

SPORTS
sports

Repsol Honda Team's Spanish rider Marc Marquez competes in the lead during the MotoGP race

Marquez takes French MotoGP for Honda 300-win landmark

AFP | Le Mans, France

Spain's defending world champion Marc Marquez won the French MotoGP at Le Mans yesterday, racking up Honda's 300th victory in the division and completing a memorable family double after younger brother Alex took the Moto2 race.

It was Marquez's 47th top level Grand Prix win and third of the season, finishing ahead of Italian pair Andrea Dovizioso and Danilo Petrucci of Ducati.

For Japanese manufacturer Honda it was a 300th elite class victory, 53 years after Jim Redman secured their first.

Starting from pole, five-time MotoGP world champion Marquez won by almost two seconds from Dovizioso and now leads overall standings after five rounds by eight points from the Italian Ducati rider.

He is 20 points ahead of Alex Rins, the Suzuki rider who was down in 10th yesterday, while Italian veteran Valentino Rossi of Yamaha -- fifth in the race -- is fourth on 72 points.

"It's always difficult at Le Mans," Marquez said of the winding Bugatti circuit.

One rider who might agree with him is Spain's Maverick Vinales, who ended up slid-

ing out on the second factory Yamaha after a tangle with Francesco Bagnaia.

Earlier in the day, Alex Marquez won the Moto2 race ahead of fellow Spaniards Jorge Navarro and Augusto Fernandez while championship leader Lorenzo Baldassarri crashed out.

It was the 23-year-old's fourth career win and first since 2017.

"I'm happy to win but even happier because my brother won in Moto 2," said Marc Marquez after completing the family double.

"When I saw that I said to myself 'you have to win too because it would be a great day for the family'.

"He has experienced hard times and it is not always easy to be 'the brother' as it always gives the extra pressure.

"It was important that he got another victory a year and a half after the last."

Despite winning three of the season's five races, Marc Marquez insisted that he was not frustrated to still have such a narrow advantage in the world championship race.

"No because there was one race where I scored zero points," said the Spaniard in a nod to his failure to finish the Grand Prix of the Americas.

“Dovi’ is doing a very good job and he is still in the top five. This is the way to fight a championship and he will be a tough opponent this year

MARC MARQUEZ

Messi increases goal haul as Barca draw with Eibar

Lionel Messi hits 50 goals for Barcelona as Real Madrid ends season to forget

AP | Barcelona

Lionel Messi scored twice to hit the 50-goal mark for the sixth time in his career yesterday while Real Madrid put a fittingly poor ending to its worst season in recent memory after losing in the final round of the Spanish league.

Barcelona, which had clinched the league title with three rounds to play, will now look to also retain the Copa del Rey title next weekend when it faces Valencia. Its chance of a rare treble of major titles was ended by Liverpool in the Champions League semifinals.

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Jeers for Madrid

Madrid endured the jeers of its own frustrated fans after a 2-0 loss to Real Betis at the Santiago Bernabeu.

Most of Madrid's supporters have long placed their hopes on what changes the club will make to an underperforming squad in the summer.

Not even coach Zinedine Zidane could find a saving grace to the campaign.

"It isn't that we don't want to (play better), we aren't able to," Zidane said. "The best thing is for this to be over. We are already thinking about the future and next season."

Madrid entered the match with nothing to play for, locked into a third-place finish for the second consecutive season for the first time since 1974. It finished 19 points behind Barcelona and eight behind second-place Atletico Madrid.

Since the return of Zidane to take charge of the club after its shock loss to Ajax in the round-of-16 in the Champions League, Madrid has finished the cam-



Barcelona's Lionel Messi shoots to score in front Eibar's goalkeeper Marko Dmitrovic

paigned with a record of five wins, two draws and four losses.

"The fault is ours," Madrid defender Marcelo said. "We didn't start well and we didn't finish it well either. In no way was this the season we wanted to have."

