TV PICKS

NBA: Sony Ten 1 (SD & HD), 8.30 a.m.
Women's T20 World Cup: Star Sports 2 (SD & HD), 9.30 a.m. & 1.30 p.m.
Khelo India University Games: Star Sports 1 (SD & HD), 10 a.m.
West Indies vs Sri Lanka: 2nd ODI, Sony ESPN (SD & HD), 2.30 p.m.
South Africa vs Australia: 3rd T20I, Sony Six (SD & HD), 9.30 p.m.
Champions League: Sony Ten 1 & 2 (SD & HD), 1.30 a.m. (Thursday).

IN BRIEF

Middleton helps Bucks survive Wizards push

LOS ANGELES

Khris Middleton scored 40 points to help Milwaukee Bucks withstand a 55-point push from Washington's Bradley Beal in a 137-134 NBA overtime victory on Monday.
The results: Cavaliers 125 bt Heat 119 (OT); 76ers 129 bt Hawks 112; Bucks 137 bt Wizards 134 (OT); Magic 115 bt Nets 113; Rockets 123 bt Knicks 112; Mavericks 139 bt Timberwolves 123; Suns 131 bt Jazz 111; Clippers 124 bt Grizzlies 97. AGENCIES

Wilder likely to seek rematch with Fury

LOS ANGELES

Deontay Wilder plans to activate his rematch clause for a third fight with Tyson Fury after his seventh-round TKO loss to the Briton. *Yahoo Sports* reported Wilder would seek a rematch — and that he says a miscalculation with his ring-walk costume proved costly in the first defeat of his career. AFP

Manchester City targets role reversal

Real Madrid's record is the envy of Europe; Lyon locks horns with Juventus

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
MADRID

Manchester City will be up against both Real Madrid and its reputation on Wednesday as the Champions League's biggest winner plays one of its biggest underachiever at the Santiago Bernabeu.

After City's win over Leicester on Saturday, Pep Guardiola said: "We will try to be ourselves. We can win and we can lose but we must try to be ourselves."

Yet in some ways, City will seek a role reversal too.

Real's record is the envy of Europe but in particular by teams like City, whose financial might and technical talent has translated only into disappointment outside domestic competition.

In the time City has won three Premier League titles and five domestic cups, it has gone past the Champions League's quarterfinals only once, reaching the last four in 2016, only to be beaten by Real.

Zinedine Zidane's side, meanwhile, have surrendered dominance in La Liga to Barcelona but made amends for one Spanish league title in seven years by winning four Champions Leagues out of the last six.

Few would argue that quality explains the difference. Madrid's success has certainly been due in part to the brilliance of Cristiano Ronaldo but City has perhaps boasted an even better all-round collection of players and their excellence in England points to a club well-equipped to excel in Europe.

Ruthless

Real believes this tournament is its own, a conviction based on historic success that makes it assured under pressure and ruthless in the decisive moments.

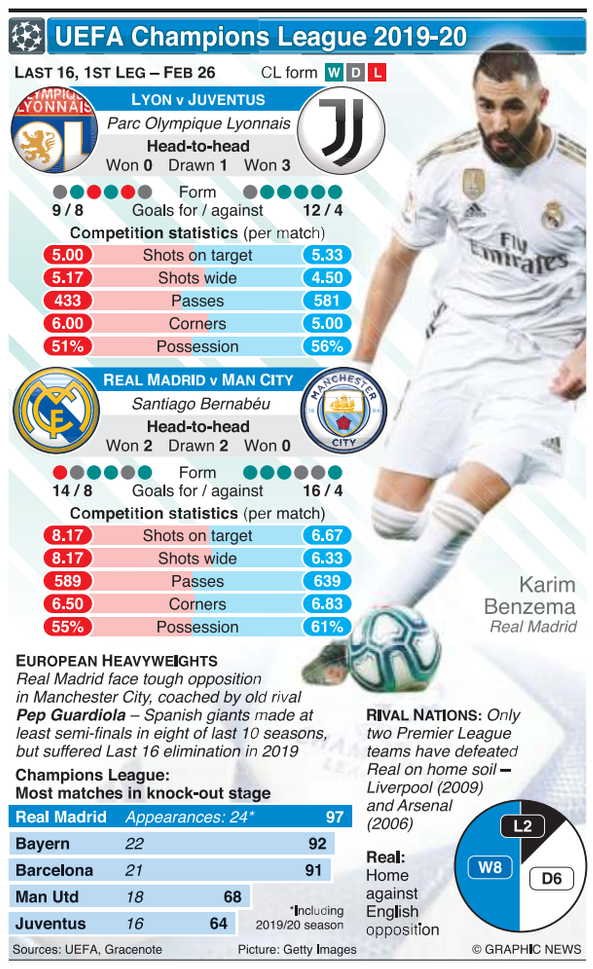
"When you have a history of the (Alfredo) di Stefano period, winning five or six European Cups at that time, it means a new player that comes to Real Madrid and puts on that shirt knows 'we have to defend our history'," said Guardiola.

