

Sports

French goalie claims her place among men on the ice

Montpellier native hopes to help women's team reach Olympics

PARIS: Charlotte Cagigos is aiming high, hoping to help the French women's ice hockey team reach the Olympics. For now that means learning a new game as the only female goaltender training with a professional French squad.

Having laced up her first skates at the age of three, the native of sunny Mediterranean city Montpellier — not exactly an ice hockey bastion — knows full well what's riding on her efforts, months away from Beijing 2022. "It's good for girls to see that you need to fight hard, and that hockey isn't just a sport for boys," said Cagigos, a 21-year-old now playing for the Caen Drakkars in the city of Caen in Normandy, northern France.

As the staccato of blades echoes off the ice, she stands guard in front of her goal during practice, taking hits from teammates who initially held back on their shots. "At first when you see a woman in the goal you say, 'We won't strike so hard, we'll be careful,'" said her teammate Emmanuel Alvarez. "But it's exactly the opposite — we want to score and we hit the same as with any goalie."

Cagigos sought a club after graduating from high school, but few have women's teams, and those that do often fill them with players of varying skills. So the French ice hockey federation allows women under 18 to skate on men's teams. For female goalies, there's no age limit, since the post is considered less exposed to the contacts that can be brutal elsewhere on the ice. But Cagigos is one of just a handful who have played high-level hockey with men since the 1980s.

'Solid work ethic'

Cagigos joined the Drakkars at 17 and now trains with its semi-pro Division 1 squad, just below the Magnus champions league, though so far she hasn't yet made its game roster. For regular season matches, which began Saturday, she is still on the U20 junior side or a reserve in Division 3.

But since playing her first — friendly — pro game in January, Cagigos has captured national attention, and she has even been profiled by Canadian television. She's not yet fully a pro, getting

“ She brings competitive spirit, solid work ethic ”

paid bonuses only for matches played, but the club's sponsors help cover the cost of the thousands of euros' worth of gloves, pads and helmet.

Between practices, she is also now studying for a master's degree in education, aiming to become a teacher. "She brings a competitive spirit and a solid work ethic. And above all she fights hard every day in front of her cage," says Drakkar coach Luc Chauvel.



CAEN: French goaltender Charlotte Cagigos, 21-year-old, gets ready before participating on a rink in a training session in Caen, northwestern France, on September 28, 2021. — AFP

She fits in so well "there are times I forget there's a young lady with us," he adds — which also means he has to remember to plan on a separate locker room for Cagigos to suit up. "That's the only down-

side to playing with the boys: I miss the locker room camaraderie a little bit," she says. "It's a small inconvenience compared with everything that I'm now able to experience." — AFP

Chargers' Herbert throws three TDs to hand Raiders first loss

LOS ANGELES: Justin Herbert threw three touchdowns and running back Austin Ekeler rushed for 117 yards as the Los Angeles Chargers handed the Las Vegas Raiders their first loss of the NFL season with a 28-14 win on Monday.

Herbert set the NFL rookie record of 31 touchdown passes last season and he has now tossed seven in his last two games including the three over the Raiders in the battle of AFC West rivals who are showing signs of being serious playoff contenders.

Derek Carr, who came into the game as the league's leader in passing yards, threw two touchdowns for the Raiders, who dropped to 3-1 on the season, leaving the Arizona Cardinals as the only unbeaten team in the NFL.

Ekeler ran 11 yards for a touchdown in the fourth quarter and connected with Herbert on a 14-yard touchdown to give the Chargers a 21-0 lead with less than a minute to go in the first half. "We told everyone we got to believe in each other and we executed well and we played well," said Herbert. "We had a great plan all week."

The start of the game was delayed due to thunderstorms in the Los Angeles area. Even though they were playing at home at the new state-of-the-art SoFi Stadium, it must have felt like a road game for the Chargers as their fans were heavily outnumbered by Raider supporters. "It is just the way we want it," said Herbert, adding they fed off the energy of the crowd.

Herbert completed 25 of 38 passes for 222 yards and Ekeler had 145 scrimmage yards (117 rushing



INGLEWOOD: Running back Austin Ekeler #30 of the Los Angeles Chargers celebrates his touchdown against the Las Vegas Raiders during the fourth quarter at SoFi Stadium on Monday in Inglewood, California. — AFP

and 28 receiving) as the Chargers used an explosive first half to gain the upper hand early. Quarterback Carr connected on 21 of 34 passes for 196 yards but had an interception in the loss. Hunter Renfrow and Darren Waller caught touchdown passes for the Raiders, who were held scoreless in three of the four quarters.

"Your feelings are going to get hurt in this league sometimes and certainly ours are hurting

right now," said Raiders coach Jon Gruden. "They converted on critical plays and on fourth downs. They went all out tonight and they are going to go places this year. They are a force to be dealt with."

Monday's outcome resulted in a three-way tie for first place in the AFC West between the Chargers, Raiders, and Denver Broncos, who are all 3-1. The 2019 Super Bowl winning Kansas City Chiefs are at 2-2. — AFP

Wallace only second black driver to win NASCAR Cup race

MIAMI: Bubba Wallace became only the second black driver to win a race in NASCAR's Cup series championship after speeding to victory in the rain-shortened YellaWood 500 at Talladega Superspeedway. Wallace, who last year led successful calls for displays of the Confederate flag to be barred at NASCAR events following the murder of George Floyd, led for five of the 117 laps in the race in Alabama.

When a second downpour forced a further suspension in racing, the race was stopped with 71 laps still to run, handing victory to Wallace and his 23XI Racing team, which is owned by NBA great Michael Jordan and Denny Hamlin.

Wallace is the first Black driver to win in NASCAR's Cup series since Hall of Famer Wendell Scott sped to victory in a race in Jacksonville, Florida on December 1, 1963. The 27-year-old Wallace joined 23XI last year after leaving Richard Petty Motorsports.

Wallace regularly spoke out against racism following George Floyd's killing in Minneapolis, and in June last year called on NASCAR chiefs to ban the Confederate flag from racetracks used on the circuit. The flag has long been a staple at NASCAR tracks in the sport's southern US heartlands, but it remains a symbol of slavery and racism for many. NASCAR later banned displays of the flag at its races.

Wallace was involved in controversy in June last year after his team reported that a noose had been found hanging in the team garage at Talladega Superspeedway. A subsequent investigation by the FBI determined Wallace had not been the victim of a hate crime and that the noose was a pull-down rope on a garage door that had been there since 2019. — AFP



TALLADEGA: Bubba Wallace, driver of the #23 McDonald's Toyota, celebrates in the Ruoff Mortgage victory lane after winning the rain-shortened NASCAR Cup Series YellaWood 500 at Talladega Superspeedway on Monday in Talladega, Alabama. — AFP

Rojas out as Mets manager after playoff bid falls short



ATLANTA: Luis Rojas #19 of the New York Mets prior to the game against the Atlanta Braves at Truist Park on Friday in Atlanta, Georgia. — AFP

NEW YORK: The New York Mets ended Luis Rojas's reign as manager on Monday after the team's latest bid to return to the playoffs ended in disappointment. A statement from the Mets said the team had declined the option to retain Rojas for the 2022 season.

The team said the fate of remaining coaching staff would be decided in the "next several days". The statement said Rojas had been offered the chance to remain with the organization in a "yet to be determined capacity".

"The entire Mets organization is grateful for the dedication and devotion that Luis has exhibited over the last two seasons as manager," Mets president Sandy Alderson said. "He has shown a great commitment to the Mets over many years in multiple capacities. These decisions are never easy, but we feel a change is needed at this time."

The decision comes after the Mets finished third in the National League East with a record of 77-85. The team led the division in early August but imploded during a 6-18 run that effectively scuppered their bid to reach the playoffs.

"We live in a results-oriented business, and I am deeply disappointed for our staff and fans that we didn't reach our goals this season," Rojas said in a statement. The Mets have not reached the postseason since advancing to the wild card game in 2016, where they were beaten by the San Francisco Giants. — AFP

KSF honors Olympic shooters

By Abdellatif Sharara

KUWAIT: Under the patronage and presence of Honorary President of Asian Shooting Confederation (ASC) and Kuwait Shooting Federation (KSF) Sheikh Salman Sabah Al-Salem Al-Humoud Al-Sabah, Kuwait Shooting Federation held an honoring ceremony for shooters who participated in the Tokyo 2020 Olympics, during which shooter Abdullah Al-Rashidi added a new achievement for Kuwait shooting by winning the skeet bronze medal.

Sheikh Salman said the achievements made in Tokyo gives shooters the night to be honored after raising Kuwait's flag high at such a major event, especially during the pandemic it came with the presence of Coronavirus, yet Kuwait shooters were up to the responsibility they had on their shoulders.

Sheikh Salman thanked the political leadership as well as Information Minister and State Minister for Youth Affairs Abdelrahman Al-Mutairi, Director General of Public Authority for Sport Humoud Fulaiteh and other officials for their support. He also thanked the President of Kuwait and Arab Shooting Federation Duaij Al-Otaibi as well as the technical and administrative departments for their efforts that resulted in many achievements regionally and internationally, in addition to the Olympics.

Meanwhile, Al-Otaibi thanked the political leadership and PAS for their continued support, which reflected positively on all achievements and ensured the success of the entire organization. Otaibi appreciated the initiative of Sheikh Salman, who took the sport of shooting from a hobby to competing with well-established organizations around the world and bagging achievements at all levels.

He said Sheikh Salman resigned from his post at KSF in 2013 after becoming a minister, but remained close to shooting and supported the sport. Otaibi said the ambition for achievements will continue, adding that shooters who participated at the Tokyo Olympics succeeded in their mission and had very high scores. The results proved they are among the elite, despite the difficulties that preceded preparations for the event and the death



KUWAIT: Participants pose for a group photo during a ceremony organized by Kuwait Shooting Federation to honor shooters who took part in the Tokyo 2020 Olympics.

of the team coaches Peter Malik and Daniel Sioni. Otaibi concluded that Kuwaiti shooting is able to face chal-

lenges, and Kuwait shooters will be able to make more achievements, most importantly at the 2024 Paris Olympics.