

SPORTS

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HH Shaikh Isa bin Salman attends Bahrain Trophy Race in UK

TDT | London

HH Shaikh Isa bin Salman bin Hamad Al-Khalifa, Vice Chairman of the Rashid Equestrian and Horse Racing Club High Committee, yesterday attended the 28th edition of the Bahrain Trophy race held as part of the Newmarket Racing Festival in the United Kingdom.

Spanish Mission, ridden by Jockey Jamie Spencer, and trained by David Simcock, won the race that witnessed high competition.

Nayef Road, ridden by jockey



Shaikh Isa bin Salman during Bahrain Trophy Race at Newmarket

Sylvester De Sousa, and owned by Emarati Mohammed Belobaida, was the runner up.

HH Shaikh Isa then presented the award to the winner of the event.

During the festival, HH Shaikh Isa highlighted HM the King's commitment to supporting and preserving the Kingdom's equestrian heritage.

HH Shaikh Isa bin Salman expressed gratitude to HM the King for the continued support provided in ensuring the success of the annual Bahrain Trophy race at the Newmarket Racing Festival.

HH Shaikh Isa noted that the success of the annual race embodies the strength of historic relations between Bahrain and the United Kingdom, which are underpinned by continued cooperation across various fields.

HH Shaikh Isa highlighted that the Bahrain Trophy race, a 2600-meter Group 3 flat horse race, is one of the most prominent races in the Newmarket calendar.

HH Shaikh Isa was accompanied by HH Shaikh Sultan Al Din bin Mohammed bin Salman Al Khalifa.

Serena to face Halep for title

● **Serena Williams to face Simona Halep in Wimbledon final with record Slam haul in view**

● **Serena beats Strycova to go into Wimbledon singles final**

● **Halep becomes first Romanian woman to reach Wimbledon final after win over Svitolina**

AFP | London

Simona Halep is the last woman standing between Serena Williams and achieving her long held ambition of equalling Margaret Court's Grand Slam title record after both recorded easy victories in their Wimbledon semi-finals yesterday.

Seven-time champion Williams made short work of plucky unseeded Czech Barbora Strycova, whose experience of her first ever Grand Slams singles semi-final in her 53rd campaign lasted just under an hour as she lost 6-1, 6-2.

Former world number one Halep's clash with Ukrainian Elina Svitolina lasted a bit longer but the 27-year-old ran out a 6-1, 6-3 victor to become the first Romanian woman to reach the Wimbledon final.

Williams has missed the chance to equal Australian



US player Serena Williams returns against Czech Republic's Barbora Strycova

Court's record on two occasions since returning from giving birth -- losing last year's Wimbledon final and then a bad-tempered defeat in the US Open final.

"It feels good to be in the final again after the year I have had," said 37-year-old Williams.

"I have just needed matches to feel good and do what I do best and that is play tennis.

"I love what I do. I have a great job and I am still pretty good at it. I get a remarkable experience every time."

Williams produced a dominant performance yesterday which has not always been the case during the Championships and she said she would not be taking seventh-seeded Halep lightly.

"She's a tough opponent," said

Williams. "We always have great matches. I look forward to it."

Strycova, who never managed to impose her delightful stroke-filled game on her opponent, at least has the consolation of perhaps winning the women's doubles.

Halep, who was French Open champion in 2018, will be playing in her fifth Grand Slam final.

"It's an amazing feeling but I am also excited and nervous. It is one of the best moments of my life," said Halep.

"The match was not easy, the games were long and went deep.

"I fought hard to win this match and I was strong mentally and physically and had the right tactics."

Halep, who had knocked out new star, 15-year-old Coco Gauff



Halep, who was French Open champion in 2018, will be playing in her fifth Grand Slam final

in the last 16, lost in her previous semi-final appearance at Wimbledon to Eugenie Bouchard in 2014. However, she said she was a different player now and had taken to grass.

"I have more experience, I don't give up anymore," se said. "I plan to be the best version

of myself and fight to the end."

