

Sports

Photo of the Day



David Plese, professional triathlete, is seen training in Hawaii. — Photo taken from www.redbullcontentpool.com

India's Olympic hopeful trio to train in Dubai

NEW DELHI: Three of India's top swimmers will begin two months of training in Dubai next month, sports officials said yesterday, ending an agonising wait that drove one of them to the verge of retirement ahead of next year's Tokyo Olympics.

Six Indian swimmers had achieved the lower, or B, Olympic qualification for the Tokyo Games before the COVID-19 pandemic forced them out of the pool in March. India has since allowed some sports facilities to reopen for training, but pools remain closed, prompting freestyle swimmer Viradhwal Khade to announce in June that he was considering retirement.

That now looks unlikely after the Sports Authority of India (SAI) announced Khade (50-metre freestyle), Srihari Nataraj (100-metre backstroke) and Kushagra Rawat (400-metre freestyle) will train at Dubai's Aqua Nation Swimming Academy from the first week of September.

"This decision was taken ... as swimming pools in India are not yet accessible as a safety measure due to the COVID-19 pandemic," it said in a statement. Among other B qualifiers, Sajan Prakash (200-metre butterfly) has been training in Thailand, while the 800-metre freestyle duo of Aryan Makhija and Advait Page began practice in the United States earlier this month.

"The Dubai camp is for Olympic B qualifiers who are in India and currently unable to train," Swimming Federation of India secretary-general Monal Chokshi told Reuters. "It will be a 60-day camp in Dubai, but if pools in India don't open in 60 days, SAI might extend it." — Reuters

Yankees' Cole posts 20th straight win

Bichette, Blue Jays bomb Rays with six home runs

NEW YORK: Gerrit Cole pitched seven strong innings to win his 20th straight decision and the New York Yankees remained unbeaten in games played at Yankee Stadium with a 10-3 rout of the slumping Boston Red Sox Friday night. Cole (4-0) became the sixth pitcher to win 20 consecutive decisions in baseball history and the first since Jake Arrieta did it for the Chicago Cubs from Aug. 4, 2015-May 25, 2016. The all-time record is 24 straight decisions by Hall of Famer Carl Hubbell from July 17, 1936-May 27, 1937 with the New York Giants. Cole allowed one run on four hits. He struck out eight, walked none in a 95-pitch outing. Cole's latest win helped the Yankees improve to 7-0 to start the abbreviated season at Yankee Stadium. It is the fourth time they have begun 7-0 or better in the Bronx since 1959 (also 2017, 1998 and 1987). Alex Verdugo homered and drove in two runs for the Red Sox, who lost their fifth straight and continued to struggle against the Yankees. Rafael Devers added an RBI single in the eighth.

BLUE JAYS 12, RAYS 4

Bo Bichette hit one of six Toronto home runs, a three-run tiebreaking home run in a five-run bottom of the sixth inning, and Teoscar Hernandez added two more as Toronto beat Tampa Bay in Buffalo. The homer extended Bichette's hitting streak to eight games, and extended his streak of games with a home run to four. The Blue Jays snapped the Rays' six-game winning streak. Hernandez hit a three-run homer and a solo shot for four total RBIs. Rowdy Tellez added a two-run blast, and Cavan Biggio and Randal Grichuk hit solo homers. Brandon Lowe hit a two-run homer for Tampa Bay.

PHILLIES 6, METS 5

Bryce Harper hit a walk-off RBI single in the bottom of the ninth inning to score Roman Quinn from second base as host Philadelphia defeated New York. J.T. Realmuto homered and drove in three runs while Quinn and Andrew McCutchen had two hits each for the Phillies, who snapped a three-game losing streak. Dominic Smith homered in a third consecutive game, singled and knocked in two runs while Robinson Cano hit a solo home run, singled and had two RBIs for the Mets. Phillies starter Spencer Howard lasted 3 1/3 in-

nings and left with an apparent blister on a finger of his pitching hand. In his second career start, Howard allowed seven hits and four runs, three earned.

