim Her, who left this March even though his contract was to end only after the 2020 Tokyo Olympics, who made Satwik and Chirag join forces five years ago.

New coach Dwi Kristiawan's move to have the 18year-old Satwik on the frontcourt, given his ability to come up with stunning smashes, proved a game-

It wasn't easy for the duo to play back-to-back marathon matches and sustain peak form. Satwik even braved a niggle in shoulder to play

"It's the biggest title we have won so far in our career. Right now, I am out of words after playing in a final and beating the current World champions. I am ex-

tremely happy," Chirag said. "I think it is refreshing to see the doubles pair win a

"The few questions often

The Satwik-Chirag file

Chirag | Age: 22 Satwik | Age: 18 Born: Amalapuram, Andhra Pradesh NOTABLE RESULTS (MEN'S DOUBLES):

2018 French Open (Super 750): Semifinal 2018 Fuzhou China Open (Super 750): Quarterfinal

2018 Commonwealth Games: Silver 2019 Indonesia Open (Super 1000): Round-of-16

2019 Japan Open (Super 750): Quarterfinal



Pioneers: Chirag, left, and Satwik have gone where no other Indian combo has. •AFP

Hamilton's tactical acumen to the fore



Whoop of joy: Hamilton's record seventh win in Hungary is applauded by Verstappen, left, and Vettel. • AFP

HUNGARIAN GP

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Lewis Hamilton regained his momentum in the drivers' World championship with a memorable strategic victory on Sunday when he overcame young rival Max Verstappen to triumph in a tense and thrilling Hungarian Grand Prix.

Hamilton started third on the grid in his Mercedes and, after stalking the 21year-old Dutch tyro for most of a fascinating tactical contest, finally swept into the lead on lap 67 of a stirring

Hamilton's record seventh win in Hungary and 81st of his career wrecked Red Bull's hopes of turning Verstappen's maiden pole position into victory and increased his lead in the title race to 62 points before the sport's European summer break.

Four-time champion Sebastian Vettel was third for Ferrari ahead of teammate

Charles Leclerc, Carlos Sainz of McLaren and Pierre Gasly in the second Red Bull. Kimi Raikkonen was seventh for Alfa Romeo ahead of Hamilton's Mer cedes teammate Valtteri Bottas, who had been forced into an early pit-stop after a first lap incident.

THE RESULTS

1. Lewis Hamilton (Mercedes) 1h 35min 03.796sec. 2. Max Verstappen (Red Bull) at 17.796sec, 3. Sebastian Vettel (Ferrari) 1:01.433, 4. Charles Leclerc (Ferrari) 1:05.250, 5. Carlos Sainz Jr (McLaren) 1 lap, 6. Pierre Gasly (Red Bull) 1 lap, 7. Kimi Raikkonen (Alfa Romeo) 1 lap, 8. Valtteri Bottas (Mercedes) 1 lap, 9. Lando Norris (McLaren) 1 lap, 10. Alexander Albon (Toro Rosso) 1 lap, 11. Sergio Perez (Racing Point) 1 lap, 12. Nico Hulkenberg (Renault) 1 lap, 13. Kevin Magnussen (Haas) 1 lap, 14. Daniel Ricciardo (Renault) 1 lap, 15. Daniil Kvyat (Toro Rosso) 2 laps, 16. George Russell (Williams) 2 laps, 17. Lance Stroll (Racing Point-Mercedes) 2 laps, 18. Antonio Giovinazzi (Alfa Romeo) 2 laps, 19. Robert Kubica (Williams) 3 laps.

Sathiyan powers Dabang into the last four

Mavericks staring at elimination after the big loss to the Delhi side

UTT

RAKESH RAO NEW DELHI

In its battle for survival, Kolkata's RP-SG Mavericks was expected to give it its all. But contrary to expectations, it was defending champion Dabang Delhi that played its heart out for a convincing 10-5 win and ensured a place in the last-four of Ultimate Table Tennis League here on Sunday

The result catapulted Delhi to the top of the table where it joined U Mumba with 33 points from four outings and left Mavericks (26) staring at elimination in the six-team league.

With just a match on hand, Mavericks is likely to join Puneri Paltan on the sidelines after the 15-match round-robin league phase.

Dabang skipper G. Sathiyan produced the kind of performance expected of him. The 30th-ranked Indian was at his belligerent best in blanking Benedikt Duda, ranked 46th. Continuing his winning display in the company of Bernadette Szocs, Sathiyan played his part in stopping Duda and Manika

Late in the decider, Bernadette made amends with some sterling returns and took the pressure off Sathiyan as the duo bounced back



Like Sathiyan, his team-

mate, the 63rd ranked Jon Persson, added three points

at the expense of an inconsistent Sanil Shetty and gave Dabang a winning lead.

With Dabang leading 9-3 before the final singles, Mavericks' left-hander Matilda Ekholm, ranked 23, staved off an upbeat Bernadette 2-1 and reduced the margin of defeat. But that was hardly a consolation for a team staring at elimination. The results:

Dabang Delhi bt RP-SG Mavericks (Kolkata) 10-5 (Krittwika Singh Roy lost to Manika Batra 11-9, 8-11, 9-11; G. Sathiyan bt Benedikt Duda 11-9, 11-7, 11-6; Sathiyan & Bernadette Szocs bt Duda & Manika 11-10, 5-11, 11-8; Jon Persson bt Sanil Shetty 11-6, 11-10, 11-8; Szocs lost to Matilda Ekholm 8-11, 8-11,

Monday's fixture: Goa Challengers v U Mumba (7 p.m.).

