

Russian World Cup star Cheryshev in doping probe: media

AFP | Moscow

Russia winger Denis Cheryshev, one of the standout performers at the World Cup, is under investigation for an alleged doping violation, local media reported yesterday.

"This case is currently being investigated by the Spanish Anti-Doping agency," the Russian daily Sport Express quoted a World Anti-Doping Agency press spokesperson as saying.

"They will inform WADA about the results of their investigation."

The 27-year-old came under suspicion after his father said in an interview that the footballer had received growth hormone treatment before the World Cup.

The taking of a growth hormone without a therapeutic use exemption can result in a four-year ban.

Cheryshev's father later said he was misquoted by the journalist.

The Villarreal midfielder, on-loan to Valencia this season, meanwhile denied any wrongdoing.

"I think we'd better leave this case in the hands of medics, who have done everything right," he told Sport Express.

"For my part everything was honest and I think there will be no problems."

Lukaku leads Belgium to victory over Iceland

Reuters | Reykjavik

Belgium striker Romelu Lukaku scored twice and won a penalty that Eden Hazard converted as they crushed Iceland 3-0 in their Nations League A, Group 2 clash in Reykjavik on Tuesday.

Bustling forward Lukaku was bundled over by Sverrir Ingi Ingason in the 28th minute and the referee immediately pointed to the spot, with Chelsea playmaker Hazard calmly sending Hannes Halldorsson the wrong way with the resulting penalty.

Lukaku made it 2-0 to Belgium minutes later, firing a close-range shot on the rebound that was judged to have crossed the line before Birkir Saevardsson managed to clear. The Manchester United striker then added a third with a deft flick nine minutes from fulltime.

It was Belgium's first game in the new competition and ended a run of 13 competitive matches unbeaten at home for Iceland, who were hammered 6-0 by Switzerland away in their opening Nations League game on Saturday.

Iceland manager Erik Hamren has now lost his opening two



Belgium's Romelu Lukaku (9), right, scores against Iceland

games as manager, conceding nine goals in the process, leaving the Nordic nation's reputation for a miserly defence in tatters.

Hamren made three changes to the side that lost to the Swiss with Runar Sigurjonsson, Emil Hallfredsson and Hordur Mag-

nusson coming in for Rurik Gislason, Gudlaugur Victor Palsson and Bjorn Sigurdarson and his side looked much more stable in the opening exchanges.

Belgium began with nine of the players who started the World Cup third-place playoff

win against England in Russia, with the injured Kevin De Bruyne replaced by Dries Mertens. Yet despite missing one of their main playmakers, there was no lack of creativity in the side.

Gylfi Sigurdsson had an early

shot deflected as Iceland pressed forward, but once Belgium had taken a decisive 2-0 lead, the hosts struggled to create anything resembling a decent shot on goal.

In contrast the Belgians poured forward, with Thomas Meunier hitting the foot of the post midway through the second half, and Lukaku blazing a late shot over the bar before steering the ball past Halldorsson to complete the rout.



Belgium began with nine of the players who started the World Cup third-place playoff win against England in Russia

Embattled umpire 'good' despite US Open controversy

Reuters | New York

Umpire Carlos Ramos has made his first public statement since the US Open, saying he was "good" despite the firestorm of controversy that followed his officiating of last weekend's women's final between Serena Williams and Naomi Osaka.

The 47-year-old Portuguese handed out three code violations to runner-up Williams on Saturday, prompting a heated on-court argument with the 23-times Grand Slam champion and sparking a debate about sexism in tennis.

"I am good, under the circumstances," Ramos was quoted as saying in Portugal's Tribuna Expresso.

"It's an unhappy situation but a la carte refereeing doesn't exist."

"Don't you worry about me!"

Ramos, who told the newspaper that he had avoided walking the streets of New York on Sunday to avoid any "complicated situations", confirmed he would be back in the chair on Friday in Zadar, Croatia.

The International Tennis Federation (ITF), which on Monday issued a statement describing Ramos as one of the most respected umpires in tennis, has appointed him to officiate the semi-final of the Davis Cup, the international men's team event, between Croatia and the United States.

Lloris avoids jail over drink-driving



Hugo Lloris

AFP | London

France's World Cup-winning captain Hugo Lloris avoided jail but received a 20-month driving ban and a £50,000 (\$65,000) fine yesterday for drink-driving in central London.

The Tottenham Hotspur goalkeeper had earlier called his behaviour "unacceptable" and received a lighter sentence from a judge who could have locked up the star for six months.

"On 15th of July, he was the proudest man of the planet," attorney David Sonn said in reference to the day Lloris and his France team lifted the World Cup trophy in Moscow.

"Forty days later, he was arrested in central London," said the lawyer. "Today he apologises to the court."

Lloris was one of the he-

ads of France's commanding march to their second football World Cup in 20 years.

The triumph turned the 31-year-old into a national hero and confirmed his status as one of the most respected goalkeepers in the world.

But Lloris's dream turned into a nightmare when his Porsche was pulled over for a routine stop in central London at 2:20am on August 24.

The Daily Mail tabloid said Lloris registered 100 microgrammes of alcohol per 100 millilitres of breath in a police check.

The amount is roughly the equivalent of seven glasses of wine, although alcohol levels depend on multiple factors such as age, gender and metabolism.

The legal driving limit in England in a breathalyser test is 35 microgrammes.

Defiant Australian paper reprints 'racist' Serena cartoon

Melbourne, Australia

An Australian newspaper defiantly republished a controversial cartoon of tennis star Serena Williams on its front-page yesterday, slapping aside "politically correct" accusations that the drawing was racist and sexist.

Melbourne's Herald Sun cartoonist Mark Knight's caricature of Williams throwing a tantrum at the US Open was originally printed on Monday, attracting widespread condemnation from across the world.

Under the front-page headline "WELCOME TO PC WORLD", the newspaper wrote yesterday that "if the self-appointed censors of Mark Knight get their way on his Serena Williams cartoon, our new politically correct life will be very dull indeed".

The cover included caricatures of other Australian and foreign political leaders drawn by Knight.

The veteran cartoonist added yesterday he had suspended his Twitter account to protect his family and friends.

Prior to disabling his account, his tweet of the cartoon had attracted more than 22,000 comments, most of them critical.

Knight labelled the outcry against his cartoon as a sign that the "world has just gone crazy".

"I drew this cartoon Sunday night after seeing the US Open



Serena Williams

final, and seeing the world's best tennis player have a tantrum and thought that was interesting," he said in quotes published on the News Corp Australia paper's website yesterday.

"The cartoon about Serena is about her poor behaviour on the day, not about race."

The caricature has also sparked renewed debate in Australia about racist and sexist discourse in the highly multicultural nation.

"I thought they went over the top. The depiction of Serena was pretty vile," Melbourne commuter Louise Rodbourn

told AFP, echoing the mood of many city workers yesterday.

"I think it's disgusting. I find it really, a little offensive," added fellow Melbourne resident Nowal Kahsai.

But some said the controversy had gone too far.

"She's a fantastic tennis player and we should all see past that," commuter Donna Weitaucher said.

"This is his (Knight's) job, isn't it? This is what he does for a living and we've all appreciated what he's done over the years in all different cartoons. Some of them very, very funny."