

Trump says would be ‘terrible mistake’ to oust Infantino

- Trump strongly backs Infantino
- Three confederations criticize FIFA chief

AFP | Washington

U.S. President Donald Trump said it would be “a terrible mistake” to replace Gianni Infantino, the embattled FIFA president who tried, and failed, to sell off part of the World Cup to private investors.

Infantino came under renewed fire in an open letter signed by three confederations -- Europe’s UEFA, North and Central America’s CONCACAF and Asia’s AFC -- accusing the world football boss of breaking trust “through deception”.

But Trump backed Infantino, who awarded the US president a “FIFA Peace Prize” at the World Cup draw ceremony last year.

“FIFA would be making a terrible mistake if, for any reason, they even considered replacing President Gianni Infantino,” Trump posted on Truth Social.

Trump called Infantino “fantastic” and said he “presided over the most successful World Cup, by four times, ever presented”.

“If he is gone, it will never



U.S. President Donald Trump and FIFA President Gianni Infantino look on after presenting the FIFA World Cup Winner's Trophy to Spain

be as successful or profitable again!” added Trump, who attended the World Cup final with Infantino last month.

Trump’s backing of Infantino is at odds with US Soccer, who joined the voices lining up against the FIFA president.

Infantino launched, and then withdrew in the face of scathing criticism, a plan to bring private investment into FIFA competitions, including World Cups.

FIFA hit back on Saturday at efforts “to undermine” football’s governing body and Infantino.

However, Monday’s joint letter from UEFA, CONCACAF and

the AFC retorted: “Leadership in football is not a possession. It is not about holding -- or demanding -- power to be held.

“When trust is broken through deception, when an individual places himself above the collective that entrusted him with authority, that duty has been abandoned.”

UEFA boycott threat

CONCACAF president Victor Montagliani is viewed as a potential challenger to Infantino, who will be up for re-election for a fourth and final term at the FIFA Congress in March, 2027.



Infantino awarded Trump a FIFA Peace Prize at last year’s World Cup draw ceremony, adding a personal dimension to the president’s public support

Candidates have to be declared by November 18.

Infantino had looked certain to be unopposed for a fourth term after overseeing a successful World Cup in the United States, Mexico and Canada until his plans were revealed.

The 56-year-old Swiss, who has been in situ for 10 years, has received the backing of the Confederation of African Football (CAF) while South American governing body CONMEBOL is largely supportive.

Individual member associations, not confederations, vote in the FIFA election,

Infantino has received support from CONCACAF’s Mexico and two AFC members -- Kuwait and 2022 World Cup hosts Qatar, where he has a house.

Rain postponements wreck Montreal Masters schedule



A general view as play was suspended due to rain

AFP | Montreal

Evening rain and the threat of lightning forced postponement of the first two quarter-finals at the ATP Montreal Masters.

The 12-day event, which has been drawing criticism for excessive length, was unable to stage the matches due to weather interruptions that have repeatedly plagued the tournament, which lasts for nearly as long as a Grand Slam.

The planned matches between Spain’s Rafael Jodar and Frenchman Arthur Fils and the clash between Italy’s Luciano Darderi and American Brandon Nakashima were both rescheduled for yesterday.

Defending champion Ben Shelton, the fifth seed from the United States, will face Czech Jakub Mensik and Spain’s Daniel Merida will play Amer-

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The Montreal Masters is not due to wrap up until Thursday’s final, overlapping with the start of the Cincinnati Masters, the last major event before the US Open

ican Learner Tien in the other quarter-finals.

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Liverpool fans seek clarity on Bezos bid to buy stake



Amazon’s founder Jeff Bezos

AFP | London

Liverpool supporters’ group Spirit of Shankly said the interests of the club and fans must come first following reports that a consortium including Amazon founder Jeff Bezos is close to a deal to buy a significant minority stake.

Sky News said Bezos was part of an investor group led by Amit Bhatia, the son-in-law of India steel billionaire Lakshmi Mittal, which also includes Facebook co-founder Eduardo Saverin.

Liverpool owners Fenway Sports Group confirmed the approach from Bhatia’s group in July.

Monday’s Sky report said

the consortium was “closing in on a deal to buy a roughly one-third stake in Liverpool”, with FSG preparing to make an announcement “as soon as this week”.

Bezos is one of the world’s richest men, with a fortune estimated by Forbes magazine at more than \$280 billion, while Saverin’s wealth is put at \$33 billion.

The 62-year-old Bezos has reportedly explored previous bids for the NFL’s Seattle Seahawks and Washington Commanders, but decided against pursuing either deal.

Spirit of Shankly has written to Liverpool asking for more clarity and a meeting to discuss the potential changes.

Swiatek dominates Shnaider to set up Toronto semi with Svitolina

- Svitolina rallies past Alexandrova

AFP | Toronto

Former world number one Iga Swiatek cruised into the Toronto Masters semi-finals to set up a clash with Elina Svitolina who fought back from a set down to reach the last four.

Poland’s Swiatek, a six-time Grand Slam champion, took just 64 minutes to sweep past Russia’s Diana Shnaider 6-2, 6-1.

Ukraine’s Svitolina, the ninth seed, beat Russia’s Ekaterina Alexandrova 3-6, 6-0, 6-3.

Swiatek reached just her second WTA semi-final this year after Rome and is seeking her first final appearance since winning the Korea Open almost a year ago in Seoul.

“From the beginning I went for it. I felt like I could dominate,” Swiatek said after dropping just three points on her first serve.

“I was quite happy with the way I played. It was a tricky match with the wind.

“I thought I needed to adjust to that. I just wanted to be more solid,” added the 25-year-old world number eight.

Svitolina won eight consecu-



Iga Swiatek in action

utive games after losing the first set on the way to dispatching Alexandrova in 93 minutes.

Swiatek leads Svitolina 4-3 in their WTA career rivalry, but lost both their meetings this year.

“I’m gonna talk with my team to adjust a little bit for Iga’s game,” said Svitolina.

“Of course she’s a great champion. She plays really well this tournament. I have to bring my

best.”

Swiatek established a 5-2 lead in the first set when she broke Shnaider a second time, courtesy of the Russian netting a backhand, and served out to take it in 31 minutes.

The Pole broke for a 2-1 lead in the second when Shnaider netted. A forehand winner gave Swiatek a 4-1 lead and a third break sealed victory.



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IGA SWIATEK

Svitolina had more of a battle after sending a backhand long on serve to drop an evenly matched first set.

It fired up the Ukrainian who reeled off four breaks to blank Alexandrova in the second set and take a 2-0 lead in the third.

Svitolina served for the match in the eighth game of the final set only for a double fault to allow Alexandrova a lifeline.

But a pumped-up Svitolina roared back, broke to love and finished the match with a searing return winner.

“Very pleased with my performance. With the fighting spirit,” said Svitolina.

“She was playing really well in the first set. I had to really step into like a fighting mode.”