'Extraordinary'

Anthony Lopes described Cristiano Ronaldo as "extraordinary", and the Lyon goalkeeper knows how big a job he faces keeping his Portuguese international colleague quiet when the French side faces Juventus.

"I have been lucky enough to play alongside him. He is the captain and an extraordinary personality, a great man," Lopes said when asked about playing with Ronaldo.

"I have gone to major tournaments with him, the Euro and the World Cup, where you have to develop links to those around you, and to do what he does every day is quite incredible," Lopes added.



Daruvala gears up for a big challenge

S. DIPAK RAGAV
CHENNAI

India's Formula One hopeful Jehan Daruvala's career got a huge boost last week after Red Bull signed him for the junior driver programme and also confirmed his participation in the FIA F2 championship for 2020 with Carlin.

The Mumbai lad finished third in the F3 championship last year and was in the title hunt till the last race and had an impressive season with two wins and seven podiums.

Steady progress

The 21-year-old who was picked by the Force India Formula One team right from his karting days has been making steady progress in the single-seater ladder in Europe and has now reached the penultimate step to F1.

After Force India folded up in 2018, the Indian youngster had no tie-ups with an F1 team but says in hindsight it was a good thing since his performances last year helped him secure Red Bull backing.

Speaking to *The Hindu*, Daruvala said, "It is a big thing for me. This is the biggest stepping stone for a driver to be part of the Red Bull programme." The Red Bull programme has produced drivers like Sebastian Vettel, Daniel Ricciardo, Max Verstappen, Carlos Sainz Jr.

Jehan Daruvala
▪ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

At the same time, the programme run by Dr Helmut Marko, a former racing driver known for being a taskmaster, is a tough one with no place to hide.

The Indian, though, is unfazed by the tough approach Red Bull employs saying, "It is a good balance of pressure because they give you the opportunity.

"It is only if you are no longer the right person for them, they drop you.

No time for patience with the spinner's craft: Chatterjee

Y.B. SARANGI
TANGI (ODISHA)

As a player and then as coach Utpal Chatterjee has seen spin bowling undergo radical changes in the last 35 years.

Chatterjee, a prominent left-arm spinner from Bengal who captured 504 wickets in 129 First Class matches between mid-1980s and mid-2000s, is a bit sympathetic towards practitioners of his trade today.

Need of the times

However, the 55-year-old spin bowling consultant of Bengal, understands the situation well.

"There are spinners around, but teams field three pacers and one or two spinners. Because of the format, every team wants an outright win and six points. If you get only first innings lead, then you cannot qualify (to the Ranji Trophy knockouts)," Chatterjee told *The Hindu* during Bengal's Ranji Trophy quarterfinal against Odisha at the DRIEMS ground here.

"In older days, the pitch used to be spinner-friendly.

Utpal Chatterjee.
▪ COURTESY CAB MEDIA

So, the stress was on spin and so many spinners played."

According to Chatterjee, the proliferation of T20 tournaments changed the scenario. "Everyone wants to bowl in the Indian Premier League. Everyone wants to stop runs, not get a batsman out by outwitting him.

"Spinners are taken off as soon as they get hit because teams want quick results. One needs to be patient with spinners and believe that they can get the breakthrough.

"The patience is gone now. Even batsmen want to score a hundred off 120 balls. That's why spinners are bowling low-trajectory deliveries and are not too keen on flighting the ball. Since we don't see traditional bowling, we don't get good spinners."

Chatterjee, who played three ODIs for India, said the increase in limited-overs internationals had its impact on the longer version.

"If there are three T20s and five one-dayers in a series, how can a spinner play? No one wants to learn bowling that suits Tests. Rather the focus is on the format in which more matches are played. That's why we don't see many spinners playing Tests.

"Look at the IPL, there are so many bowlers who bowl well. Such bowlers don't stand a chance for the Indian Test side."

Best option

Chatterjee said being flexible was the best option. "One has to bowl as per the team's needs. Look at Virat Kohli, he has been scoring runs in all formats because he has been able to adapt well. If someone is an all-rounder, he has an advantage," said Chatterjee.