Desperate measures



Gotcha: Tamil Thalaivas trap Haryana Steelers raider Vikas Khandola on way to a 35-28 victory in the ProKabaddi League in Patna on Sunday. In the other match, Puneri Paltan beat Patna Pirates 41-20. • RANJEET KUMAR

who is also involved with

Olympic Gold Quest, con-

gratulated Vinesh on her

nesh as she wins the gold

medal beating the local girl

3-2 in the final of the Poland

This is Vinesh's 3rd con-

secutive gold in 53kgs after

Spain and Turkey. Well done

@Media_SAI, #TOPS and

#WFI. We are proud to sup-

port this champion Vinesh

@OGQ India," Rasquinha,

who heads the Olympic

Gold Quest as its CEO, wrote

"Congrats @Phogat_Vi-

TV PICKS

UTT: Star Sports 1 & SS Select 1 (SD& HD), 7.10 p.m. PKL: Star Sports 2 (SD& HD), 7.15 p.m. & 8.30 p.m. TNPL: Star Sports 3, 7.10

p.m. **The Ashes:** Sony Six (SD& HD), 3.30 p.m. Rogers Cup tennis: Sony ESPN (SD& HD), 9.30 p.m.

IN BRIEF



Mick Schumacher opens Formula2 account BUDAPEST

Mick Schumacher, the 20year-old son of seven-time World champion Michael Schumacher, on Sunday claimed his first Formula Two victory ahead of the Hungarian Grand Prix. The German driver won the 28-lap 'sprint' race for Prema Racing after starting from pole. Schumacher finished 1.5 seconds ahead of Hondabacked Nobuharu Matsushita of Carlin. AFP



No stopping Alex at Czech Moto2 GP

Alex Marguez made the most of pole position to dominate Sunday's Czech Moto2 Grand Prix to register his fifth win of the season. The Kalex rider, brother to MotoGP champion Marc Marquez, heads the championship standings on 161 points, 33 clear of Swiss teammate Thomas Luthi. Luthi had to retire after a fall 16 laps from the end. Marquez crossed the line over three seconds up on Italy's Fabio Di Giannantonio with Enea Bastianini in third. In Moto3. Aron Canet won his second race of the season to retake the championship



century of career wins

Honda's Marc Marquez claimed his 50th career race win at the Czech MotoGP on Sunday after the race had due to rain. Spain's defending champion beat Ducati's Italian Andrea Dovizioso by 2.4sec to extend his advantage at the top of the riders' standings with his sixth triumph of the season Australian Jack Miller was third in the race cut by one lap due to the weather. Earlier, Marquez's 58th pole position took him equal with Mick Doohan of Australia, AFP



Thiem realises a childhood dream

KITZBUHEL (AUSTRIA) Top seed and World No. 4 Dominic Thiem captured his 14th career title and first on home ground on Saturday with a 7-6(0), 6-1 win over Spain's Albert Ramos-Vinolas in the final of the Kitzbuhel clay court tournament. It was Thiem's third title of 2019 after a maiden Masters win at Indian Wells and in Barcelona on the eve of Roland Garros where he eventually went on to finish runner-up to Rafael Nadal for a second successive vear. AFP

Bharat women win, men lose

CHENNAI: Though Bharat lost to Korea 7-0 in the men's category, it beat Malaysia 4-0 in the women's section on day one of the Special Olympics International football championship here on Sunday.

The results: Men: Austria bt Mvanmar 1-0: Malavsia bt Bangladesh 2-0; Korea bt Bharat 7-0.

Women: Bharat bt Malaysia 4-0; Russia bt Maldives 6-0; Indonesia bt Bangladesh 2-1; Philippines bt UAE 4-0.

No stopping Rajiv Sethu

Anish Shetty and Venkatesan achieve a double

MOTORSPORTS

SPORTS REPORTER CHENNAI

Rajiv Sethu (Idemitsu Honda Ten10 Racing) scrambled to his fourth win in-a-row in the Pro-Stock 165cc class on the final day of the third round of the MRF MMSC FMSCI Indian National motorcycle racing championship at the MMRT on Sunday.

Bengaluru-based Anish Shetty (Idemitsu Honda Ten10 Racing) and Chennai's I. Venkatesan (Moto Maniacz Racing) achieved a double each in the Pro-Stock 201-300cc and Novice (Stock 165cc).

Ryhana Bee (Sparks Racing), also from Chennai, took the honours in the girls'



Ryhana Bee, winner of girls'

race. Sethu tops the leaderboard with 100 points, followed by Jagan Kumar of TVS Racing (94) and Sarath

The results (Provisional, all 8 laps unless mentioned):

National c'ship: Pro-Stock 301-400cc (Race-2): 1. K.Y. Ahamed (TVS Racing) 15:32.793s: 2. Rahil Shetty (Sparks Racing) 15:35.179; 3. Deepak Ravikumar (TVS Racing) 15:44.637.

Pro-Stock 201-300cc (Race-2): 1. Anish Shetty (Idemitsu Honda Ten10 Racing) 16:13.776; 2. Abhishek Vasudev (Idemitsu Ten10 Racing) 16:26.707; 3. Aravind Balakrishnan (Idemitsu Honda Ten10 Racing) 16:31.680.

Pro-Stock 165cc (Race-2): 1. Raiiv Sethu (Idemitsu Honda Ten10 Racing) 16:07.022: 2. K.Y. Ahamed 16:07.032: 3. Sarath Kumar (Idemitsu Honda Ten10 Racing) 16:15.267.

Novice (Stock 165cc): Race-2 (6 laps): 1. I. Venkatesan I (Motomaniacz Racing) 13:13.563: 2. V. Lokesh (Speedup Racing) 13:14.839; 3. Annish Samson (Speedup Racing) 13:21.887.

Girls (Stock 165cc, 5 laps): 1. Ryhana Bee (Sparks Racing) 11:09.174: 2. Alisha Abdullah (Alisha Racing) 11:12.948: Nivetha Jessica (Pvt.) 11:32.874.



Victorious: Bengaluru-based Anish Shetty was in complete control in the Pro-Stock 201-300cc. • SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

PTF chief allays Indian fears

Says tie will be held in a safe and secure environment

DAVIS CUP

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI Seeking to allay fears on the Indian team's security during the Davis Cup tie, Pakistan Tennis Federation president Salim Saifullah Khan assured that the contest will be held in safe and secure environment, promising "impressive hospitality" to the visitors.

