

Sports

Photo of the Day



Participant trains for Red Bull X-Alps. — Photo taken from www.redbullcontentpool.com

Kuwait resumes competitions under health guidelines

KUWAIT: Kuwait's Minister of Information and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi affirmed the importance of hosting sport events and competitions, and to hold their domestic and foreign competitions "in adherence with health preventive procedures." These procedures include no public attendance or sports fans in stadiums, in order to preserve good health to all members of the sports community, their families and society in light of the ongoing pandemic of coronavirus, the minister said in a press statement. Mutairi added that the ministerial coronavirus emergency committee had approved the precautionary measures that were agreed upon between representatives of clubs and local sports federations officials from the Public Authority for Sports in the meeting held Monday. Stressing such measures will be upheld "before, during and after the competitions, in accordance with approved guidelines setup by health authorities," Mutairi said.

The minister noted that one of the most important measures is "seeking to carry out vaccinations for the virus to all players, referees and officials in charge of matches, as well as conducting continuous (PCR) checks for them." The minister also referred to "permanently banning the presence of any public fans," calling on federations and clubs to "adhere to these measures that come in the interest of everyone." Mutairi praised all clubs for meeting the Cabinet's call to halt sports activity and friendly matches, which was issued on February 3 to combat the increasing spread of this epidemic in the country, saying "this mechanism and procedures will provide an opportunity for a safe return to sports activity." The minister expressed hopes that "these measures will enable youths to safely carry out their favorite activities, especially since many national teams in a number of games are awaiting important international participation." — KUNA

Clarkson on song as Jazz down Sixers, Clippers, Nets roll on

Wizards edge Rockets in Wall's return to Washington

LOS ANGELES: Jordan Clarkson erupted for 40 points off the bench as the Utah Jazz overpowered the Philadelphia 76ers 134-123 in the NBA's clash of the conference leaders on Monday. Clarkson produced a dazzling display of long-range shooting, making eight of 13 attempts from beyond the arc as Utah overturned an early double-digit deficit to score a convincing win at Salt Lake City's Vivint Arena.

Utah talisman Donovan Mitchell finished with 24 points while Australian veteran Joe Ingles delivered 20. Sixers star Ben Simmons saw a record-breaking 42-point display — the highest ever tally by an Australian player in an NBA game — end in defeat. Simmons was in superb shooting form, making 12-of-13 free throws while supplying 12 assists. Team-mate Tobias Harris had 36 points with 10 rebounds.

But the night belonged to Clarkson, whose high-scoring cameo saw the Jazz stretch their lead at the top of the Western Conference to 23-5, and extended the team's unbeaten streak to eight games. "It feels good," Clarkson said. "The biggest thing is we just got another win. We're trying to keep it going, trying to keep getting better every time we step on the floor. That's what it's about at the end of the day."

Philadelphia, who lead the Eastern Conference at 18-10, got off to a fast start, with Harris's floating jump shot putting the visitors 14 points clear at 24-10 midway through the first. Utah gradually chipped away at the lead, however, with Ingles cut-

ting the deficit to just seven points at the end of the first quarter. The Australian then got Utah to within one with a three-pointer early in the second period to make it 46-45.

Utah finally moved into the lead just before half-time, turning around six points clear at the break. Another Mitchell three-pointer put Utah 86-74 ahead in the third quarter, and they maintained a 12-point lead heading into the final period with the score at 106-94. Clarkson brought up his 40-point tally with a three-pointer to put Utah 121-112 ahead before the hosts closed out a decisive win.

Clippers, Nets win

In Los Angeles, a depleted Clippers side missing Kawhi Leonard and Paul George proved too strong for the Miami Heat in a 125-118 win at the Staples Center. Marcus Morris shouldered the scoring burden for the Clippers with 32 points, while Ivica Zubac had 22 off the bench. The Clippers improved to 21-8 to remain firmly on the heels of Utah at the top of the West. Jimmy Butler (30 points), Bam Adebayo (27) and Tyler Herro (27) led the Miami scoring.

In Sacramento, Kyrie Irving scored 40 points as Brooklyn extended their winning run to three games in a 136-125 win over the Kings. It was a second straight road victory for the Nets, who had beaten Golden State in their last outing on Saturday. James Harden added 29 points for Brooklyn, who improved to 17-12 and remain third in the Eastern Conference. In San Francisco, Steph Curry's sparkling form for



WASHINGTON: John Wall #1 of the Houston Rockets dunks the ball against the Washington Wizards on Monday at Capital One Arena in Washington, DC. — AFP

Golden State continued with 36 points, two rebounds and six assists in a 129-98 blowout for the Warriors over the Cleveland Cavaliers.