Experience counts in Grand Slams, says Pierce

'Playing on clay helps youngsters develop physically, mentally, technically, tactically'

With a legend: Mary Pierce with the Indian juniors and, seated from left, Lucas Dubourg of French Tennis Federation, Davis Cup team captain Rohit Rajpal and vice-president of Oppo Sumit Walia. ▪ KAMESH SRINIVASAN

TENNIS

KAMESH SRINIVASAN
NEW DELHI

Mary Pierce was able to play her best tennis in Grand Slams early in her career, but emphasised that playing one's best tennis in Grand Slams, was achieved mainly through experience.

"To feel at home in Grand Slams, you need the experience. You keep getting better each time. Everyone feels nervous the first time.

"To play your best in competition, you need the experience, the hard work and the ability to stay focused," said Pierce, who interacted with the junior players and the media, during the Roland Garros junior wild card tennis event at the DLTA Complex on Tuesday.

Expressing happiness about being part of the promotion for clay court tennis, and Roland Garros, "the Mecca of clay court tennis", Pierce said she could not believe that it was already 20 years since she won the Roland Garros.

"When I won the first match on the centre court, it was an incredible experience. It was my first win on centre court.

" I had a special feeling inside of me. I told myself, this could be the year for me. I didn't tell that to anyone. I kept winning match by match, reached the final and my belief came true", recalled Pierce, who had to wait for six years to win Roland Garros, after having lost the final to Arantxa Sanchez in Paris in 1994, when she was 19.

Pierce said playing on clay developed the young players, "physically, mentally, technically and tactically."

Inspiring

She also observed that the juniors will be inspired and motivated while competing in the same tournament as the top stars of the game, and would learn a lot especially by watching the professionals practice.

Conceding that the game needed to be affordable to ensure the wide participation of people from different economic backgrounds, Pierce said she was lucky to have had a sponsor from the age of 13.

"We had a sponsor for three years when I was 13. We could live and eat. Train and travel for tournaments. I don't think I could have made it without that support", said Pierce.

She also pointed out that once the players took care of the equipment and court, they could develop by playing even against the wall, as having coaches would require paying for them.

"Playing against the wall is really important. It has been lost with time", she remarked.

Noting that Abhimanyu Vannem Reddy had made it to the Roland Garros event in 2017 through the wild card series, Pierce wished that the current lot would work hard to emulate such an achievement.

"I have been to India a few times, and I know that there is talent in abundance in the country," she said.

She highlighted the impact of players like Leander Paes, Mahesh Bhupathi, Rohan Bopanna and Sania Mirza on world tennis, and expressed her belief that Indian players could make a mark in singles on the Grand Slam stage.

Divij named as reserve

DAVIS CUP

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The All India Tennis Association (AITA), on Tuesday, nominated a five-member team for the Davis Cup World Group qualification tie to be played against Croatia on indoor hard court in Zagreb on March 6 and 7.

Prajnesh Gunneswaran, Sumit Nagal and Ramkumar Ramanathan will be the singles players, while Rohan Bopanna and Leander Paes will be the doubles specialists.

Divij Sharan, who had won the Asian Games gold with Bopanna in 2018 and is tipped to compete in the Tokyo Olympics with him, has been named as a reserve.

The team would look at various combinations before finalising the five players ahead of the draw ceremony to be held on March 5.

Ghosal and Joshna in squad

SPORTS REPORTER
CHENNAI

Saurav Ghosal (13 times national champion and World No. 13) and Joshna Chinappa (18 times national champion and World No. 12) will lead the Indian men's and women's contingents for the 20th Asian team squash championship, to be held in Malaysia from March 25 to 29.

The other members of the squad include Abhishek Pradhan, Harinder Pal Sandhu and Abhay Singh in the men's section, and Tanvi Khanna, Sunayna Kuruvilla and Sanya Vats in the women's.

The selection was the based on the players' performance in the 77th National championship. The team officials will be David Palmer, Surbhi Mishra and Dimple Kamalakannan (Physiotherapist).

Leander moves up

SPORTS BUREAU
DUBAI

Leander Paes and Mathew Ebden of Australia knocked out second-seeded Ivan Dodig and Filip Polasek in the pre-quarterfinals of the $2,950,420 ATP-500 tennis touranment on Tuesday.

In quarterfinals, Leander and partner will play qualifiers Henri Kontinen of Finland and Jan-Lennard Struff of Germany, who won their first round against Mate Pavic and Bruno Soares.
The results: $2,950,420 ATP-500, Dubai: First round: Dennis Novak (Aut) bt Prajnesh Gunneswaran 6-4, 6-3.
Doubles (pre-quarterfinals): Matthew Ebden (Aus) & Leander Paes bt Ivan Dodig (Cro) & Filip Polasek (Svk) 6-4, 6-3.