'Kicking the ball'

The easy manner in which former world number one Halep wrapped up the match had not looked on the cards at the outset.

Svitolina, the first Ukrainian woman to reach a Grand Slam semi-final, and Halep traded shots aplenty and break points in the opening two games which took over 20 minutes to complete but Halep emerged on top with a 2-0 lead.

Svitolina, being watched from the players box by her English coach Andy Bettles and French boyfriend and ATP star Gael Monfils, briefly raised her game to break back.

However, Halep broke again immediately and 24-year-old Svitolina gave an indication of her increasing frustration when she netted a simple volley and lashed out, kicking the ball into the net.

Worse was to come for Svitolina on her next service game when Halep produced a stunning shot to go 5-1. The 27-year-old Romanian dashed across court to get to Svitolina's drop shot and flashed it cross court.

Halep, who had not faced a seeded player until Svitolina, faced some resistance as she served for the set eventually taking it on her sixth set point.

Although Svitolina stayed with Halep for the first part of the second set, the self-belief and fight had gone and when the Romanian broke for 4-3 it was game over.

Arsenal captain Koscielny refuses to travel on pre-season tour

AFP | London

Arsenal captain Laurent Koscielny has refused to travel for the club's pre-season tour in the United States.

The Gunners released a statement yesterday highlighting their disappointment at the 33-year-old Frenchman, who has been at the club since 2010.

"Laurent Koscielny has refused to travel to the US for our pre-season tour," said Arsenal.

"We are very disappointed by Laurent's actions, which are against our clear instructions.

"We hope to resolve this matter and will not be providing any further comment at this time."

Spain goalkeeper Lopez leaves Betis for Roma

AFP | Madrid

Spain international goalkeeper Pau Lopez has completed his move from Real Betis to Serie A giants Roma, the two clubs announced late on Wednesday.

The 24-year-old has signed a five-year deal with Roma paying 23.5 million euros (\$26.48 million).

"It is almost impossible to say no to a club like Roma. It represents a step forward in my career and I am ready to rise to this new challenge," Lopez said in a video on the Roma website.

Lopez is Roma's fourth signing of the summer after Amadou Diawara, Bryan Cristante and Leonardo Spinazzola, taking their spending to over 100 million euros.

He began his career at Espanyol, making 78 appearances before a year-long spell on loan at Tottenham where he failed to make any appearances for the first team. He joined Betis in 2018.

Bahrain Merida's Teuns wins Stage six, Ciccone takes race lead

● **Thomas silences doubters**

AP | Champagne, France

Defending Tour de France champion Geraint Thomas defied his doubters as Belgian Dylan Teuns won stage six and his breakaway partner Giulio Ciccone snatched the yellow jersey by just a few seconds on an iconic mountain stage.

Teuns won the ultra-tough mountain stage to Planché des Belles Filles when he and Ciccone crossed the summit fin-

ish line as the sole survivors of a mass breakaway.

"It was so steep, but I love these kind of finishes, I'm pretty good at this kind of finish," said Teuns, a Belgian who rides for Bahrain Merida.

Ciccone was less calm about his feat.

"It's just unbelievable," said the Italian after taking the overall lead from Frenchman Julian Alaphilippe by just six seconds.

Alaphilippe put in a heroic defence of his lead, but missed out due to the bonus seconds over the final two summits saw the young Italian edge ahead of him.



Belgium's Dylan Teuns (R) and cyclists ride during the sixth stage of Tour de France

"It feels strange, to have the yellow jersey on my back feels so strange," said Ciccone.

"I wanted to win the stage for the team but I never believed it would be possible to take the lead," said the 24-year-old who rides for the same Trek-Segafredo team as Richie Porte.

Just behind this victorious pair the struggle between the contenders to win the Tour de France itself played out when defending champion Geraint Thomas suggested that the doubters who had called him a one-hit wonder after his 2018 win with Sky might be wrong.