Elsewhere Monday, John Wall made a high-scoring return to former club Washington but finished on the losing side as the Wizards defeated the Houston Rockets 131-119. Wall, who was traded by

the Wizards in December as part of the deal that sent Russell Westbrook in the opposite direction, finished with 29 points and 11 assists. But Wall was outgunned by former team-mate Bradley Beal, who poured in 37 points while Westbrook added a triple double of 16 points, 13 rebounds and 15 assists for the visitors. — AFP

Ricciardo under pressure to deliver for McLaren, says Norris

LONDON: Lando Norris has warned his new McLaren team-mate Daniel Ricciardo he will be under pressure to deliver this season. British driver Norris will race alongside seven-time Grand Prix winner Ricciardo following the Australian's move from Renault. Ricciardo, 31, agreed a three-year contract with McLaren as the British team aim to challenge the sport's superpowers. In his opening two seasons, Norris was evenly matched with team-mate Carlos Sainz. Following the Spaniard's switch to Ferrari in place of four-time world champion Sebastian Vettel, the 21-year-old believes he can keep up with Ricciardo.

"I don't think the arrival of Daniel will make it any harder for me," said Norris as McLaren became the first team to launch their 2021 car on Monday. "I worked with Carlos who is an extremely good driver and there are things Carlos is going to be better at than Daniel and vice-versa. I don't believe Daniel is a big step above anything that Carlos has achieved, and there is more pressure on him because he has been in Formula One for longer and he has to come in and perform very well. It is harder for someone to go up against a much younger driver than it is for a younger driver going up against someone with more experience. I am in that earlier phase of my career but I still need to perform very well, and there are no



WOKING: A handout photo released on Monday by McLaren shows McLaren's British driver Lando Norris (right) and Australian driver Daniel Ricciardo posing by the new McLaren Formula 1 car MCL35M in Woking, southwest of London. — AFP

excuses for me anymore."

Ricciardo is keen to get back on track after recording just two top-three finishes at Renault following his surprise decision to quit Red Bull. "I feel like this team has a bunch of momentum and there is good stability," he said. "When I first talked to McLaren in 2018 there were still quite a few moving parts. The results were not there on track, and they were trying to figure out their own structure. They have established that now and I am fitting into the puzzle as opposed to putting it all together."

Norris helped McLaren to third in last season's constructors' championship, their best result since Lewis Hamilton left for Mercedes at the end of 2012. He became the youngest British driver to finish on the podium after taking third at the opening round in Austria last year. Now he wants to establish himself as McLaren's number one driver, regardless of Ricciardo's arrival. "I have more responsibility on me now than the past few years to lead the team," Norris said. "It is a big opportunity for me to take up that lead and I will work very hard on doing that." — AFP

Ashwin stars as India thrash England to level Test series

CHENNAI: India captain Virat Kohli said yesterday his side showed more "grit" and "determination" to thrash England in the second Test, playing down complaints about the difficult pitch. With local hero Ravichandran Ashwin claiming eight wickets in the match and scoring 106 in the second innings, India completed a 317-run victory inside four days in Chennai.

Left-arm spinner Axar Patel claimed a five-wicket haul on his Test debut as England were out for 164 while chasing an unlikely 482 on day four. Some said the Chennai pitch, which crumbled from nearly the first day, was not fit for a Test. But England made no public complaint and Kohli rejected the criticism and said his side played a "perfect game".

"I think our application with the bat was outstanding," said the India captain. "The conditions were challenging for both sides but we showed more application and grit and determination to battle it out. We didn't panic out there looking at the hard turn and bounce on that pitch." Kohli highlighted that India scored 600 runs over two innings despite the conditions, and winning the toss made no difference. "So if you put up that kind of batting performance and you string in those important batting partnerships then we know that our bowlers are going to do the job."

England captain Joe Root conceded that his side were "outplayed in all three departments this week" and had to learn quickly before the third Test in Ahmedabad. But he added: "I would say it was a challenging wicket. I do think that it was an important loss to win." England, he said, now have to be "honest" and learn quickly to adapt to conditions in India. England, struggling since the opening day, kept losing wickets after resuming on 53-3 on day four. Root departed for 33 soon after lunch, falling to Patel. Left-arm wrist spinner Kuldeep Yadav joined in to finish off the innings, taking Moeen Ali after he smashed 43 off 18 balls. — AFP