Delhi beats TN

MUMBAI: Lalita Sharma's three-wicket haul helped Delhi beat Tamil Nadu by six wickets in the BCCI senior women's tournament on Tuesday.
The scores:
BCCI senior women's tournament: Tamil Nadu 83 in 38.3 overs (Lalita Sharma 3/25) lost to Delhi 87/4 in 26.5 overs (Vandana Chaturvedi 27).
BCCI women's u-19 one-dayers (Rajkot): Tamil Nadu 164/9 in 50 overs (K. Yogyasri 36, S. Swathi 58, Vedanti Salodkar 3/25) lost to Vidarbha 167/8 in 47.5 overs (Riddhi 75 n.o., K.B. Vamsi 3/39).

Panther Shergill on the prowl

NEW DELHI: Simran Shergill smashed home eight goals to help Jindal Panther register a 9-7 victory over Sujan-Sona in a league match of the Maharaja Jiwaji Rao Scindia Gold Cup 12-goal polo tournament here on Tuesday.

In another match, Cavalry-Army Service Corps (ASC) beat Sona-Sujan 6 1/2 goals to 6.
The results (league):
Cavalry-ASC 6 1/2 (Ravi Rathore 4, Vishal Chauhan 2, handicap 1/2) bt Sona-Sujan 6 (Gerardo Mazzini 5, Dhananjay Singh).
Jindal Panther 9 (Simran Shergill 8, Gaurav Sahgal) bt Sujan-Sona 7 (Dhruvpal Godara 4, Siddhant Sharma 2, Salim Azmi).

Vaishnavi rallies to beat Akanksha

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Vaishnavi Adkar overcame an erratic start to defeat second seed Akanksha Nitture 3-6, 6-3, 7-5 in the girls' semifinals of the Roland Garros junior wild card tennis tournament on Tuesday.

The free-stroking Vaishnavi recovered from 0-3 and 3-5 in the decider to get past Akanksha who played smart but could not close out the contest.

In the final, Vaishnavi will play Sanjana Sirimalla, who overcame a spirited challenge from top seed Reshma Maruri 6-4, 7-5.

One-sided contests

In contrast to the tight fight in both the girls' semifinals, the boys' matches were one-sided, as top seed Dev Javia and third seed Chirag Duhan raced to the final, dropping four games between them.

The boys' and girls' champions will compete in the play-off in Paris with those from Brazil, China and Mexico, for the wild card into the main draw of the Roland Garros junior event.

"We will monitor the situation in China till the end of March.

"If there is no change in the situation regarding the Coronavirus, we will try to invite the best-ranked boy and girl from China for the event in Paris," said Lucas Dubourg of the French Tennis Federation (FFT).

Stunning win: Vaishnavi Adkar defeated second seed Akanksha Nitture in three sets. ▪ KAMESH SRINIVASAN

The results (semifinals):
Boys: Dev Javia bt Nitin Jaipal Singh 6-2, 6-1; Chirag Duhan bt Mohit Bondre 6-1, 6-0.
Girls: Sanjana Sirimalla bt Reshma Maruri 6-4, 7-5; Vaishnavi Adkar bt Akanksha Nitture 3-6, 6-3, 7-5.

Liverpool overcomes West Ham's challenge

EURO LEAGUES

AGENCIES
LONDON

Runaway Premier League leader Liverpool had to come from behind –and needed some help from two goalkeeping blunders – to beat lowly West Ham United 3-2 in a thrilling game and maintain its 100% home record on Monday.

Trailing 2-1 late in the second half, West Ham keeper Lukasz Fabianski was twice at fault as Mohamed Salah and Sadio Mane ensured Liverpool prevailed to equal the record of 18 consecutive top-flight wins set by Manchester City in 2017.

Juergen Klopp's side now needs 12 points from 11 games to make sure of its first league title in 30 years.

"We started really well, scored a wonderful first goal. Then we weren't good in the second ball situations," said the Liverpool manager. "We struggled in these situations, that was difficult for us tonight."

"You have to squeeze it, force it and that's what we did tonight.

"It's so special, it's unbelievable"

More determined

West Ham, which played with much more determination and poise than in recent weeks but remains in the relegation places, fought to the end.

Defeat leaves the Hammers on 24 points from 27 games, a point behind Aston Villa in the safety zone.
The results:
Premier League: Liverpool 3 (Wijnaldum 9, Salah 68, Mane 81) bt West Ham 2 (Diop 12, Fornals 54).
Bundesliga: Eintracht Frankfurt 1 (Hubner 79-og) lost to Union Berlin 2 (Andersson 49, Ndicka 67-og).