

Hamilton welcomes Verstappen title fight

Hamilton is hoping for a title tussle with Verstappen as Red Bull rise to the challenge

● **Hamilton has a 30-point advantage over Verstappen in drivers' standings**

AFP | London

Lewis Hamilton welcomes the prospect of a Formula One title battle with Max Verstappen following the Dutchman's dramatic victory in Sunday's torrid 70th Anniversary Grand Prix at Silverstone.

Defending champion and current leader Hamilton, who has a 30-point advantage at the top of the drivers' standings, praised Verstappen and his Red Bull team for inflicting a first defeat on Mercedes in five races this year.

"It's great that Max won," said Hamilton, speaking in the aftermath of his record-equalling 155th podium finish, in second place.

"As I've said before I want to have races and a challenge. Obviously, the Red Bull seems to be quite close to us in race conditions, but that's a good thing and it will be interesting to see their progression through the rest of the year.

"I definitely will not overlook them. We will keep a close eye on them. It's not going to be easy by any means."



Mercedes' Lewis Hamilton (R) sprays champagne at Red Bull's Max Verstappen on the podium

Hamilton, who shares the podiums record with seven-time world champion Michael Schumacher, is in pursuit of his own seventh drivers' title this year and also has the German's unrivalled haul of 91 GP wins in his sights.

'Difficult day' for Mercedes

However in sweltering conditions on Sunday, Red Bull had not only a superior strategy -- by choosing to start Verstappen on hard-compound tyres -- but also a superior level of management of tyre wear, which appears to have become a weakness of Mercedes' otherwise flawless car this year.

Hamilton had only won the



British GP at the same track a week earlier after surviving a last-lap puncture as Verstappen closed in.

Mercedes chief Toto Wolff conceded his team had failed to deliver after starting with Valtteri Bottas on pole and Hamil-

ton second in their 67th front row lockout.

Verstappen started fourth and won by 11 seconds, a luxury that afforded him several light-hearted quips on his way to victory and a poor sign for Mercedes heading into the weekend's Spanish GP in Barcelona.

"It was a difficult day in the office," admitted Wolff. "We have a handful of days to find out what exactly caused our issues today, come up with solutions, test them in Barcelona and then hopefully have a better race on Sunday.

"It will be challenging, but we've had these days in the past and came out stronger and I am

Atletico resume training as rest of squad test negative for Covid-19



Atletico Madrid's Uruguayan defender Jose Gimenez (R) and teammates during a training session (file photo)

AFP | Madrid

Atletico Madrid's fears of further disruption to their trip to the Champions League 'Final Eight' tournament in Lisbon have been eased after the rest of the squad tested negative for COVID-19, following two positives the previous day.

The club's morning training session was postponed due to the positive cases and their plans to travel to Lisbon were put on hold, but the club said in a statement they would have one final session before flying out on Tuesday, a day later than planned.

The statement revealed that the two players to test positive were forward Angel Correa and injured defender Sime Vrsaljko, who will miss the trip and were isolating at home, adding that the pair were both asymptomatic.

Atletico, who are bidding to win the competition for the first time after falling in the 2014 and 2016 finals, face German side RB Leipzig on Thursday in the quarter-finals, hoping to set up a last-four meeting with Paris St Germain or Atalanta.

"The first team squad and coaching staff underwent COV-



Atletico Madrid are bidding to win the Champions League for the first time after falling in the 2014 and 2016 finals

ID-19 tests on Sunday and they all came back negative, after two positive tests were registered following the previous tests on Saturday," said Atletico's statement.

"In keeping with health protocols, those who share a home with the two players who tested positive also received tests, which came back negative.

"The club's medical services have been authorised by the two players to reveal their identity in order to end speculation."

Atletico did not register any positive cases for the virus when La Liga re-started in June after a three-month hiatus due to the pandemic as the top-flight was successfully completed without any major incidents.

BRAVE CF 39 fighters available for online Media Day via Zoom

TDI | Manama

BRAVE Combat Federation will host its third Swedish event in as many weeks, this Saturday, as BRAVE CF 39 takes place once again in Stockholm.

All fighters from the main card will be available on Wednesday, for Zoom Interviews on Media Day. Reporters will be able to speak to the fighters ahead of yet another huge fight card hosted in association with Bulldog Fight Nights.

In the main event, Welterweight contender Tahar Hadbi returns to action against Giannis Bachar, from Greece.

Also set for fight night is the debut of Middleweight Andreas Gustafsson, who takes on Miro Jurkovic in the night's co-feature. Brazilians Rafael Macedo and Felipe Lima are also on deck as they fight Tobias Harila and Farbod Irannejad, respectively.

Finally, Davide Gregorio La Torre will represent Italy against fellow debutant Sahil Siraj, who was supposed to fight at BRAVE CF 36 but was forced to postpone his debut due to COVID-19 travel restrictions.



BRAVE CF 39 Fight Card

Welterweight: Tahar Hadbi vs Giannis Basar
Middleweight: Andreas Gustafsson vs Miro Jurkovic
Lightweight: Rafael Macedo vs Tobias Harila
Catchweight (64 kg): Felipe Lima vs Farbod Irannejad
Lightweight: Sahil Siraj vs Davide La Torre

Jesus says City stronger for past Champions League disappointments

AFP | London

Manchester City striker Gabriel Jesus says he can imagine his hands round the Champions League trophy and he and his team-mates are stronger for previous disappointments in the competition coveted by their Abu Dhabi owners above all others.

The 23-year-old Brazilian had a standout performance in Friday's 2-1 win over 13-time European champions Real Madrid that earned a place in the quarter-finals.

Jesus's starring role eased concerns at the likely absence of injured record goalscorer Sergio Agueiro for Saturday's quarter-final in Lisbon.

Guardiola -- who has not lifted the Champions League since his second success with Barcelona in 2011 -- and the squad fly to Portugal later yesterday.

"We have to dream," Jesus told British media. "I'm a dreamer and can picture myself with the trophy on my hands.

"But I know the reality is different, we have to work, to show our dedication. To win is the most important thing."

Jesus -- who scored in both



Manchester City's striker Gabriel Jesus celebrates scoring a goal (file photo)

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GABRIEL JESUS

legs and set up Raheem Sterling for their first goal in Friday's last 16 second leg -- said

the players had turned disappointments in Europe's premier club competition into a positive.

Under Guardiola they have exited in the quarter-finals the past two years to English rivals Liverpool and Tottenham Hotspur and prior to that Monaco eliminated them in the last 16.

City's best performance so far was reaching the 2016 semi-finals under Guardiola's predecessor Manuel Pellegrini.

"As a group, we have matured from being knocked out of the previous Champions League editions," said Jesus.

"We've learned to suffer."