

Tour de France 2021 to begin in Brittany



Competitors ride in Paris
Reuters | Paris

The 2021 Tour de France will start in Brittany after Copenhagen's staging of the 'Grand Depart' was pushed back by a year due to a potential clash with soccer's postponed European Championship, race organisers said.

Brittany will also host the first four full stages of the race.

"Delighted to announce with Christian Prudhomme that we will start in Brest, pass through Finistere, Cotes d'Armor, Morbihan and Ile-et-Vilaine. It will be a great celebration and a boost for the economy," said the region's president Loig Chesnais-Girard.

The start of next year's Tour was brought forward by six days to avoid clashing with the men's road race at the rescheduled Tokyo Olympics.

Bayern ponder how to stop Messi

Leon Goretzka insists that Bayern Munich have no plan for Barcelona's Lionel Messi

● Bayern face Barcelona in Champions League quarter-final on Friday

AFP | Berlin

Bayern Munich midfielder Leon Goretzka said the German giants are working out how to curb the legendary talents of Barcelona star Lionel Messi ahead of Friday's Champions League quarter-final.

"Thousands of people before me have tried to answer this question," Goretzka replied yesterday in Lisbon when asked how to stop Messi.

"It is nice - after playing against (Juventus star Cristiano) Ronaldo a few times - to play the other formative player of the last decade.

"That can only be done collectively," the 25-year-old central midfielder said of Messi, "because he is a gifted footballer".

"I don't know how, but we have to force our game on them." Messi scored his 31st goal this



Barcelona's forward Lionel Messi runs with the ball as he vies for it with Napoli's forward Lorenzo Insigne (R)

season on Saturday and is looking to lift the Champions League for the fifth time in his career with Barcelona.

Treble-chasing Bayern, however, have won all 13 games since the coronavirus lockdown restart.

They underlined their impressive form on Saturday

when Robert Lewandowski, the Champions League's top scorer, netted twice and created two more in the last 16, second-leg rout of Chelsea to seal a 7-1 thrashing on aggregate.

Bayern are chasing the treble having already won an eighth straight Bundesliga title and lifted the German Cup, but Goretz-

ka says Barcelona present a true test.

"There is no easy way now. We are here in the sun in Portugal and are preparing for a knockout game in the Champions League," he said.

"We're really up for it. Knockout matches are great." While Barcelona are packed



● Messi scored his 31st goal this season on Saturday and is looking to lift the Champions League for the fifth time in his career with Barcelona

with stars alongside Messi, Goretzka says Bayern are far more than just Lewandowski's goals.

"At the moment, we're playing as a unit, in addition to the quality of the individual players.

"We have a clear plan in hand and our intensity without the ball can make the difference."

But he admitted being wary of Arturo Vidal, Barca's ex-Bayern midfielder.

"I got to know him for a few weeks and played against him many times. He has a first-class mentality with amazing fitness," added Goretzka.

Alcantara set to leave but Bayern 'cautiously optimistic' of keeping Alaba

AFP | Berlin

Bayern Munich chairman Karl-Heinz Rummenigge said yesterday he is "cautiously optimistic" of keeping David Alaba but is braced to lose Liverpool target Thiago Alcantara once the Champions League finishes in Lisbon.

Having routed Chelsea 7-1 on aggregate in the last 16 following Saturday's 4-1 win in Munich in the return leg, Bayern face Barcelona in the quarter-finals on Friday in a clash of European heavyweights.

With a year left on their contracts, both defender Alaba and central midfielder Alcantara are stalling over extensions.

Alcantara, 29, who has been heavily linked to Liverpool, has long since signalled to the club that he wants to leave.

So far, the Spaniard, who has won the Bundesliga title in each of his seven seasons in Munich, has rejected all of Bayern's ef-



Bayern Munich's Thiago Alcantara (R) celebrate a goal as David Alaba looks on

7
Bundesliga titles have been won by Thiago Alcantara in each of his seasons with Bayern Munich

orts to keep him.

"It is known that he wants to do something new. If a club comes to us and offers a fair sum, we will deal with it," Rummenigge said with an air of resignation at a media event in Munich yesterday.

However, he is "cautiously optimistic" about keeping Alaba, because "we are working on a solution".

Halep grinds out win on return to court in Prague

AFP | Prague

Simona Halep won her opening match of the WTA Prague Open yesterday, defeating Polona Hercog 6-1, 1-6, 7-6 (7/3) to relaunch a season disrupted for nearly six months by the coronavirus pandemic.

Top seed Halep needed two and a half hours to overcome Slovenian world number 46 Hercog on clay in the Czech capital, blowing six match points in the decider before prevailing in a tie-break.



Simona Halep

The second-ranked Halep will meet Barbora Krejčíková in the round of 16.

The reigning Wimbledon and

former French Open champion was appearing in her first match on tour since securing her 20th career title at the Dubai Championships in February.

She pulled out of the first post-lockdown WTA tournament in Palermo last week over virus concerns, and is yet to make a final decision whether to play at the US Open later this month.

The tournament in Prague is Halep's first trip abroad since February, having spent the lockdown in her native Romania.

Your favorite dishes are available at Spice Village

Chicken Keema, Fried Egg: Minced chicken cooked with spices, fried egg, our specialty.

Butter Chicken: A delicious rich, creamy buttery sauce with chicken tikka pieces.

FREE DELIVERY 17361199

**Also available Birthday Party, Takeaway & Catering*

4TH FLOOR, JUFFAIR MALL, BESIDE MUKTA A2 CINEMA, KINGDOM OF BAHRAIN