The PTF chief also said it plans to invite India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi to watch the contest, scheduled for September 14-15, and promised memorable hospitality to the visiting team and fans.

"We are eagerly waiting for the Indian team. There will be good arrangements for Indian fans and players. We will host the tie in a very safe and secure atmosphere," Salim Saifullah told PTI in an exclusive interview.

Lot of excitement

"There is a lot of excitement in Pakistan for this tie. Everyone is happy. It's better if we spray tennis balls at each other and not bombs. I am confident that the Indian team will be impressed with Pakistan's hospitality."

An Indian tennis team is set to travel to Pakistan for the first time in 55 years. The last time Pakistan hosted India was way back in 1964 when the visitors won 4-0 in Lahore. When reminded that

there are apprehensions regarding players' safety in Pakistan, Salim assured that untoward nothing happen. "The ITF consultants

were here for three days and they inspected everything. "All the set up will be de-

clared a red zone. I am sure nothing untoward will happen," he said.

Sowjanya, Sravya lose final

INDIANS ABROAD

TABARKA (TUNISIA)

the mid 1960s through to the 1980s, passed away in the early hours of Sunday. Anant was 84 and he is survived by two sons, Kevic and Tarshish. Anant's funeral rites will

SPORTS BUREAU

The fine run of Sowjanya Bavisetti and Sravya Shivani came to an end as they were beaten 6-2, 6-2 by the Dutch pair of Eva Vedder and Stephanie Judith Visscher in the doubles final of the \$15,000 ITF women's tennis tournament. The results: \$15.000 ITF women, Tabarka, Tunisia: Final: Eva Vedder & Stephanie Ju-

dith Visscher (Ned) bt Sowja-

nya Bavisetti & Sravya Shivani

Chilakalapudi 6-2, 6-2.

Anant Setalvad.

Vinesh Phogat. ■ FILE РНОТО

wrestler had stood atop the

podium at Grand Prix of

Spain and at the Yasar Dogu

International at Istanbul last

captain Viren Rasquinha,

Former national hockey

Three cheers for Vinesh

The wrestler bags her third consecutive gold

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Star India grappler Vinesh

Phogat bagged her third

consecutive gold in the wo-

men's 53kg category after

winning the Poland Open

wrestling tournament in

3-2 over local wrestler Rok-

sana in the final of the

Sofia Mattson of Sweden,

the Rio Olympics bronze

medallist, in the quarterfi-

passes away

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Anant Setalvad, whose plea-

sant baritone voice distin-

guished him from other

cricket commentators from

take place at 4 p.m. at Worli

crematorium on Monday

"He was ailing for some

time. He died at 12.40 a.m.

Sunday," said his son Kevic.

cricket commentary on All

India Radio (AIR), Anant

shared the microphone with

Vijay Merchant, Pearson

Surita, Raju Bharatan, Balu

and

"Anant was an aristocrat.

Fluency and fluidity went

hand in hand with him. He

was easy in delivery, accu-

rate in description, on the

ball and all in all he was a

Anant was commentator

for AIR in Ranji Trophy and

other BCCI tournaments

and also for Test matches.

commentator,"

Alaganan

Saraiya.

pleasant

said Bharatan.

Regarded as a giant in

The top Indian woman

Anant Setalvad

competition.

The 24-year-old prevailed

Vinesh had earlier beaten

He was on the AIR panel for the 1969 India-Australia Test match in Mumbai and also in the panel for the 1973 Test against the Tony Lewis led England at the CCI.

Dr. Narottam Puri, who worked on many assignments with Setalvad, said, "he was a gentleman. He was very knowledgeable about the game with a tremendous broadcasting sense.

"His mellifluous voice would stay with you for long. It was a matter of pride to have worked with him because he had shared the mike with my father (Devraj Puri) too. To me he was a perfect commentator. May his soul rest in peace.

on his twitter page. India beats Bolivia in

COTIF Cup

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA NEW DELHI

The Indian women's senior national team defeated Bolivia 3-1 in its second match of the COTIF Cup football tournament in Spain.

A Ratanbala Devi brace and a Bala Devi goal led the Indian women to a comfortable win over the South American side.

After the 2-0 defeat to Spanish club side Villareal CF, the Indian women conceded an early goal in the second minute when Sweety Devi put the ball into her own net to give Bolivia the advantage.

The lead for Bolivia was, however, short-lived.

In the fifth minute, Bala Devi collected the ball around the opponent's penalty area and fired in a volley into the back of the net to restore parity.

Ratanbala Devi gave India the lead in the 36th minute when she headed home by connecting a cross from the left flank.

Shortly after, Ratanbala Devi got her second goal to extend India's lead to 3-1.

CSA shows Gibson & crew the door

Creates director of cricket post, a la football manager

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Ottis Gibson and his entire South Africa coaching team and management staff have lost their jobs, Cricket South Africa (CSA) announced on Sunday.

The decision, taken during a board meeting last week, follows a disastrous South African World Cup campaign in which the Proteas finished seventh of the

The clean-out comes shortly before a tour of India next month during which South Africa will play their first three Tests in the new World Test Championship.

In a statement, CSA said a football-style team manager would be appointed, who would take charge of all aspects of the national team,

including the appointment of coaching staff, the captain or captains and medical and administrative personnel. The team manager will report directly to a director of cricket, a new position.

Former South Africa player Corrie van Zyl, currently in charge of cricket pathways at CSA, will be acting Director of Cricket until a full-time appointment is made.

The statement said van Zyl and CSA chief executive Thabang Moroe would appoint an interim management team for the tour of India as well as an interim selection panel and captain.

Faf du Plessis was on Saturday night named South African Cricketer-of-the-Year and it would be a surprise if he was replaced.

