

SPORTS

sports

Abu Dhabi Sports to cover Brave 20 from India

TDT | Manama

Brave Combat Federation has confirmed that Brave 20 marks the first Mixed Martial Arts event taking place in India that is covered by the UAE based premium broadcast network.

Abu Dhabi Sports will cover the event taking place in India providing the highest global exposure to an event taking place in India. The initiative to host an event in India under the patronage of HH Shaikh Khalid bin Hamad Al Khalifa was praised for giving Indian athletes a platform to compete and showcase their skills globally.

Abu Dhabi Sports will broadcast the event live in the Middle East and North Africa. The event marks the second time the Bahrain based global mixed martial arts organization is hosting an event in India. Earlier the fifth edition of the promotion took place on 23rd April 2017 at the Dome Arena in Mumbai, India. The initiative will give the opportunity for eight Indian fighters to compete globally for the first time. Two Indian fighters, Kantaraj Agasa, and Nelson Paes will compete in a global Mixed Martial Arts promotion for the first time.

Latham ton puts NZ in charge

● Tom Latham and Kane Williamson grind Sri Lanka on batting day

● New Zealand lead by 29 runs with 8 wickets remaining in the innings

AFP | Wellington

Opener Tom Latham's unbeaten century put New Zealand in charge of the first Test against Sri Lanka in Wellington yesterday, as the Black Caps raced past the tourists' first-innings total and looked to build an imposing lead.

Latham was 121 not out at stumps on day two with New Zealand cruising at 311 for two in reply to Sri Lanka's modest 282.

It was a frustrating day for Sri Lanka's bowlers on a Basin Reserve pitch that transformed into a batters' paradise after wreaking havoc during the tourists' innings on day one.

Black Caps skipper Kane Williamson narrowly missed out on his own century, falling for 91, and all New Zealand's batsmen got good starts, with Jeet Raval making 43 and Ross Taylor not out on 50.

While the Sri Lanka attack worked hard, they could not build pressure and the two New Zealand wickets that fell were



Tom Latham of New Zealand plays a shot

the result of rash shots from Raval and Williamson.

That was not an issue for Latham, who meticulously crafted his seventh Test century from 219 balls and never looked rattled at the crease.

He combined with Williamson for a 162-run partnership, laying the foundation for a huge total from a line-up that has eight wickets in hand and has plenty of batting to come.

Coach Gary Stead New Zealand would look to turn the

screws on day three.

"Hopefully we can bat for a big chunk of tomorrow and we'll just bat once in the game, that's the plan," he said.

"We'll try and make the most of these conditions as long as we can, then we'll see where we get to tomorrow afternoon and maybe have a wee bowl at them.

"There's a lot of game to be played before then."

Despite failing to reach triple figures, Williamson still has a remarkable record against Sri

Lanka, with three centuries in seven Tests against them.

That includes an unbeaten 242 at Wellington's Basin Reserve in 2015.

Sri Lanka will be hoping for a dramatic New Zealand collapse on day three to salvage any hopes of a win.

Earlier, they added just seven to their overnight total before Tim Southee coaxed an inside edge off Kumara to claim a six-wicket innings haul.

Kumara's departure for a duck left Dickwella stranded on 80

New Zealand 1st innings	
J. Raval c Dickwella b Kumara	43
T. Latham not out	121
K. Williamson c Rajitha b de Silva	91
R. Taylor not out	50
Extras (lb4, nb1, w1)	6
Total (2 wickets; 84 overs)	311
Sri Lanka	
1st innings (275-9 overnight)	
M. Gunathilaka lbw Southee	1
F. Karunaratne c Watling b Wagner	79
D. de Silva c Watling b Southee	1
K. Mendis c Patel b Southee	2
A. Mathews c Watling b Southee	83
D. Chandimal c Patel b Southee	6
N. Dickwella not out	80
D. Perera c Watling b de Grandhomme	16
S. Lakmal c Nicholls b Wagner	3
K. Rajitha c Watling b Boult	2
L. Kumara c de Grandhomme b Southee	0
Extras (lb7, nb2)	9
Total (all out, 90 overs)	282

not out after he led a rearguard action for Sri Lanka.

Angelo Mathews and Dimuth Karunaratne were the only other batsmen to offer any meaningful resistance, notching 83 and 79 respectively and forging a 133-run partnership.

