

Hamilton staying with Mercedes

The four-time F1 champion signed a new two-year deal keeping him at the team until 2020

Reuters | Hockenheim, Germany

Four-times Formula One world champion Lewis Hamilton ended months of speculation about his future yesterday by signing a new two-year deal keeping him at his Mercedes team until the end of 2020.

The 33-year-old Briton would have been out of contract at the end of this season and the negotiations have been a major talking point in the paddock.

No financial details were given in a Mercedes statement but British media reports have suggested the new deal could be worth up to 40 million pounds (\$52 million) a year and was likely to make Hamilton the sport's top earner.

Yesterday's announcement

is now likely to trigger other driver decisions, with Australian Daniel Ricciardo set to remain with Red Bull but waiting for Mercedes to set out their plans.

Hamilton's current team mate Valtteri Bottas is also out of contract at the end of the year and there was no mention of the Finn in yesterday's statement.

"This contract extension has basically been a formality since (team chief) Toto (Wolff) and I sat down during the winter, so it's good to put pen to paper, announce it and then get on with business as usual," Hamilton said ahead of Sunday's German Grand Prix.

"I have been part of the Mercedes racing family for 20 years and I have never been happier inside a team than I am right now," he added.

"I'm very confident that Mercedes is the right place to be over the coming years."

Lingering doubts

While Hamilton had been expected to stay with the team that has won both the drivers' and constructors' titles for the past four years, there had still been some lingering doubts about his commitment to the sport.

Former team mate Nico Ros-



Lewis Hamilton poses with Mercedes F1 car at Silverstone

berg stunned the team in 2016 when he won the title and then announced his retirement only days later.

Hamilton, who won his first title with McLaren, enjoys a celebrity lifestyle with plenty of interests — mainly in music and fashion — outside of Formula One and there have been ques-

tions about how long he will race on for.

The Briton, winner of 65 grands prix and with a record 76 career pole positions from 218 races, said yesterday that he was still hungry for success.

"The competitive passion that burns bright inside me is shared by every single member of this

group — always chasing the next improvement and digging even deeper to make sure we come out on top," he said.

"I can't wait to see what we can achieve together in the next two-and-a-half seasons."

The Briton is currently eight points adrift of Ferrari's Sebastian Vettel, also a four-times

world champion, at the halfway point in the season. Vettel has won four races this year to his rival's three.

Wolff recognised there had been plenty of speculation in recent months and was happy to put it to bed.

"It's good to put all of that to rest and get this thing announced," he said. "We signed the final documents this week and didn't want to keep people waiting any longer."



In 2014, He changed his helmet colour since his karting days from Yellow to White with red stripes. His father had painted his helmet yellow to identify him during the karting days

44

The number on Hamilton's car, which he has used since his junior career. Also the number of races he has won with Mercedes since he joined in 2013

Miami voters will have say on Beckham MLS stadium plan



Soccer mogul David Beckham (center) with MLS Commissioner Don Garber (left) and Miami-Dade Mayor Carlos Gimenez

AFP | Miami

Miami voters will have their say in November on David Beckham's latest plan for a Major League Soccer stadium development in the city, after a vote by city commissioners on Wednesday.

The Miami City Commission voted 3-2 to place a referendum on the November 6 ballot

that would open the door for the complex on city-owned land that is now occupied by a municipal golf course.

The proposal by retired England star Beckham and his business partners includes a 25,000-seat stadium for an expansion MLS club, along with 23 acres of youth football pitches with artificial turf, a 750-room hotel, restaurant, retail and of-

fice space plus a 58-acre public park.

The commission delayed a vote last week after a presentation by the investment group was followed by hours of public comment both for and against the plan.

Those opposed included a group from the First Tee Miami youth golf program based at the Melreese Country Club site.

Arsenal youngster Nwakali joins Porto on loan

AFP | London

Arsenal's Nigeria midfielder Kelechi Nwakali joined Portuguese champions Porto on a season-long loan yesterday.

Nwakali, 20, has yet to break into the Arsenal team since moving to the Premier League club in 2016.

He was sent on loan to Dutch side MVV Maastricht for the 2016-17 season and returned to Holland for a loan spell at VVV Venlo last term.

"Kelechi Nwakali will spend next season on loan with Portuguese side FC Porto. The deal is subject to the completion of regulatory processes," Arsenal said on Thursday.

Nwakali has played once for Nigeria's senior team after captaining his country to victory at the Under-17 World Cup in 2015.

Speaking to the Porto website, Nwakali added: "My main goal is to develop, improve my qualities and the other aspects I know I need to correct to grow in the way I play," he said.

'Wonderful start' for Talisca in China

AFP | Shanghai, China

Anderson Talisca revelled in a "wonderful start" after the Brazilian hit a dazzling debut hat-trick for Guangzhou Evergrande as they try to resurrect their challenge for an eighth straight Chinese Super League crown.

Talisca, who arrived on loan from Portuguese side Benfica during the summer transfer window, set up Guangzhou's first goal and added three of his own in a 4-0 thrashing of bottom-dwellers Guizhou Zhicheng as the season resumed Wednesday after a two-month summer and World Cup break.

"God's plans are wonderful! Great match by the whole team!" Talisca, 24, said in an Instagram post.

"Wonderful debut: 3 goals, 1 assist," he added.

Brace for yet more spin, Sri Lanka warns South Africa

AFP | Colombo

Rangana Herath warned South Africa yesterday to expect yet more spin in the second Test after the visitors were skittled for their lowest total since the Proteas' re-admission to international cricket.

Sri Lanka are chasing their first Test series win against the Proteas since 2006 and need just a draw to clinch the honours against the world's second ranked Test side.

South Africa lost the opening Test in Galle inside three days after being dispatched for 126 in the first innings and 73 in the second.

Herath said pitch conditions were ripe for a repeat of last week's drubbing, in which the left-arm spinner took five wickets and off-spinner Dilruwan Perera returned overall match figures of 10-78.

"If you see the surface, it's dry. It will be more of a spin friendly surface," the 40-year-old veteran spinner said ahead of the final Test starting Friday in Colombo.

"We have Dilruwan (Perera) and if we require we also have Dhananjaya (de Silva). He couldn't bowl in Galle, but he is certainly ready to bowl during games," Herath told reporters.

Proteas skipper Faf du Plessis top-scored with a gritty 49 while paceman Kagiso Rabada impressed with four wickets in Sri Lanka's first innings.

Rabada, who returned figures of 4-50, was ably supported by Dale Steyn and Vernon Philander in their first innings to bowl out the hosts for 287 runs, more than half of which were notched up by Sri Lankan opener Dimuth Karunaratne.

Du Plessis said his team will



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rely on their pace bowlers to come back hard at the hosts.

"If it doesn't rain, then we will have a dangerous weapon in our fast bowlers. Once again we have to make a call as to whether we are playing three seamers or two spinners," Du Plessis said.

Du Plessis added that South Africa was aiming to conquer local conditions in their bid to overtake India -- about to embark on a five-Test series in England -- and become the number one side.

"It is never easy winning away from home. When you are coming to the sub-continent, drawing a series is as good as winning a series," he said.

"It's tough and that's what the best teams do. We need to get to that number one position in Test cricket."

The next visitors to Sri Lanka will be England in October.