

# Inter let Juve off the hook as tired Ronaldo stays home

AGENCE FRANCE PRESSE  
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CRISTIANO RONALDO stayed at home as Juventus battled to a 1-1 stalemate at lowly Lecce, but the defending champions still stay top in Serie A as nearest rivals Inter Milan drew 2-2 with Parma. Both goals in Lecce came from penalties with Paulo Dybala's strike from the spot after 50 minutes cancelled out by Marco Mancosu's six minutes later as the promoted southerners grabbed their first point at home this season on Saturday.

Unbeaten Juventus have 23 points from nine games, one more than Antonio Conte's Inter, who let the champions off the hook to stay second. Ronaldo, 34, did not make the trip to the heel of Italy after Tuesday's 2-1 Champions League win over Lokomotiv Moscow, and ahead of two Serie A matches in four days next week, and a reverse fixture against the Russians on November 6.

"Ronaldo was tired both physically and mentally, so it would not have helped to make this journey," said Juventus coach Maurizio Sarri. "When a player expresses his fatigue, it's only right to give him a rest. Even without him we created ten chances on goal, but weren't able to finish them off. We let ourselves be drawn into a dirty game."

It was a bruising encounter in Puglia. Argentina forward Gonzalo Higuain suffered a nasty knock to his forehead late in the game after colliding with Lecce's Brazilian goalkeeper Gabriel. The 31-year-old sat down on the pitch after the game suffering from dizziness and was stretchered off, later receiving stitches to his forehead. Miralem Pjanic and Rodrigo Bentancur also suffered knocks. Dybala, who scored both goals against the Russians last Wednesday, started up front alongside Higuain, with Federico Bernardeschi slotting in just behind the Argentine strike duo.

Sarri rang the changes giving starts to Emre Can and Danilo with Blaise Matuidi and Juan Cuadrado both named on the bench.

## Morata on target again

Madrid: Diego Simeone's decision to leave out Diego Costa was vindicated as Atletico Madrid beat Athletic Bilbao and Costa's replacement Alvaro Morata scored in the 2-0 victory. Morata had been the one to sit on the bench against Bayer Leverkusen on Tuesday but his winning goal as a substitute earned him a start against Bilbao and the Spaniard delivered again. "The changes were good for the team," said Simeone on Saturday. "It was a great performance."

Morata's finish in the second half at the Wanda Metropolitano, after Saul Niguez had opened the scoring, secured Atletico a comfortable win that puts them above Real Madrid in the La Liga table and level on points with Barcelona. The postponement of the Clasico due to unrest in Catalonia gave Simeone's side the chance to close the gap on the top two and sustain momentum from their gritty win in the Champions League.

Morata had rescued Atletico against Leverkusen but the decision to omit him, and now Costa, suggests Simeone feels there is a need for fresh thinking up front. Since missing the first two games of the season with a thigh injury, Costa had started all 10 thereafter, despite managing to score only two goals, one of them from the penalty spot.

It remains to be seen if Simeone will leave him out for long but Correa was the provider for both of Atletico's goals while Morata's smile after coming off late on suggested he thought his was a job well done.

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# Springboks win battle of grit

South Africa set up a repeat of 2007 World Cup final against England by beating Wales 19-16 in semis



## NO HOLDS BARRED

Wales' Jake Ball (L) clashes with South Africa's Faf de Klerk during the Rugby World Cup semifinal in Yokohama, Japan, on Sunday. Reuters

REUTERS

YOKOHAMA, OCTOBER 27

SPRINGBOKS FLYHALF Handre Pollard kicked a penalty four minutes from time to send South Africa into their third Rugby World Cup final with a 19-16 victory over Wales in a semi-final dogfight on Sunday.

The South Africans will return to Yokohama next weekend to bid for a third World Cup triumph against an England side who ran defending champions New Zealand out of the tournament with a breathtaking display of rugby on Saturday.

This was the other side of the game, a largely grim arm-wrestle dominated by the boot and appropriately settled by a three-pointer from the kicking tee. Pollard potted all five of his shots at goal, including three other penalties and a conversion, while centre Damian de Allende crossed for the game's first try in the 57th minute.

