

## Pique 'pessimistic' over Davis Cup finals



Gerard Pique watch Rafael Nadal returning the ball during a match (file photo)

AFP | Madrid

Barcelona football star Gerard Pique said Sunday he was "pessimistic" that the Davis Cup Finals, which his company finances, would be held in Madrid this year.

Pique's Kosmos investment group has a 25-year deal worth \$3 billion with the International Tennis Federation. However, he believes that the November 23-29 finals in the Spanish capital could fall victim to the coronavirus.

"There is a lot of uncertainty, we try to be aware of what the government says regarding sports and to whether we can put spectators inside the Caja Magica," Pique said.

"I would say I am a bit pessimistic, because a Davis Cup without fans is difficult."

## Suresh Raina calls on BCCI to lift overseas T20 ban

Reuters | Mumbai

India's 2011 World Cup-winning batsman Suresh Raina has called on the country's cricket board (BCCI) to lift its ban on players participating in overseas Twenty20 leagues.

The BCCI does not allow active players to sign for franchise-based leagues outside the country in a bid to protect the prestige of its own Indian Premier League (IPL), which attracts many of the world's top cricketers.

Raina said there were many active Indian players left on the sidelines of the lucrative annual T20 tournament who were also being denied the chance to play abroad.

# Russell seals Virtual Spanish GP victory

Williams' George Russell snatched victory from Charles Leclerc in final lap



George Russell of Great Britain and Williams gives the fans a thumbs up (file photo)

Reuters | London

George Russell, yet to score a point for his struggling Williams team in the real world of Formula One, celebrated a virtual Spanish Grand Prix victory from pole position on Sunday.

The Briton took his first F1 esports win ahead of Ferrari's Charles Leclerc, who collected a three second penalty for exceeding track limits on the penultimate lap.

That wiped out a similar sanction Russell had picked up.

Mexican former F1 driver Esteban Gutierrez was third for Mercedes.

The race also featured Manchester City's Argentina soccer striker Sergio Agüero, Real Madrid's Belgium goalkeeper Thibaut Courtois and Barcelona's Brazil midfielder Arthur Melo as well as British golfer Ian Poulter.

"I am feeling ecstatic. I'm not used to this winning thing," said Russell after taking the chequered flag in a race broadcast around the world and on F1's own platforms.

"I've not done it for a long, long time so I dearly missed it," added the 2018 Formula Two

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DAVID COULTHARD

champion who had his F1 rookie season last year.

Former champions Williams have not won in the real world since Venezuelan Pastor Maldonado triumphed at the same circuit in 2012.

"When I got past Charles and I knew I had that three second penalty I was pretty furious," said Russell. "But when that radio message came in at the end and I heard he had a three second penalty I was almost wetting my pants."

Leclerc, who had won two of the previous four races, took the lead from the second lap as Russell plunged to fifth.

Red Bull's Alexander Albon moved up to second on lap four but then pitted on a risky two-stop strategy that was his undo-

ing, with others opting for just one. The Thai finished fourth with the fastest lap.

McLaren's Lando Norris yet again suffered technical problems with the Briton out after just seven laps.

In the soccer battle for bragging rights, Courtois took 12th place for Alfa Romeo while Agüero finished 14th for Red Bull and Melo 19th with Haas.

"It was fun racing with Sergio... he showed he's really fast," said Albon. "You can see with all the top athletes that they want to be the best they can be and they put so much effort in."

Agüero, who finished ahead of Lewis Hamilton's brother Nicolas, said he would love to do it again.

Sunday would have been the day of the real Spanish Grand Prix but that was postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic that has stalled the championship.

The virtual series, with six current F1 drivers, has helped give fans some action.

"It's getting ever more competitive. I think it started out as a little bit of fun to fill the time and now it's a real race and badge of honour," said warring former grand prix racer turned pundit David Coulthard.

## Lions Club of Riffa joins KHK Heroes Challenge



TDT | Manama

Lions Club of Riffa is the latest organization to join KHK Heroes in helping to distribute much-needed food parcels and masks to those who are already in need and further affected by the Pandemic.

The Lions Club of Riffa is a registered charitable, non-profit organization, serving the Bahrain community since 1995 through various charitable community food drives, blood donation drives, environmental projects, and school projects.

Initiated by HH Shaikh Khalid bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince, Deputy Supreme Commander, and First Deputy Premier and HH Shaikh Nasser bin Hamad Al Khalifa, His Majesty the King's Representative for Charity Works and Youth Affairs, National Security Advisor and President of the Supreme Council for Youth and Sports, KHK Heroes has called on the nation for a united cause, helping those most vulnerable during the Coronavirus Pandemic.

Public can take part in the challenge by making donations, volunteering time to KHK Heroes or taking up the challenge to post a video online and nominate someone to pay it forward.

## Kvitova, Pliskova sisters set to clash at Prague tournament

AFP | Prague

Two-time Wimbledon champion Petra Kvitova, the Pliskova sisters and other top-100 Czech players are set to clash at a tennis tournament in Prague on May 26-28, organisers said Sunday.

"This is the first event the Czech Tennis Association (CTS) has prepared for players at a time when they can't travel because of the (coronavirus) pandemic," tournament spokesman Karel Tejkal said in a statement.

The women's event will bring together Kvitova, 12th in the WTA rankings, 26th-ranked



Czech Republic's Karolina Pliskova (L) shakes hands with her compatriot Petra Kvitova after a match (file photo)

Karolina Muchova and 31st-ranked Barbora Strycova.

"I'm looking forward to playing a tournament after a long time," said Kvitova.

"I'm really curious about the shape we'll be in without playing any tournaments."

# British GP could go ahead despite quarantine restrictions

Reuters | London

Formula One is working to put on a British Grand Prix in July even if the country imposes quarantine measures on visitors during the COVID-19 crisis, F1 sources said on Sunday.

The Sun newspaper quoted a government source as saying there would be an exemption for sports, with Formula One and soccer teams free to travel from Britain and return without restriction once competition resumes.

It said athletes and teams

would be expected to undergo a rigorous testing regime and isolate themselves immediately if they tested positive for the novel coronavirus.

Formula One sources told Reuters conversations with the government were ongoing.

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson said in a televised address to the nation on Sunday that "it will soon be the time... to impose quarantine on people coming into this country by air".

An association representing UK airlines said the government was planning a 14-day quaran-



General view of a Union Jack flag being carried out on to the track by service personnel before the 2019 British GP race (file photo)

time period for most people arriving from abroad to try to avoid a second peak of the coronavirus outbreak.

Manchester City and Chelsea are still in the Champions League, which has been halted since March at the last 16 stage, and would need an exemption to continue in the competition.

Quarantine also has big implications for Formula One, with the British Grand Prix at Silverstone scheduled for July 19 -- the weekend after teams complete a planned double-header in Austria on July 5 and 12.

The race will be a 70th anniversary for Formula One at the English circuit which hosted the first world championship race in 1950.

Seven of the 10 Formula One teams are based in Britain and would be returning from a secure environment in Austria where they would have been effectively isolated for two weeks and repeatedly tested.

Formula One managing director Ross Brawn outlined last week some of the measures set to be implemented for the season-opening races.