In principal approval for 22nd race from the next year Mercedes boss says teams have agreed to expand the calendar

FORMULA ONE

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Formula One teams have given their approval in principal to an expanded 22-race calendar next year without any allowance for an additional power-unit, Mercedes team boss Toto Wolff has

Speaking after a teams' meeting with F1 chief executive Chase Carey at the Hungarian Grand Prix, Wolff was quoted on Sunday saying the 22-race plan with no extra engines - and therefore costs for the smaller customer teams – was supported.

"In a nutshell, we basically agreed to have a 22nd race," said Wolff, as quoted Autosport

(www.autosport.com). "We've got to let Liberty do their business and their business is to grow F1.

"If they are able to attract promoters, we've got to support them so, we shouldn't change the technical regulations because we have an extra race. That was the debate

No extra components

Wolff added that an increase to the duration of the season and number of races should not be interpreted as a chance for more components to be used on the cars.

"It shouldn't be seen as an opportunity to increase the number of components, but equally we've got to protect our people and all of us because it could get to a point where it's not manageable any more with one single crew.

"That becomes a factor that needs a solution."

Support from the Catalan government for the continuation of the Spanish Grand



Toto Wolff.

Prix this week suggested an expansion of the existing 21race calendar was inevitable.

The enlargement requires approval from the teams, a factor that precipitated the meeting on Saturday.

Double headers

The expansion may lead to an increase in the number of 'double-headers' formed of two successive race weekends in a calendar due to a into F1 at a very young age," return of the Dutch Grand Prix and a Vietnam Grand Prix for the first time. Wolff also said Mercedes

was not considering promoting impressive young British rookie George Russell from Williams to the main factory team alongside Lewis Hamilton next season.

He has made clear that current driver Valtteri Bottas is under consideration to retain his seat, but that a final choice between him and highly-rated reserve driver Esteban Ocon is due to be made during the sport's European summer break this

August. Russell on Saturday outqualified his Williams teammate Robert Kubica by 1.3 seconds to take 15th place on the grid, the team's best effort this year.

"I think you've got to consider that these guys come

said Wolff. "And, yes, there are exceptions to the norm, such as Max Verstappen."

Learn from mistakes

He said the 21-year-old Dutch tvro, who will start Sunday's Hungarian Grand Prix from his maiden pole position, had benefited from being allowed to learn and make mistakes at both Toro Rosso and Red Bull.

"You're not given the possibility to do that in a Mercedes because vou're being put in a car that is able to win races and championships, in high-pressure

environment." He said that putting Russell alongside "the best driver of his generation who has been with us for seven years", referring to Hamilton, could go terribly wrong for him. "And I wouldn't

want to burn George."

Tetra Rama has an edge over his rivals

HYDERABAD: Tetra Rama, who is in fine nick, has an edge over his rivals in the K. Mahipathi Rao Memorial Golconda Juvenile Million (1.400m), the chief event of the races to be held here on Monday

There will be no false rails. KALAMARIS PLATE (Div. IV) 1 (1,200m), 4-y-0 & over, rated 20 to 45 (Cat. III), 1-30 p.m.: 1. Amazing Script (8) Surya Prakash 60, 2.

Guiding Force (1) N. Rawal 58.5, 3. Man Apart (4) P. Trevor 56.5, 4. Holy Healer (6) R.S. Jodha 55.5, 5. Khan Sahib (9) A.A. Vikrant 55.5, 6. Farmville (3) Abhay Singh 53.5, 7. Loch Stella (5) C.P. Bopanna 53.5, 8. Handsome Duo (7) Ajeeth Kumar 52 and 9. Dance All Night (2) Afroz Khan 51.5.

1. GUIDING FORCE, 2. AMAZING SCRIPT, 3. MAN APART. 7 KALAMARIS PLATE (Div. III),

20 to 45 (Cat. III), 2-00: 1. Your Grace (3) A.A. Vikrant 60, 2 Southern Meteor (4) Gaurav Singh 57.5, 3. Natasha (1) Umesh 57, 4. Baywatch Babe (9) P. Sai Kumar 56.5, 5. Latest News (2) Rafique Sk. 55.5, 6. Magic Street (5) Afroz Khan 53.5, 7. Tiger Of The Sea (6) Surya Prakash 52, 8. Yogya (7) Ajeeth Kumar 51.5 and 9. Bomstic (8) Nakhat Singh 50.5.

2. LATEST NEWS, 3. YOUR GRACE.

1. MAGIC STREET,

NOBLE QUEST FLOW (1,600m), maiden 3-y-o only (Cat. II), (Terms), 2-30: 1. Ace Mis (Cat. II), (Ternis), 2-50: I. Ace Mis-ile (1) R. Ajinkya 56, 2. Bar Et Law (5) Aneel 56, 3. Bedazzled (3) Deepak Singh 56, 4. Brave Syera (10) G. Naresh 56, 5. Francis Bacon (6) Neeraj 56, 6. Gazebo (11) Nakhat Singh 56, 7. Healthandhappiness (8) Deepak Singh 56, 8. Monte Rei (9) P. Sai Kumar 56, 9. Turf Choice (2) Ajit Singh 56, 10. Artistryy (7) R.N. Darshan 54.5, 11. British Empress (12) Akshay Kumar 54.5 and 12. Miss Marvellous

(4) Umesh 54.5 1. FRANCIS BACON, 3. BRITISH EMPRESS.