Wales, who will depart heartbroken at having lost a third World Cup semi-final, levelled the scores at 16-16 with 15 minutes remaining when winger Josh Adams crossed for his sixth try of the tournament. South Africa would not be denied, however, and secured their passage to the final when Pollard calmly slotted the ball through the posts from about 30 metres out wide to the left.

An chilly autumn wind had blown away the last remains of a balmy day just after kick-off but that did not deter both sides from going to the skies from the start of the gritty contest. South Africa's set piece looked the steadier but Wales were getting past the Springboks' rush defence on the left wing and looked the more likely to cross if the game was ever going to produce a try.

In the absence of any other enterprise, Pollard and Dan Biggar reprised their flyhalf penalty-kicking duel of the 2015 quarter-final with the South African coming out on top, as he did four years ago, to send his side into halftime 9-6 ahead. The Welsh suffered a double injury blow just before the break that did not augur well for an attritional chess game, however, with prop Tom Francis damaging his shoulder and winger George North pulling up clutching his hamstring strain.

## Birthday cards put loss in perspective for All Blacks

**Reuters:** Kieran Read had a birthday to forget on Saturday as the All Blacks crashed out of the Rugby World Cup with a 19-7 loss to England, but then some reminders of home waiting for him at his hotel put everything back in perspective. Rugby was just a game after all.

"It's pretty empty. Yep, it's not what we came here for," Read said. "And it was my birthday yesterday. But I get back to the hotel room and there are cards from my kids waiting for me. It changes things and puts things in perspective," he added while blinking back tears before composing himself. "It's a rugby game and people care. We care. So you enjoy moments and, for me, I'm a dad, and that's first and foremost the thing I want to be remembered by. That's the thing."

Biggar stepped up to kick his third penalty to tie up the scores six minutes into the second half but the biggest cheer from the crowd until that point came when Springboks scrumhalf Faf de Klerk squared up to towering Wales lock Jake Ball.

The South Africans in the stadium finally had something to shout about approaching the hour mark when Pollard for once eschewed the kick and cut through the defensive line to take the Springboks deep into the Welsh 22. With the referee playing advantage, the ball came out to de Allende who brushed off two tacklers and reached over to touch down in the grasp of a third.

Wales hit straight back, however, camping on the South African line, taking a five-metre scrum when awarded a penalty then quickly moving the ball out to the wing for Adams to score. Fullback Leigh Halfpenny split the uprights from wide to level up the scores but South Africa's forwards did enough to ensure Pollard had his chance to win it.

# English sporting takeover comes with a twist

ASSOCIATED PRESS

YOKOHAMA, OCTOBER 27

IT'S AN English sporting takeover with a twist.

Fuelled by the brainpower of foreign coaches, England is going through a dominant spell of success in its traditional team sports: Football, cricket and, most recently, rugby. And it has all happened in the space of six months.

It started with Liverpool and Chelsea winning two European soccer trophies - the Champions League and the Europa League, respectively - within three days. Liverpool, managed by charismatic German coach Jurgen Klopp, became European champion for the sixth time by beating Tottenham 2-0 in an all-English final in early June and could yet be crowned world champion of the club game before the year is out. The team competes in the Club World Cup in Qatar in December and will start as favorite.

A month later, England won the Cricket World Cup for the first time in unforgettable circumstances, beating New Zealand in a final that was decided after a rare "Super Over" by a tiebreaker few had even heard of: Boundary countback. The architect of that triumph? An Australian, Trevor Bayliss.

Fast forward three months and another major victory is in England's sights in the Far East, where the country's rugby team is into the final of the World Cup. England defeated the mighty All Blacks, one of the most dominant teams in the history of any sport, in the semifinals on Saturday after a masterclass in mind games and strategy by its coach, Eddie Jones. Who just happens to be, you guessed it, Australian.

Wales or South Africa awaits in the final, with England seeking to win the main global cricket and rugby world titles in the same year for the first time. That's only ever been done once before - by Australia in 1999 at the peak of the country's sporting dominance which also saw the Australians win the Davis

Cup that year.

Jones and Bayliss have transformed the fortunes of their respective adopted national teams, with England failing to get out of the group stage at the previous cricket and rugby World Cups, in 2015. It led to much introspection and soul-searching back home as the inventors of the two sports slumped embarrassing lows and reached out to coaches born overseas.