REDS 8, PIRATES 1

Jesse Winker homered twice and right-hander Sonny Gray struck out 10, while pitching into the seventh, as Cincinnati evened its four-game home series against Pittsburgh. Nick Castellanos' three-run homer highlighted a four-run seventh inning for the Reds. Gray (4-1, 2.05 ERA) allowed a Bryan Reynolds home run in the fourth, plus four other hits with one walk in 6 2/3 innings. Winker hit a solo shot in the second and added two-run blast in the fourth. Kuhl (0-1) took the



Winker hit a solo shot

loss after giving up the two home runs, three runs and five hits with six strikeouts over five innings. The Pirates have lost 14 of their first 18 games.

NATIONALS 15, ORIOLES 3

Despite seeing starting pitcher Stephen Strasburg exit in the first inning, Washington got 5 1/3 strong innings from Erick Fedde and ended host Baltimore's six-game winning streak. Strasburg, who started last weekend's game, did the same in Friday's nightcap, but lasted only 16 pitches after a rain delay of one hour, 57 minutes at the start. After Anthony Santander homered off Strasburg in the first, Washington took over against Tommy Milone (1-2), who allowed six runs (three earned) on nine hits with two strikeouts and no walks in four innings.

BREWERS 4, CUBS 3

Christian Yelich hit a go-ahead, three-run homer



NEW YORK: Gio Urshela #29 of the New York Yankees breaks his bat swinging at a pitch from Colten Brewer #48 of the Boston Red Sox during the third inning at Yankee Stadium in the Bronx borough of New York City. — AFP

in the sixth inning, and Milwaukee held on for a win over host Chicago. The 412-foot blast by Yelich was his fifth home run of the season, which leads the team. Milwaukee bounced back from a series-opening loss one night earlier and avoided its first three-game skid of the season. Jason Kipnis, Ian Happ and Anthony Rizzo drove in one run apiece for the Cubs, whose home winning streak was snapped at seven games. Chicago lost for only the second time since July 30.

INDIANS 10, TIGERS 5

Fransil Reyes scored three runs and drove in three more, Domingo Santana hit a three-run homer, and Cleveland continued its dominance of Detroit. The Indians have defeated Detroit 18 consecutive times, dating back to last season. It's the Tigers' longest losing streak to any team in franchise history. Indians

starter Aaron Civale (2-2) gave up four runs on eight hits in six innings. Tigers starter Ivan Nova (1-1) surrendered eight runs on five hits in 3 1/3 innings as Detroit lost its third straight.

DODGERS 7, ANGELS 4

Clayton Kershaw threw seven strong innings, Cody Bellinger hit two home runs and the Dodgers beat the Angels in Anaheim, Calif. Kershaw bounced back in a big way after losing his last start against the San Francisco Giants, giving up only one hit — a solo home run to Anthony Rendon — while walking two and striking out six. Bellinger had just two home runs all season before Friday, when he went deep against Angels starter Patrick Sandoval in the sixth inning and reliever Ryan Buchter in the eighth, both two-run homers. — Reuters

Hamilton predicts 'killer' Spanish Grand Prix

BARCELONA: Lewis Hamilton said he was ready for a "killer" race in today's Spanish Grand Prix after bouncing back to top the times ahead of his team-mate Valtteri Bottas as Mercedes dominated Friday's practice for the Spanish Grand Prix. The championship leader said the searing heat during the afternoon session had been tough to endure, but was happy his car had survived without any serious problems. "I don't think I've been to Spain when it's this hot," he said.

"We're here in February and March usually, or early May. It's beautiful weather, but it's a killer in the car and it's obviously very tough on tyres as well." The six-time world champion had been second behind Bottas after the morning's opening session, but re-established his supremacy on a hot afternoon at the Circuit de Catalunya.

Hamilton clocked a best lap in one minute and 16.883 seconds to outpace Bottas by 0.287 seconds with Max Verstappen, winner of last weekend's 70th Anniversary Grand Prix at Silverstone, third for Red Bull, eight-tenths adrift of the fastest lap. In much hotter conditions than those of the morning, with an air temperature of 30 degrees Celsius and the track at almost 50, the two Mercedes enjoyed a comfortable advantage over their rivals.