FATEH MAIDAN CLUB PLATE 4 FATEH MAIDAN CLUB PLATE (1,400m), 3-y-o & over, rated 40 to 65 (Cat. II), 3-05: 1. Ash was 100 ft. (1,000m). Yashobali (10) P. Trevor 60, 2. In dian Dreams (6) Deepak Singh 59.5, 3. Platts Tour (9) Ashhad Asbar 59.5, 4. Shakesphere (8) Afroz Khan 55.5, 5. Dancing Doll (1) Gaddam 55, 6. Sarvatra (4) Abhay Singh 55, 7. N R I Vision (7) Koushik 54.5, 8. Yours Forever (5) Surva Prakash 54.5, 9. Rutilant (3)

R. Ajinkya 54, 10. Blue Empress (11) Santosh Raj 53, 11. Mahira (12)

Naresh 51.5 and 12. Sporting

1. PLATTS TOUR, 2. SPORTING SMILE 3. ASHWA YASHOBALI

5 KALAMARIS PLATE (Div. I), (1,200m), 4-y-o & over, rated 20 to 45 (Cat.III), 3-35: 1. Evon Von Brando (6) Surya Prakash 60, 2. Southern State (4) R.S. Jodha 59, 3. Solo Winner (10) Jitendra Singh 57.5, 4. Shiloh (8) Kiran Naidu 56.5, 5. Marvel Princess (2) N. Rawal 55.5, 6. London Bridge (1) Gopal Singh 54.5, 7. Vega Cassandra (5) Kuldeep Singh 52.5, 8. Delphina (3) P. Trevor 52, 9. Wood Bridge (7) Gaddam 51 and 10. Stormy (9) Afroz Khan 50.5. 1. EVON VON BRANDO,

3. VEGA CASSANDRA.

6 K. MAHIPATHI RAO ME-MORIAL GOLCONDA JUVENILE MILLION (1,400m), 3-y-o only (Terms), 4-05: 1. Agni (1) Zervan 56, 2. Blazer (3) Umesh 56, 3. Mon General (4) P. Trevor 56, 4. Tetra Rama (5) Akshay Kumar 56 and 5. Sitara (2) Suraj Narredu 54.5. 1. TETRA RAMA. KALAMARIS PLATE (Div. II), 7 (1,200m), 4-y-o & over, rated 20 to 45 (Cat. III), 4-35: 1. Max (1)

Umesh 60, 2. Crimson Fire (4) Ro

hit Kumar 58, 3. Honest Hunter

(7) B.R. Kumar 58, 4. Sublime (5)

Ashhad Asbar 56.5, 5. Brush The Sky (6) S.G. Prasad 54.5, 6. Tokyo Jam (8) Akshay Kumar 54.5, 7 Promiseofhappiness (9) Rafique Sk. 52.5, 8. Hurricane (10) Abhay Singh 51.5, 9. Patron Saint (3) Jitendra Singh 51 and 10. Yogastha (2) Aieeth Kumar 50.5. 1. MAX,

2. TOKYO JAM, 3. SUBLIME.

BEST OF BOLD PLATE 8 (1,400m), 5-y-o & over, rated upto 25 (Cat. III), 5-05: Invasion (2) Ashhad Asbar 60, 2. Recum bentibus (9) Kuldeep Singh 60, 3. Halo's Princess (1) P. Sai Kumar 59, 4. All Star General (10) Deepak Singh 58.5, 5. Ultimate Risk (11) Kunal Bunde 58.5, 6. Cowboys Delight (8) Jitendra Singh 58, 7. Royal Dancer (7) Akshay Kumar 57.5, 8. Silver Dollar (4) B.R. Kumar 56, 9. Golden Adara (3) Afroz Khan 53.5, 10. Delmonico (5) Ajeeth Kumar 52 and 11. New Hope (6) Ajit Singh 50. 1. DELMANICO,

3. ALL STAR GENERAL. Day's best: FRANCIS BACON. Double: PLATTS TOUR - EVON Jkt: 4, 5, 6, 7 & 8; Mini Jkt: 5, 6, 7 &

8; Tr (i): 1, 2 & 3; (ii): 3, 4 & 5; (iii): 6, 7 & 8; Tla: all races.

Moondancer wins Air Command Cup

HYDERABAD: Satyanarayanatrained Moondancer (Rohit Kumar up) won the Air Command Cup, the main event of the races held here on Sunday. The winner is owned by Mr. Thimmaraja Yelamarthi & Mr. C. Krishna Kannaiah. It was a good day for Rohit Kumar as he rode two more winners, while trainer Lax-man Singh saddled three horses to

VIKARABAD PLATE (1,600m), 4-I y-o & over, rated upto 25 (Cat. III): BRAVE WARRIOR (Rohit Kumar) 1, Turf Emperor (Umesh) 2, N R I 1, 1th Elliperor (Onlesh) 2, N R 1 Flame (Kuldeep Singh) 3 and Mossad (Ajeeth Kumar) 4. 6-1/4, 2-1/4 and hd. 1m, 41.46s. ₹ 12 (w), 5, 7 and 6 (p), SHP: 25, FP: 59, Q: 37, Tla: 126. Favourite: N R I Flame. Owner: Dr. G. Lakshmi Prasad. Trainer: S.

SILVERADO PLATE (Div. II), 2 (1,200m), maiden 3-y-o only (Cat. II), (Terms): MY JOURNEY (Ash had Asbar) 1, Premier Action (Umesh) 2, Explosive (R. Ajinkya) 3 and Stepper (S.G. Prasad) 4. 4-1/2, 3-1/2 and shd. 1m, 13.33s. ₹ 16 (w), 6, 6 and 9 (p), SHP: 16, FP: 49, Q: 26, Tla: 210. Favourite: Unstoppable. Owner: Mr. S. Pathy. Trainer: Laxman Singh.

3 **Comparison of Comparison o Gusty Look (Suraj Narredu) 2, Soul

wood (Abhay Singh) 4. 1-3/4, 1-1/2 and 3/4. 1m, 41.76s. ₹13 (w), 8 and 7 (p), SHP: 13, FP: 28, O: 11, Tla: 54, avourite: Gusty Look. Owners: M/s. Five Stars Shipping Co.Pvt.Lt-d.rep. by Mr & Mrs. K.N. Dhunjibhoy & Mr. Z.K. Dhunjibhoy. Trainer: WANAPARTHY CUP (Div. II).