Bayliss achieved the cricketing turnaround with a relaxed, laid-back approach. He stayed very much in the shadows, giving his players freedom to express themselves. It helped England to the top of the rankings in one-day international cricket for the first time and then a first-ever world title, even if England's fortunes in test cricket have started to slide.

It remains to be seen how England gets on now Bayliss has left his post and an understated Englishman, Chris Silverwood, is in charge. Jones, the first foreign-born coach of England's rugby team, is very much the opposite to Bayliss. Brash, outspoken and confrontational, Jones enjoys using news conferences to shape his own agenda. He relishes the psychological battle, seeing it as important as the game itself. He views it as a way of taking the heat off his players - and it worked a treat ahead of the New Zealand game.

"We will make sure the guys have the right attitude," the wily Jones said after the 19-7 win over the defending champions, "as well as the right time to relax and switch off a little bit."

With English racing driver Lewis Hamilton on the brink of winning the Formula One world title for a sixth time, these are golden days for English sport. Winning the football World Cup is still regarded as holy grail when it comes to sports in England, and that hasn't happened since 1966.

This year, at least, England's cricket and rugby teams are doing their best to pick up the slack.

# Verstappen stripped of pole at Mexican GP

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
MEXICO CITY, OCTOBER 27

MAX VERSTAPPEN turned in a brilliant lap to snatch a surprising pole position at the Mexican Grand Prix. Then he opened his mouth. Three hours later, the Red Bull driver was bumped down to fourth, the Ferraris of Charles Leclerc and Sebastian Vettel were back at the front, and Mercedes' Lewis Hamilton was in fighting position to clinch his sixth career Formula One championship.

The changes came when Verstappen was penalised for not slowing down after Mercedes' Valtteri Bottas had a hard crash just ahead of him on his final lap of Saturday's qualifying. Verstappen seemed to be in the clear until he admitted in the post-qualifying press conference he didn't slow under a yellow flag, even though the rules require it.

"I was aware that Valtteri crashed," Verstappen said. When pressed later whether he should have backed off, Verstappen bristled. "Do we have to go there? To safety? I think we know what we are doing, otherwise we would not be driving an F1 car." Verstappen said. "It's qualifying and, yeah, you go for it. But like I said before, if they want to delete the lap, then delete the lap."

His comments prompted an investigation from race stewards and Verstappen lost more than that. The Dutch driver had expertly cut the thin air and slow corners at the Autodromo Hermanos Rodriguez to perfection, and an earlier lap would have been good enough for his second career pole position.

But Verstappen was still on the track because the Mercedes and Ferraris were making their last runs. Bottas was rounding the final curve when he took a hard shunt into the wall and Verstappen zipped past. The crash ended qualifying and forced Ferrari to abort its final laps. Hamilton said the penalty was correct. "It's really important that (race officials) are very strict on yellow flags," Hamilton said. "There could have been marshals on the track. These volunteers put their lives on the line to make sure we are safe, and you have got people who are being careless and not abiding by the rules."

Leclerc said every driver knows to slow down under a yellow flag. Verstappen is only 22, but he's a veteran driver in his 99th Grand Prix. "On my side, the crash was behind, so I cannot judge that situation, but yeah, I think it's clear for every driver," said Leclerc, who is also 22. "It's the basics."

Ferrari is back in No. 1 for the sixth race in a row as Leclerc and Vettel hunt for the fourth team win in that span. Verstappen won the last two Mexican Grand Prix from the No. 2 spot, and the straight-line power edge of the Ferraris should give them a huge jump out of the start in the sprint to the first corner. The entire scenario gives Hamilton a better chance to close out the championship on a race track that has not been kind to him in recent years. Hamilton clinched the 2017 and 2018 championships in Mexico City but ran poor races both times. He hasn't been on the podium here since winning in 2016.

Hamilton can clinch the title with a podium finish that puts him 14 points clear of Bottas. Anything less than third for Hamilton extends the championship to next week's U.S. Grand Prix in Texas, a race he's won five times since 2012. A Hamilton podium won't be easy. Verstappen has been significantly faster than the Mercedes on this track. He'll be seething after the penalty and will want to chase the Ferraris. A sixth career championship would put Hamilton just one behind the record seven won by Michael Schumacher.