Sri Lanka, ranked sixth in the world, have lost their last five Tests against New Zealand and suffered a 3-0 home Test series whitewash against England last month.

They have faced upheaval in their coaching and selection ranks in recent weeks and arrived in New Zealand low on confidence.

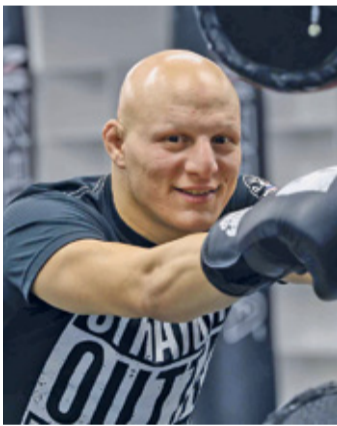
Ali Qaisi predicts a victory at Brave 20

TDT | Manama

Ali Qaisi is the latest athlete signed with the Brave Combat Federation from Jordan. Qaisi joined the ranks of Jordanian superstars including the reigning welterweight world champion, Jarrah Al Selawe, Jalal Al Daaja, Nawras Abzakh and Hashem Arkagha at the Bahrain based global Mixed Martial Arts organization.

Qaisi signed to compete at Brave 20 taking place on 22nd December at the Gachibowli Indoor Stadium in Hyderabad, India. Initially, Qaisi was set to face the Indian featherweight fighter, Abdul Muneer. However, Muneer withdrew from the fight card due to a shoulder injury contacted during wrestling sessions. Hence Nelson Paes stepped in to challenge the Jordanian.

"I'm so excited to fight in In-



Ali Qaisi

dia. I am always eager to perform in a new place in front of a new audience. I'm sure they will all be shocked to see how I finish the win, just like before", said Qaisi who is set to compete in India for the first time.

Qaisi has made a name for himself in the Middle East competing in two local pro-



I don't find much value in fight records. So many fighters train hard but don't have a chance at getting a fight, or some choose easy opponents to boost their record.

ALI QAISI

motions, Desert Force and Phoenix Fighting Championship. Qaisi pointed out the heavily buffed up fight records to be among major hindrances for MMA fighters in India.

Not only this ends up as a disadvantage when the fighters are set to compete globally, but this also forces matchmakers to pitch the fighters against experienced veterans at a time the fighters requires global experience and take it to the top.

"Personally, I don't find much value in fight records. So many fighters train hard but don't have a chance at getting a fight, or some choose easy opponents to boost their record. Yeah, it's important, but it's not everything. We will see on December 22 what gets the win— a good record, or training hard for the fight", commented Qaisi.

Badminton gold at last for 'proud' Sindhu, Shi stuns Momota

AFP | Shanghai, China

An emotional PV Sindhu finally got her hands on gold at badminton's season-ending World Tour Finals yesterday while in the men's decider China's Shi Yuqi exacted stunning revenge over number one Ken-tomomota.

The 23-year-old Indian Sindhu has suffered a series of near-misses in recent years, winning silver at the 2016 Rio Olympics, and again at the Asian Games and Commonwealth Games this year.

The world number six, renowned for her never-say-die attitude, has also twice lost in the final of the World Championships and was runner-up in last year's season finale.

But she put all that heartbreak behind her in the Chinese city of Guangzhou, beating the fifth-ranked Nozomi Okuhara of Japan 21-19, 21-17 in the women's final in just over an hour.

Sindhu, who was always in control of the match, sealed the championship with a forehand smash, before collapsing to the court floor on her hands and knees, physically and emotionally exhausted.

"I'm really proud, the year has ended on a beautiful note," said Sindhu.

"People have been asking me the same question, I think the question won't come again --



Sindhu Puserla of India hits a return against Ratchanok Intanon of Thailand



PV Sindhu has twice lost in the final of the World Championships and was runner-up in last year's season finale

asking why I always lose in the final.

"It was good that people were asking me about losing so many

finals because I had to ask myself why I was losing.

"Finally I got the answer."

The men's final, a mouth-watering showdown between the two top-ranked players in the world, was a re-run of the world championship decider in August.

On that occasion, the 22-year-old Shi -- the new star of Chinese men's badminton -- was well beaten by Momota.

But roared on by the crowd in Guangzhou, Shi got revenge in emphatic fashion, beating the tournament favourite 21-12, 21-11 in a surprisingly one-sided encounter for the biggest win of his young career.

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