Empress (R.S. Jodha) 3 and Button-

4 WANAPARTHY CUP (DAY). ..., (1,400m), 4-y-o & over, rated 40 to 65 (Cat. II): MEKA'S (Afroz Khan) 1, Solar Heights (Rafique Sk.) 2, Lockhart (Ajeeth Kumar) 3 and Dur ango (Suraj Narredu) 4. 1-1/2, nk and shd. 1m, 26.73s. ₹35 (w), 8, 9 and 7 (p), SHP: 26, FP: 484, O: 147, Tla: ,351. Favourite: Durango. Owners: Ms. Meka Ahalya & Mr. Meka Yugandhar. Trainer: L.D'Silva.

SILVERADO PLATE (Div. I), O (1,200m), maiden 3-y-o only (Cat. II), (Terms): SHIVALIK VALLEY (Rohit Kumar) 1, Linewiler (Umesh) 2, Moskova (Suraj Narredu) 3 and Born Greek (R.N. Darshan) 4. nose 4-1/4 and 1. 1m, 13.86s. ₹ 18 (w), 7, 6 and 8 (p), SHP: 15, FP: 51, Q: 22, Tla: 171. Favourite: Linewiler. Owners: M/s. J.S. Prasad & Nirmal Singh Trainer: Satyanarayana.

AIR COMMAND CUP (1,400m), 3 y-o & over, rated 75 & above (Cat. I): MOONDANCER (Rohit Kumar) 1, That's My Class (Akshay Kumar) 2, Exclusive Wind (Santosh Raj) 3 and Exclusivenorthwind

claimed, 5-1/4, 2-1/2 and 3/4, 1m. 25.98s. ₹32 (w), 11 and 5 (p), SHP: 9, FP: 94, O: 36, Tla: 544, Favourite: Exclusivenorthwind. Owners: Mr. Thimmaraja Yelamarthi & Mr. C. Kannaiah. Satvanaravana. WANAPARTHY CUP (Div. I)

(1,400m), 4-y-0 & over, rated 40 to 65 (Cat. II): SUPER DART (Suraj Narredu) 1, The Special One (Akshay Kumar) 2, Dunkirk (Afroz Khan) 3 and Shaquille (Kiran Naidu) 4. 4-3/4, 1 and 1. 1m, 26.15s. ₹ 11 (w), 6, 6 and 8 (p), SHP: 17, FP: 36, Q: 25, Owner: Mr. S. Pathy. Trainer: Lax-NIZAM SAGAR PLATE (2,000m), 3-y-o & over, rated 20 to 45 (Cat. III): CALL OF THE BLUE (Akshay Ku-

mar) 1, Wings Of Eagles (B.R. Ku-mar) 2. Royal Style (R.N. Darshan) 3 and Ashwa Arjun (Gaurav Singh) 4. Not run: Mr. Shanghai. Nk, 1/4 and hd. 2m, 8.47s. ₹ 15 (w), 8, 5 and 8 (p), SHP: 15, FP: 38, Q: 19, Tla: 185. Favourite: Wings Of Eagles. Owners: Dr. Peddi Reddy Prabhakar Reddy & Mr. P. Prabhakar Reddy Trainer: R.H. Sequeira. Jackpot: ₹13,505 (45 tkts), Runner

up: 1,541 (169 tkts), Mini Jackpot: 1,486 (130 tkts), Treble (i): 275 (194 tkts), (ii): 666 (88 tkts), (iii): 342 (354



IN BRIEF



Green extends Warriors stay till 2024

SAN FRANCISCO Three-time NBA champion Draymond Green has agreed to a four-year maximum contract extension with Golden State Warriors, linking him to the club until mid-2024. The 29-year-old power forward, an emotional leader as well as a versatile playmaker, was set to become a free agent next July but will stay with Warriors. Green's remaining contract now goes for five years and pays \$118 million. He has won the NBA crown in 2015, 2017 and 2018. NBA Defensive Plaver-of-the-Year 2017, Green has been on the All-Defensive first or second team for five consecutive



AC Milan snaps up **Africa Cup star Bennacer**

AC Milan on Sunday announced the signing of French-born Algerian midfielder Ismael Bennacer, named Plaver-of-the-Tournament at the recently concluded Africa Cup of Nations. Bennacer, who played for the French under-18 and -19 teams before switching to Algeria in 2016, joins the Milan club from fellow Serie A side Empoli on a five-year contract. He has won 16 caps for Algeria, including seven at the Africa Cup of Nations in Egypt, where his team beat

Annu, Shweta ready to make it count in Rio



Target Tokyo: Annu Rai Singh and Shweta Singh who have returned to the National air pistol team for the Rio World Cup.

Second Olympic quota place to be won

SHOOTING

KAMESH SRINIVASAN NEW DELHI

Two of the best women pistol shooters in the country, Annu Raj Singh and Shweta Singh, will compete in the last World Cup of the season in Rio de Janeiro aspiring to win the second Olympic quota for Tokyo 2020, in air pistol

The 32-year-old Shweta, who works with ONGC, has competed in five World Championships, and three Asian Games.

She did win the Asian Games individual bronze in Incheon, 2014.

Returning was tough

"I am happy to make the main team for the last World Cup of the season. Returning to the team was tough because of various reasons.

"It was hard to spare time

for training (following marriage and the birth of a child). But, my husband supports me and takes care of our child.

"I worked full force, covering all training needs and made the World Championship team last year," recalled

Huge payments

"I used my savings for participating in open tournaments abroad for more exposure and paid hefty fees to mental and physical trainers. I trusted my abilities and worked hard.

"I was missing selection to the national team by 0.1 point or one point. I am happy that the hard work is paying off," said Shweta.

Unlike Shweta, Annu Raj, who is with Air India, has been in the 25m sports pistol team, having represented the country in the London Olympics by virtue of silver in the World Cup in Fort Benning when she had shot an impressive score of 389.

The last time Annu made the National team in air pistol in a World Cup was in 2015. The 35-year-old Annu will be competing in the 60shot air pistol for the first time in a global competition.