'HOTTEST HERE'

"It looks like things will be very exciting with Red Bull

over the long distance," said Hamilton, referring to the race. "It will therefore be a very exciting race, I think. "It's definitely quite tough out there. It's the hottest that it has been for us here."

Despite the heat, he said he was generally satisfied. "It's been a good day - the second session was better for me. The long runs we look very close with the Red Bulls so I think it's going to be a very close race.

"The tyres aren't happy in these conditions so you're just sliding around with overheated tyres. I didn't see any blistering, but we didn't see blistering last Friday either so I really can't say too much."

Bottas, keen to regain lost ground after slipping to third behind Verstappen in the title race last Sunday, was also ambiguous about his prospects. "I didn't have a bad feeling in the car," he said.

"I struggled with a bit of under-steer at the beginning of the session, but that's normally a quick fix with the car set-up, but it was quite a lot by the end." Verstappen was similarly unconvinced that anything meaningful had been revealed on Friday. "The car was ok on one lap," said the Dutchman. "We are using all of the hardest compounds and it is manageable. We would have liked to have a softer tyre, but they're not here this weekend.

"Mercedes are very fast on one lap in qualifying, but let's see what their race pace is like on Sunday. I think it's going to be very different to last week at Silverstone."

Daniel Ricciardo was fourth for Renault ahead of Roman Grosjean of Haas who outpaced Charles Leclerc, who was sixth for Ferrari. Carlos Sainz was seventh for McLaren ahead of Sergio Perez, returning to action for Racing Point after missing two races with coronavirus. Esteban Ocon in the second Renault and Pierre Gasly of Alpha Tauri filled out the top ten. — AFP

Harlequins shock Sale and Tuilagi

LONDON: Harlequins marked the return of the English Premiership after the coronavirus lockdown with a shock 16-10 win over Sale that ruined Manu Tuilagi's debut on Friday.

The Premiership has been in hibernation for five months due to the pandemic and the restart behind closed doors at The Stoop was a predictably scrappy affair.

Sale are expected to challenge league leaders Exeter for the title following Tuilagi's arrival from Leicester, but they were outclassed by Harlequins.

Harlequins head of rugby Paul Gustard said: "Start of the second half we gave Sale a sniff and they're a brilliant team.

"For us to fight back in that next 10-minute window was crucial for us. I was really pleased with the turnaround from that."

Sale director of rugby Steve Diamond added: "We gave a silly try away and we missed a kick before half-time. "That's a 10-point turnaround and we lost by six."

Harlequins, who gave Chris Ashton his first start, were sharper and smarter throughout and piled over for the decisive try through hooker Scott Baldwin in the third quarter.

Fly-half Marcus Smith kicked three penalties

and a conversion and Quins were rarely out of control, pierced only by Byron McGuigan's try as Sale exited half-time with a purpose that then deserted them.

It was a low-quality return to action for the competition, marred by 29 penalties and resembling a pre-season game.

The rivals showed their support for the Black Lives Matter movement in different ways. Sale's players wearing white T-shirts emblazoned with "Rugby against racism" while Quins took a knee as part of a circle.

Four of the Sharks also took a knee after the clubs were given free rein to mark the fight against racism in the way they saw fit.

For all the expectations of Sale's renewed challenge for the Premiership title, it was Quins who made the brighter start and within 20 minutes they had built a lead through two Smith penalties.

Smith's third penalty extended the lead, while Sale fly-half Robert du Preez could only pull a simple chance wide of the right post.

England prop Joe Marler was reprimanded by referee Luke Pearce for his trademark sledging, the official warning "enough commentary Joe, it's winding people up", and Sale took their revenge early in the second half. An attacking line-out saw Tuilagi act as a decoy and, with acres of space created on the right, wing McGuigan completed a routine finish.

But the comeback was stopped in its tracks in the 57th minute when Baldwin crossed over, with Smith adding the conversion. — AFP