Messi's double

Messi moved four goals ahead of Paris Saint-Germain forward Kylian Mbappé -- who has 32 in the French league with a round left -- as the top scorer in Europe's major domestic leagues.

Marc Cucurella, a Barcelona youth player on loan to Eibar, opened the scoring before Messi got his first goal from a pass by Arturo Vidal in the 31st.

Messi added a second just a minute later when he broke behind Eibar's high defensive line, received the ball from Ivan Rakitic and chipped it over goalkeeper Marco Dmitrovic.

Eibar defender Pablo de Blasis leveled just before halftime when he scored from distance into an open net after Barcelona goalkeeper Jasper Cillessen made a poor clearance with his



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head outside the area.

Youth player Carles Pérez debuted for Barcelona in the second half.

The victory at Madrid didn't save Quique Setién's job.

Betis announced shortly after that Setién and the Seville-based club had agreed to part ways after two seasons together, confirming weeks of speculation that he was on his way out.

At least Setién's last match in charge was one to remember for

the coach.

Betis outplayed the hosts from the start and got second-half goals from Loren Morón and former Madrid forward Jesé Rodríguez.

Giovani Lo Celso led Betis to victory with his creativity. The Argentine midfielder created all of his team's best chances, drawing a save from goalkeeper Keylor Navas before setting up both goals.

A long ball by Lo Celso set Andrés Guardado free down the left as he sprinted clear of Raphael Varane before crossing for Morón to score.

Lo Celso then slipped a ball through to Junior Firpo, who found Jesé unmarked at the edge of the six-yard box.

Betis, which beat both Madrid and Barcelona at their stadiums, ended the season in 10th place.

"This allows us to finish a season that has been a bit disappointing with a victory against a team and at a stadium that will always be a nice memory," Setién said before the club announced his departure.

Qaed bowls high series to climb to top of Group

TDI | Manama

Mustafa Qaed enjoyed a strong day at the lanes as qualifying rolled ahead on Saturday in the 2019 edition of The Godfathers Tournament, currently being played at Funland Centre.

The competition is being held in memory of the late Murtadha Qudrat Rasti and the late Shaikh Ebrahim bin Mohammed Al Khalifa.

Qaed played the daily high series amongst Group B participants of 660 pins and rose to the top of his division's standings in the process.

The Bahraini bowler's impressive outing was his second-best of the competition thus far. It added to his two other top trials of 690 and 639, giving him a 1,989 total and a 221.0 average. With his latest score, he climbed to the top of Group B, which is for intermediate participants, and where he displaced former leader Abdulrahman Alali.

Alali dropped to second with a 220.3 average and 1,983 total, while Essa Taqi followed in third with a 218.4 average and a 1,966 total.

Ranked fourth through sixth, respectively, were Patrick Toney, Abdulla Almurbati and Ali



Group B bowler Eulysis Salcedo, left, and Group C participant Fatima Almahmoud with Funland general manager Adel Rasti

Abdulla.

Also putting in fine performances late Saturday night were Emerson Gotencio and Hisham

Mohammed.

Gotencio was the evening's top man, playing the overall daily high series of 717 pins as he

competed in Group A amongst elite bowlers. Mohammed, on the other hand, had the best series of 478 amongst Group C participants, who are beginning bowlers.

In Group A, Gotencio's score was his highest series so far, with his other two being 710 and 692. He raised his average to 235.4 pins per game from a 2,119 average, putting him in second position.

Abdulla Abdulkarim was the new leader. With trials of 748, 701 and 698, Abdulkarim enjoyed a 238.6 average and a 2,147 total that helped him leapfrog to first place.

Man City's Kompany to leave club

AFP | London

Vincent Kompany announced that he will leave Manchester City after 11 trophy-laden years to become player-manager of Anderlecht.

Belgian defender Kompany joined City in 2008 and made 360 appearances, winning four Premier League titles, two FA Cups, four League Cups and two Community Shields.

"As overwhelming as it is, the time has come for me to go. And what a season to bow out," Kompany said.