"I don't think making the team in itself is noteworthy. It is just the first step.

"I don't think much about quota, etc. It would be nice to get it. It is more about being able to follow the process," said Annu.

"The knowledge available for young shooters, along with funding for the junior programme, is helping them get there faster (among the

"For them, transition is the key. Earlier, we would learn from our seniors. Now, the juniors motivate me to give my best," said Annu.

the ball and Bayern paid the

Sancho made a speedy

counterattack down the side,

booted the ball across to

where Alcacer took control

straight in front of the net

and drilled it in past Neuer in

Bayern tried to battle

back, but Marwin Hitz made

an outstanding save to deny

a shot by Kingsley Coman;

Joshua Kimmich then made a

strong run but sent his shot

Those missed chances

proved costly when Sancho

intercepted a pass by Jerome

Boateng, raced down the

field and beat Neuer with a

crossing shot to give Dort-

mund an insurance goal in

the 48th minute.

United's pre-season run continues

James fetches shoot-out win over AC Milan

FOOTBALL

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Daniel James converted the winning penalty in a shootout to give Manchester United victory over AC Milan on Saturday and six wins in as many pre-season matches.

The 21-year-old Wales international, who signed from second tier Swansea in the close season, sealed victory after David de Gea had saved a spot-kick from Daniel Maldini, son of Milan and Italy legend Paolo.

United's 5-4 victory – its other five victories included beating Tottenham Hotspur and Inter Milan - in the shoot-out came after the match ended 2-2 but was not enough for it to win the International Champions Cup with the honours going to Portuguese side Benfica instead.

"It's amazing. Today was a difficult test but it showed the spirit to come from behind," James told MUTV. "To score that last penalty, especially here in Cardiff, is very special."

The English side's triumph came despite the absence of Belgium striker Romelu Lukaku, who

expected to leave the club on a potential swap deal with Argentinian Paulo Dybala from Juventus, and France's World Cup-winning midfielder Paul Pogba.

Pogba purportedly missed the trip to Wales with a back injury although the Daily Mirror claimed he had sought to seal a move away to Real Madrid by not

travelling with the squad. United took the lead when Marcus Rashford opened the scoring with a delightful individual effort, dancing through two rather feeble efforts at tackles before his shot took a deflection off Milan skipper Alessio Romagnoli.

The visitors levelled in the 25th minute, Suso curling one into the net from outside the penalty area. de Gea denied Suso a second seven minutes before the break.

Suso was at the heart of the goal that gave Milan the lead on the hour mark, his cross being flicked on by Samu Castillejo which hit United central defender Victor Lindelof's head and went in.

United struck back as substitute Jesse Lingard's shot beat former Liverpool goalkeeper Pepe Reina with 18 minutes remaining.



Decisive moment: Daniel James scores the winning

Dortmund wins German Supercup

Alcacer, Sancho deny Bayern a third triumph

Borussia Dortmund stunned Bayern Munich 2-0 in the German Supercup final on the strength of goals by Paco Alcacer and Jadon Sancho.

The win on Saturday ended a streak of three straight victories for Bayern in this annual match, which pits the winners of the previous season's Bundesliga and German Cup titles.

The duel was electric from the start, more than might be expected in the first days of August, reports Efe news.

Dortmund had more opportunities in an evenly contested first half, with Bayern superstar Robert Lewandowski unable to assert his presence in the centre of the



Best of the best: Borussia Dortmund celebrates the German Supercup victory. •AP

field. Thomas Muller finally got off a shot for the Bavarian giants in the 19th minute, but it sailed over the crossbar.

ed Bayern goalkeeper Manuel Neuer, who managed to keep the game scoreless with a foot save of a shot by Ra-

The evenness of the match unravelled as soon as the second half began. Just three minutes had passed when Thiago lost control of

off target.

Man U faces uncertain future

Can Solskjaer make the Red Devils contenders again?

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Manchester United has missed out on the top four in four of the six seasons since Alex Ferguson stepped down and fans are coming to terms with its current status as Premier League also-rans.

Here, AFP Sport looks at whether Ole Gunnar Solskjaer can make United a contender again for the first time since its last Premier League title in 2012-13 or whether it is facing another season of turmoil and pain.

What to expect

It is difficult to know what to expect from Solskjaer's United, which enjoyed a purple patch after the Norwegian replaced Jose Mourinho but slumped alarmingly towards the end of last season.

At one stage it looked likely to finish in the top four but there was the suspicion it was getting the rub of the green and so it proved. Its campaign ended with a

whimper as it drew 1-1 at relegated Huddersfield and it was beaten 2-0 at home on the final day by Cardiff, which was also heading out of the Premier League.

A gap of 32 points to champion Manchester City was embarrassing and many questioned whether the club had been too hasty in appointing the relatively inexperienced Solskjaer to the full-time manager's post.

United will not have Champions League football to paper over the cracks during the coming season, with Thursday nights in the Europa League ringed in the calendar instead.

The club has had a positive pre-season but there are still lingering issues that need to be addressed – Paul Pogba's future is still in doubt and Solskjaer has to wrestle with the conundrum of an under-

United had problems at



Pogba continuing at Manchester United, Solskiaer has a tough task at hand to rebuild the team. • REUTERS

mier League and conceding 54 goals, the most it has conceded in a league season since 1978-79.

The 20-time champion desperately needs a positive start to rebuild confidence that it can challenge at the sharp end of the Premier League. Anything less and the knives could be out for

New faces

After a leaky defence played a key role in United's struggles last season, Solskjaer made it clear he wanted Leicester's Harry Maguire to plug the holes.

The England centre-back is reportedly on the verge of becoming the world's most expensive defender, with United said to have agreed an €80 million fee to land

But has it signed enough faces to boost a squad that looked short of class compared with Manchester City and Liverpool last season? Highly rated right-back Aaron Wan-Bissaka has joined from Crystal Palace, with Solskjaer describing the 21year-old as "one of the best upcoming defenders in the Premier League".

Winger Daniel James was bought from Championship club Swansea to add thrust on the flanks.

United has also been linked with a swoop for Juventus forward Paulo Dybala, but the Argentine is said to be unsure about joining a team outside the Champions League.

Romelu Lukaku could be on the way out of Old Trafford, with Juventus and Inter Milan both keen on the Belgium striker according to reports.

Key man

This is the season when Marcus Rashford will have to step up and show emphatically that he deserves to wear the number 10 shirt at Manchester United.

Still only 21, Rashford scored 17 goals in 54 appearances last season for club and country but will have to boost those numbers if he is to be the undisputed leader of United's attack.

Rashford signed a new four-year deal to remain at Old Trafford last month, saying it was "a privilege" every time he wore the shirt.

He has scored some sublime goals for the club but with a shortage of goal threat from elsewhere, Solskjaer will want to see him take his tally to 20-plus goals this season and become more of a

Guardiola places a premium on Premier League

Is averse to gambling all on the Champions League

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Pep Guardiola has dominat- and difficult to win," he said. ed English football in his time at Manchester City, winning five of the six domestic trophies in the last two seasons, and once again is putting Premier League glory at the top of his list of ambitions for the

Liverpool won its sixth European Cup with victory over Tottenham in May, and while Guardiola does want to conquer Europe with City, he prefers the sustained excellence that a successful league campaign brings over the vagaries of the post-Christmas knockout rounds.

The 48-year-old Spaniard has won eight titles in 10 seasons as a manager and he is now aiming to repeat the three straight league title wins he had at German giant Bayern Munich with City.

"The Champions League is an important tournament

knockout stages). I am not going to go to the casino and gamble everything I have in my pocket on seven games. I don't want that. "I want to be happy for 11

months and the Premier

League makes me happy. Ev-

ery game when we win, I am happy and I go to a restaurant feeling better. "Why am I going to wait until February for seven games and put everything on black? From my point of

view, that is too risky.' Guardiola, whose side was knocked out of the Champions League by Liverpool and Spurs in the past two seasons, said the title meant everything to him.

"To maintain the health and focus of the team, the



Pep Guardiola. • REUTERS

most important thing is the Premier League," he said.

"It is the standout competition because it is every weekend. In the Champions League, many things can happen in one or two games.

"We will be closer to achieving in Europe when we have more Premier League titles. That is a nice process and the right process to do at Manchester City.

"If I could have one thing this season, right now, it

would definitely be the title." The discussion has been

had all summer about whose not having a single player achievements were greater last season, Liverpool's Champions League glory or City winning the three domestic trophies – Liverpool pushing City all the way in the Premier League title race - in England plus the Community Shield.

But it was 3-0 in the Reds' favour in nominations for the best male player for the Best Fifa Football Awards, which were announced Wednesday.

Virgil van Dijk, Mohamed Salah and Sadio Mane are on the 10-man shortlist.

Wider acclaim

It has left Guardiola wondering what City's players must do to receive wider acclaim for their performances.

"I cannot imagine Real Ma-

drid or Barcelona winning four titles in one season and there," he said.

"That is impossible. I am

not going to say that the ten guys nominated don't deserve it, but I am a bit surprised we had no one because our players were incredible. "For example I don't think any player made a better sea-

son than Bernardo Silva, who also won the Nations League with Portugal." Guardiola had to acknowledge that success in Europe

is the only remedy to resolving the conundrum. "These awards are normally when you win the Champions League or are in

the latter stages," he said. "The other competitions do not count. So if we win the Champions League, our players will be there."

Second seed Thiem has

purposefully left it late for

the hardcourts, preferring to

stay as long as possible on

European clay by entering

Hamburg

Thiem, beaten by Nadal in

the last two Roland Garros fi-

nals, has a special goal driv-

ing him when he lands in

Francophile Canada. Thiem

will open his campaign

against either Canadian De-

nis Shapovalov or French-

man Pierre-Hugues Herbert.

Kitzbuehel.

Nadal heads the field at Montreal Masters

Djokovic, Federer have opted out of the key US Open tune-up

ROGERS CUP

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Defending champion Rafael Nadal heads the field for the ATP Montreal Masters that starts on Monday with Novak Djokovic and Roger Federer opting out of the key US Open tune-up.

With Djokovic and Federer putting a return to action on hold after their dramatic Wimbledon final, 33-year-old Nadal will be seeking to retain the title he earned last year in Toronto, when he beat rising star Stefanos Tsitsipas in the final.

Thiem seeded two

The Greek is back, taking the fourth seeding behind a pair of fellow young guns in number two Dominic Thiem of Austria and Germany's Alex-



US Open at Flushing Mea-

Federer has been training

dows, the final Grand slam of

on hardcourt at home in Switzerland after falling to Diokovic in a dramatic fiveset final at the All England Club three weeks ago, in starts on August 12, giving which the Swiss great held them one tournament prior two match points. to the August 26 start of the

Enjoying a break

Djokovic has been pictured

relaxing at various European

beach resorts with his family prior to picking up the racquet once again.

Nadal, meanwhile, is pacing himself after another season marred by injury, insisting despite the pleas and inducements of Cincinnati officials that he won't decide whether to play there until he sees how he feels after

"Depending on what happens in Montreal, I'll take a decision on Cincinnati," he said. "Cincinnati is still an option. But I want to arrive well prepared and ready for the US Open, the last Major of the season."

Nadal could face a challenge in the second round after a bye, with a possible match against Australian Alex de Minaur – winner of the Atlanta title last weekend.

Third seed Zverev, who won the title here two years ago with a win over Federer in the final, will open against either Briton Cameron Norrie or Hungarian Martin Fucsovic. Tsitsipas will bid to better his 2018 finals showing but must first get past either Milos Raonic or American Taylor Fritz.

performing Alexis Sanchez.

both ends of the pitch last season – scoring 30 goals fewer than City in the Pre-