

# Murray wants assurance on quarantine issues before US Open

Andy Murray said he is willing to take the travel "risk" as he missed playing in big events

AFP | London

Players need assurance that they would not face mandatory quarantine upon returning to Europe from the US Open before travelling to New York amid the COVID-19 pandemic, former world number one Andy Murray has said.

Organisers United States Tennis Association (USTA) will set up a strict bio-security 'bubble' to minimise the risk of contracting the novel coronavirus during the Grand Slam, which will be played from Aug. 31-Sept. 13.

The Western & Southern Open, which was relocated from Cincinnati this year because of COVID-19, will also be held in New York from Aug. 20-28 and will serve as a tune-up for the hardcourt Grand Slam.

Mandatory quarantine would rule out players' participation in other ATP and WTA claycourt events scheduled in Europe before the French Open from the end of September.



Andy Murray hits a return during a match (file photo)

The two major claycourt events in the leadup to Roland Garros are in Madrid (Sept. 13-20) and Rome (Sept. 20-27).

While Spain does not require mandatory quarantine, Italy would need travellers to quarantine for 14 days if coming from the US. The USTA has said the organisers are working with relevant authorities to resolve issues.

"My understanding is that it would be sorted before we go to

America. But things can change in the next 10 to 12 days," Murray told British media.

"Hopefully before we leave, the players will have the assurances that, when they come back from America, they won't have to quarantine for two weeks.

"If that is the case, and if you do well in the US Open, you can't just arrive on the Sunday before the French Open starts on the Monday. That's not going to work."

Unites States has over 4.68 million confirmed cases of COVID-19 with more than 155,000 deaths.

Murray, a three-times Grand Slam winner, has not played competitively since November due to hip problems but took part in some exhibition events recently with the professional circuit shut.

The 33-year-old said he is willing to take the travel "risk" as he missed playing in big events.

"The situation I've been in the last few years, I've not had opportunity to play in many Slams. I don't know how many I'll have left," Murray said.

"So, while I'm feeling relatively decent ... obviously there is a risk there, but I want to try and play in them and enjoy the biggest events again."

German Zverev yet to decide on playing US Open



Alexander Zverev

Reuters | Berlin

World number seven Alexander Zverev has said he is still unsure about travelling to New York amid the COVID-19 pandemic to play in the US Open.

Zverev, who reached his maiden Grand Slam semi-final at the Australian Open this year, told the Tennis Majors website he was undecided.

"I will see because the situation right now in the US is not that great so I don't know what we will decide with my team," the 23-year-old added.

"I want to play tournaments, but I think the US right now is a little bit of a funny place."

Zverev faced criticism after a video appeared to show him dancing in a crowded club at the end of June, soon after he said he would self-isolate after playing in Novak Djokovic's Adria Tour event, where numerous players tested positive for COVID-19.



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Mercedes deserved to win and no regrets, says Verstappen



Max Verstappen of Red Bull Racing climbs out of his car in parc ferme

AFP | London

Max Verstappen said Mercedes deserved to win Sunday's British Grand Prix and he had no regrets about a late pitstop that brought him a point for fastest lap but may have cost him victory.

The Red Bull driver was in third place with Mercedes drivers Lewis Hamilton and Valtteri Bottas seemingly heading for a comfortable one-two when he decided to go for the fastest lap bonus point on fresh tyres.

Bottas then suffered a puncture on the penultimate lap that dropped him to 11th while championship leader Hamilton hung on to win after his front left tyre went on the last lap.

Verstappen was too far behind to make up the distance, closing from 31 seconds to five at the finish.

"I know everyone is asking whether we should not have

pitstop for the soft tyre because we could have won but could have, would have, should have. You can always ask these questions with hindsight," said the Dutch 22-year-old, who finished second.

"I don't regret anything and I believe we made the right decision to pit for fastest lap at the end. We did the right thing and who knows if I would also have got a puncture.

"At the end of the day Mercedes deserved to win as they were faster than us, some people are saying Lewis was lucky but he was actually unlucky to get the puncture in the first place and so was Bottas."

Until the punctures, Verstappen's afternoon had been low on excitement.

So lonely was his race behind the two Mercedes that he reversed roles for fun and reminded his race engineer to remember to stay hydrated.

"Other than that I was just counting sheep," he said.

## 'Didn't think I'd make it': Hamilton's 'heart-stopping' British GP puncture

AFP | London

Lewis Hamilton said he feared he may not have made it home when a last lap puncture almost derailed his charge to a record seventh British Grand Prix victory on Sunday.

"I didn't think I would make it round the last two corners," admitted the world champion.

The front left tyre of his Mercedes had delaminated and deflated on his final lap, leaving the six-time world champion to nurse his car to the finish as second-placed Max Verstappen hunted him down.

"I just can't believe it," said the championship leader.

"It was heart-stopping. I backed off and stayed chilled and was so glad it happened on the straight - not on a high-speed corner like Copse. That would have been a disaster."

Hamilton claimed a record seventh home win - passing Alain Prost's total of six home wins in France - to increase his career total to 87, four short of Michael Schumacher's record of 91.

He also passed Ayrton Senna's record of most races led from start to finish with his 20th lights-to-flag victory, but he conceded it was a race finish like nothing he had previously experienced.

"Up until that last lap everything was relatively smooth-sailing," said Hamilton. "(Teammate) Valtteri (Bottas)



Lewis Hamilton inspects his punctured tyre

was really pushing incredibly hard, I was doing some management of the tyres. Then, when I heard his went, I looked at mine and it seemed fine.

"In the last few laps, I started to back off and then on the last lap it deflated. That was a real heart in the mouth moment.

"You could see it falling off the rim. From then, I was just managing it and I was just praying to get round and not be too slow."

'Survival instincts took over'

"I have definitely never experienced anything like that on



**It was heart-stopping. I backed off and stayed chilled and was so glad it happened on the straight - not on a high-speed corner like Copse. That would have been a disaster**

LEWIS HAMILTON

the last lap and my heart nearly stopped.

"I could hear him (Verstap-

pen) catching me. It was 30 seconds, 20, 19, 15, 10 and then seven. A horrible feeling. I thought he would catch me on the line, but thankfully I got it home.

"I had to stay cool. I had no choice. My survival instincts took over."

Reminded that the weather forecast for next weekend's 70th Anniversary Grand Prix, at the same circuit, is for higher temperatures and, on softer tyres, more wear problems, Hamilton said he was not intending to worry.

"If it's hotter and worse, it's not for me to stress about now."