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# Woods on verge of equalling PGA Tour record

REUTERS

CHIBA, OCTOBER 27

TIGER WOODS held a three-stroke lead over local favorite Hideki Matsuyama after 11 holes of the fourth round of the Zozo Championship on Sunday.

Woods, who has led from the opening round of the PGA Tour's first tournament in Japan, carded three birdies against a lone bogey when the fourth round was suspended due to darkness. Combined with the third round he played earlier, Woods played a total of 29 holes on Sunday. "Today has been a long day in the saddle, so early wake-up call tomorrow and back at it again," Woods said. "I'm gonna try to win, there is no doubt about that. I have a job to do tomorrow, start off from the 12th hole, it's not one of the easiest of holes so right out of the gate I've got one of the hardest holes on the golf course."

Woods is making his first start in his 23rd season on the PGA Tour. If he can hold onto his lead through the remaining seven holes on Monday, he will reach 82 wins and tie the career record held by Sam Snead. Play will start at 7:30 a.m. local time on Monday.



Tiger Woods watches his tee shot on the 6th hole during the final round of the Zozo Championship in Tokyo on Sunday. AP

Matsuyama made things interesting when he finished with back-to-back birdies on Nos. 11 and 12. Before that he was five strokes back which would have put him in a difficult position on Monday. "Three strokes behind right now," Matsuyama said. "I have

a lot of ground to make up tomorrow. I need to play well to even have a chance, but I will give it a shot and do my best."

Matsuyama started the fourth round at the Accordia Golf Narashino Country Club course three strokes back of Woods after

completion of the third round earlier Sunday when Woods shot 4-under 66. In the fourth round, the Japanese star faltered with two bogeys on the front nine but made up for it with his two birdies on his final two holes.

Woods got off to a strong start to the fourth round with a birdie on the first hole. His only trouble of the day came when his tee shot on the par-4 No. 4 went into the rough. His second shot was a routine chip shot from the side of the green that was short, barely reaching the green. He then two-putted for his only bogey of the fourth round. Woods came right back with a birdie on the next hole and added another on the sixth. Torrential rain washed out play on Friday prompting the second round to be moved to Saturday. To make up for the lost day, the players started the fourth round immediately after finishing the third to get in as many holes as possible.

Gary Woodland was tied in third place at 12-under with Sungjae Im, while Rory McIlroy, the highest-ranked player in the field, was fifth at 11 under with just two holes to play. Woods last played in an official tournament in Japan in 2006 at the Dunlop Phoenix, where he lost in a playoff to Padraig Harrington.

# U-23 Wrestling Worlds: Sharvan to open India's campaign

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 27

JUNIOR ASIAN Championship gold medalist Sharvan will open India's medal hunt on Monday as a 30-member wrestling squad left for Budapest to participate at the UWW Under-23 World Championships.

India will be looking to improve their performance from the last edition where Ravi Kumar Dahiya won the silver medal in 57kg. While freestyle exponent Sharvan (65kg) remains one of India's key medal hopes, the squad also has the likes of Greco-Roman wrestler, Sajan Bhanwal, who has three medals from the World Junior Championships in 77kg and would be looking to grab his first medal from the U-23 Worlds.

Among the women, Pinki and Reshma Mane are looking to make their mark on the world stage. On the first day of the championships, Naveen (57kg), Naveen (70kg), Virdev Gulia (79kg), and Akash Antil (97kg) will be in action, besides

Sharvan (65kg).

Based on the current form of these wrestlers, the WFI is expecting a better performance at the World Championships after the men's team and the women's team underwent 15 days of rigorous training at Sonipat and Lucknow respectively.

## 60 nations, 600-plus wrestlers

More than 60 teams and 600 under-23 wrestlers will be seen in action from all around the globe. The championship will be underway with men's freestyle competition on the first two days followed by women's wrestling, with the Greco-Roman competition scheduled on the final three days. The first edition of the tournament was played in 2017 in Poland where Bajrang Punia led India to three silver medals.

In the second edition, it was Ravi Kumar Dahiya who shone before going on to prove his mettle at the 2019 Senior World Championships by claiming the bronze and confirming the 57kg freestyle category berth at the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games.