

# Russell apologises to Bottas after Imola outburst

Russell had speared his Williams into side of Bottas's car at Emilia Romagna Grand Prix

● A furious Russell emerged from the wreckage and confronted Bottas in his cockpit, slapping his helmet

AFP | Imola

George Russell apologised publicly to Formula One rival Valtteri Bottas on Monday for his behaviour after the pair collided at the Emilia Romagna Grand Prix.

"Yesterday wasn't my proudest day," the 23-year-old Briton said on social media.

The Williams driver had been trying to pass Bottas' Mercedes for ninth place on Sunday when they made contact at speed and crashed out, bringing the race to a halt. Neither was hurt and stewards declared it a racing incident.

Russell climbed out and confronted Bottas, still sitting in his wrecked car, and asked him whether he had wanted to kill them both.

He also accused the Finn of breaking a 'gentleman's agree-



George Russell (standing) and Valtteri Bottas in the wake of the crash

ment' with a dangerous tactical move and suggested Bottas had been harder with him because Russell, a Mercedes-managed driver, might be in the frame to take his seat.

"Having had time to reflect on what happened afterwards, I know I should have handled the whole situation better," said Russell.

"Emotions can run high in the heat of the moment and yesterday mine got the better of me. I apologise to Valtteri, to my team and to anyone who felt let down by my actions. That's not who I am and I expect more from myself as I know others expect more from me."

Russell, whose Mercedes powered team have scored just

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one point in the last two seasons, said he had learned some tough lessons and would be a better driver and person for the experience.

He recognised he had taken a risk in trying to pass, it had not paid off and he took responsibility for it.

Mercedes boss Toto Wolff said on Sunday that Bottas's car was almost a write-off and, with a cost cap in effect, the cost of repairs could limit future upgrades.

## Belarus star Vadim Kutsyi signs with BRAVE CF, calls for home debut in June

TDT | Manama

One of the biggest stars in the Eastern European scene, and certainly one of Belarus' most prominent names in Mixed Martial Arts nowadays, Vadim Kutsyi has made his long-awaited international breakthrough, signing with BRAVE Combat Federation.

Holding a professional record of 15 wins and a single loss, Kutsyi is a grappling specialist, with 7 of his wins coming by way of submission, but also has powerful hands, which led him to earn 5 career knockouts, and a stunning 80% finish-ratio.

Currently on a 8-win streak, which includes a rare Von Flue



choke submission, Kutsyi completely dominated the competition in the Eastern European scene before making his international debut and is set to bolster the already stacked Super Welterweight division.

With BRAVE Combat Federation heading to his hometown of Minsk in June, and making Belarus the 22nd nation to host a BRAVE CF fight night in history, Kutsyi did not waste time in asking for a spot in the card.

"I am delighted to share big news! I am now a BRAVE CF fighter, and a part of the fastest-growing organization in the world! Thank you to His Highness Shaikh Khaled and to president Mohammed Shahid. I want to fight at home on June 4th! Let's do this", he said.

BRAVE CF 51 will take place in Minsk and is being hosted in association with Rukh Sports Management.

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## Kingad sets sights on second ONE title shot

TDT | Manila

Second-ranked ONE Championship flyweight contender Danny "The King" Kingad of the Philippines is eager to don the 4oz. gloves, enter the octagon cage, and fight a worthy opponent again.

Forced to patiently wait for his next fight, the former world title challenger said that he's raring to get another shot at a second ONE title.

The 25-year-old Kingad (14-2) said that ONE Championship has not talked to him yet about its plans on his career, leaving him to only hope for a potential fight in the coming months.

He has been unable to compete since January last year. His scheduled bout with Kairat Akhmetov last December was nixed after one of Team Lakay's cornermen tested positive for COVID-19 a day before they were set to fly for Singapore.

"Last year was a really peculiar year. There were a lot of restrictions imposed at the start of the pandemic," said the Filipino warrior.

"We've never really experienced anything like that before. It was difficult to adjust to training. As a normal person, it was very difficult coping with so much uncertainty. Mentally, it has been very exhausting."

Several of his team mates have got fights in since the start of the pandemic and Kingad feels comfortable with the current routine.

"We've been able to adjust to the 'new normal' since then, and we've since gotten back to training. I'm looking forward to a better year this year."

Kingad fought for the ONE Championship flyweight title



Kingad is ready for that one big fight to the top

” I want to bring honor and glory to the Philippines, and I have only one goal on my mind, and that's making a run at ONE gold

DANNY KINGAD

in 2017. He was submitted by current champion Adriano Morales but went on to win seven of his next eight fights with the sole loss coming at the hands of Demetrious Johnson.

"I want to bring honor and glory to the Philippines, and I have only one goal on my mind, and that's making a run at ONE

gold," he said.

However, he acknowledged that one more win might be required to secure that title shot.

"I'm looking to earn another long-awaited shot at the title. I think I'm ready, I'm one big win away from getting to the top," he said.

Kingad is hoping he doesn't have to wait too long to find out who he will be fighting next. But whatever happens he says he has learned valuable lessons from a frustrating year.

"The biggest lesson I learned last year had to do with time management. Before, we would spend entire days training at the gym. Now, we're spending more time at home, which has its advantages and disadvantages," he said.

## Dubai group offers to host PBA season opener games

TDT | Manama

A group in Dubai has reportedly expressed interest in opening its doors again to host the Philippine Basketball Association (PBA) Season 46 Philippine Cup in the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

League insiders have confirmed that the same group that hosted the PBA games in 2019 is offering itself once more to stage the season opener this year.

While this might be a long shot, it's not entirely new and impossible for the pro league to accept the offer.

In October 2019, the Governors' Cup was held at the Coca-Cola Arena in City Walk, Dubai with games featuring crowd darlings Barangay Ginebra, San Miguel Beer and NLEX.

Last year, that same group also sent a proposal to the PBA to host the Season 46 bubble. The league, however, thumbed down the idea due to time constraints. In particular, the offer came in September and the league wanted to resume play by October.

The Coca-Cola Arena was among the 20 venues that bid for the hosting of the bubble, which was eventually awarded to Clark, Pampanga. The bubble play was held for two months that saw Ginebra emerge as the new Philippine Cup kings.

Still, the league greatly appreciated the offer, and Dubai very much remains an option for them. Commissioner Willie Marcial said back then that they might discuss bringing the All-Star festivities there in the future.

Until now, