

Guardiola calls for Man City cool heads to see off PSG

Pep Guardiola aims to lead Manchester City to their first ever Champions League final

● Man City have a 2-1 lead over PSG from the first leg of the semi-final

AFP | London

Pep Guardiola yesterday called on his Manchester City players to control their emotions if they are to reach a first ever Champions League final as they take a 2-1 lead into the second leg of their semi-final against Paris Saint-Germain.

City came from behind with a stunning second-half performance in the French capital last week to take a giant step towards a goal they have been chasing ever since Sheikh Mansour's takeover in 2008 transformed the club's fortunes.

Guardiola has won the Champions League twice as a coach when in charge of Barcelona, but has failed to do so in the past 10 years as he has suffered numerous agonising exits from Europe's premier club competition as Barca, Bayern Munich and City boss.

City moved to the brink of sealing a third Premier League title in four years at the weekend and Guardiola urged his side to maintain the same focus they have all season to see off PSG on Tuesday.

"The second-leg of semi-fi-



Manchester City's manager Pep Guardiola gives his instructions (R) next to PSG's head coach Mauricio Pochettino (file photo)

nal always the toughest game, more than the final. We have to control our emotions to do exactly what we have to do," said Guardiola at his pre-match press conference.

"You cannot play 90 minutes like we played in the second half (in Paris). I would love to but it won't happen.

"You have to understand it will be a big battle and we are going to suffer. They have to visualise that we are going to do it.

"What we have to do is not different to what we have done over the last seven months. Go out and play our game and win."

PSG are also dreaming of winning the Champions League for the first time, but if they are to

progress to the final for a second consecutive season, they will need to score at least twice at the Etihad.

City have not conceded more than once in a Champions League game all season as the centre-back partnership of Ruben Dias and John Stones has eradicated the sort of defensive lapses that have cost Guardiola's men in previous years in this competition.

Stones admitted the English champions-elect have to remain wary of the "world class" talents of PSG star duo Kylian Mbappe and Neymar, but said City are confident of finally getting to the final.

"I think (we are) quietly confident, we have to be. It is a big

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occasion for us as players and as a club, a chance to get into a Champions League final," said Stones.

"We have got to go into it where we left off. We are really confident and excited for the challenge ahead."

Mbappe is an injury doubt after sitting out Saturday's 2-1 win over Lens due to a calf strain.

The French World Cup winner has travelled to Manchester with the rest of the PSG squad and Guardiola dismissed any suggestion he won't be available.

Maher to face Gonzalez at BRAVE CF 51



TDT | Manama

BRAVE Combat Federation, the only truly global mixed martial arts promotion in the world for hosting live events in 20+ countries, has just announced that Giannis Bachar of Greece has withdrawn from his three-round Super Welterweight bout against hometown hero Denis Maher in the co-headliner of BRAVE CF 51: The Future Is Here. The historic card is set to take place at the state-of-the-art Falcon Club Arena in Minsk, Belarus on June 4th.

Stepping in for Bachar is Sweden's Fernando Gonzalez, a submission specialist who owns a 9-2 professional record with five victories by way of tapout. It will be the 29-year-old veteran's debut on the sport's global stage after plying his trade in the European circuit for almost a decade. A product of the world-renowned Allstars Training Center, he trains with a handful of outstanding

athletes, including Alexander "The Mauler" Gustafsson, Ilir "The Sledgehammer" Latifi and former BRAVE CF standout Khamzat "Borz" Chimaev.

Welcoming Gonzalez in BRAVE CF is fellow debutant Denis Maher, an undefeated prospect from Belarus who has a perfect 7-0 slate with four wins by submission and two via knockout. The Minsk-based phenom is coming off a spectacular 2020, making quick work of his first assignment last year courtesy of a first-round submission and then following it up with a second-round stoppage victory.

Maher and Gonzalez are the latest additions to the organization's talent-filled Super Welterweight division that was recently beefed up with the signings of Axel Sola, Kamal Magomedov, Andreas Stahl, Nursulton Ruziboev, Luis Felipe Dias, and Vadim Kutsyi, who will also be in action on June 4th.

Alora eyes second straight Olympic stint

TDT | Manila

Kirstie Elaine Alora will join three other taekwondo teammates in their ambitious bids to make it to the Tokyo Olympics.

Alora has already made his appearance in the Summer Games in 2016 in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, but fellow national team members Pauline Lopez, Kurt Barbosa and Arven Alcantara have never made it yet to the prestigious quadrennial event.

The four athletes have been training as sparring partners ever since they entered a bubble camp in Calamba, Laguna since February.

All of them will be seeing action in the final Asian qualifiers, set to be held on May 14 and 15 in Amman, Jordan. To make it to the Olympics, they just have to make it to the top 2 in the tournament. There will be no finals there.

Before reaching the Rio Olympics, Alora bagged the silver medal at the Asian Olympic Qualifying Tournament in the middleweight division.

During the Olympiad, she reached the Round of 16 before she was defeated by Maria Espinoza of Mexico.

Alora has kept herself in great shape with a training partner in fellow Olympic aspirant Arven Alcantara during the prolonged lockdown last year.

The 31-year-old Alora is in a favorable position to secure



Alora hopes to wave the Philippine flag again in Tokyo

“We’ve been trying our very best for us to be ready in time for the qualifiers. I became more fit during the quarantine period because I was able to watch my diet and focus more on what I want to achieve”

KIRSTIE ELAINE ALORA

one of two available continental spots for the privilege to join Team Philippines in Tokyo for the global Summer Games on July 23-Aug. 8.

"We've been trying our very best for us to be ready in time for the qualifiers. I became more fit during the quarantine period because I was able to watch my diet and focus more on what I want to achieve," she

said.

The three-time SEA Games champion felt there was still an unfinished business when she decided to have another crack at the Olympics.

"I could have retired had I won the gold medal in the SEA Games. But when I got a silver, I thought that there should be another chance," said Alora. "The coming qualifying will be a make or break campaign for me."

Lopez, an Asian champion, will try to make the cut to the Olympiad in the women's 57 kgs. Four years ago, she missed the cut for the 2016 Summer Olympics after losing her match against Phannapa Harnsujin of Thailand at the 2016 Asian Taekwondo Olympic Qualification.

Barbosa and Alcantara, both Southeast Asian Games gold medalists, are in their first Olympic qualifying stints.

Retirement not an option for Fodayang

TDT | Manila

Once again, Filipino veteran mixed martial arts (MMA) fighter Eduard "The Landslide" Fodayang bowed to Japanese legend Shinya Aoki in their third ONE Championship face-off in Singapore.

The 36-year-old Team Lakay stalwart lost via submission in the 4:20 mark of the first round during one of the undercards of ONE on TNT IV in Singapore.

It was the second straight victory for Aoki over Fodayang, taking a 2-1 lead in their classic trilogy.

The sorry defeat was the third straight for Fodayang in ONE and dropped him to 11 losses in his pro career as opposed to 22 wins.

But despite a plummeting career, Fodayang said retirement is not in his immediate plans for now and, in fact, he is still looking for two more showdowns with Aoki.

And he will be preparing harder for it.

"Retirement? It is just there, but not now. I still have a lot of things to learn so I'm not giving up yet," said Fodayang.

"Along the way, I'm still hoping to have Game 5. We will avenge our loss."

Fodayang's Team Lakay also supported his decision not call it a day yet, saying the defeat was a continuation of the fighter's growth.

"Positively, not the end for Eduard Fodayang," the team



Fodayang, centre, during his fight against Aoki

“Retirement? It is just there, but not now. I still have a lot of things to learn so I’m not giving up yet. Along the way, I’m still hoping to have Game 5. We will avenge our loss”

EDUARD FODAYANG

wrote on its official Facebook page.

Adding, "The match was not the end for Eduard, but an experience. There's still a vision for the future. We learn, we continue for another. There's still a lot of competition for the face of Philippines' MMA... He will rise back again soon!"

After the bout, Aoki admitted he is also open to the possibility of fighting the Filipino again.

"Five years ago, I lost to Eduard Fodayang. Today, I got the win. If I have the chance, I would like to have a fight with him again," added Aoki.

Back in 2019, Aoki also beat Fodayang in 2:16 of the first round via an arm triangle choke for a win by technical submission.

He said Aoki deserves the win after he was able to execute his game plan perfectly.

"He really put his words in action. And he really dominated," added Fodayang.

It was Aoki's fourth consecutive win since losing his lightweight crown to Christian Lee in 2019.

Aoki was dominant against his familiar foe right at the onset.

Fodayang tried hard in the early goings to avoid going to the ground, the strong suit of the Japanese, but eventually succumbed to the pressure.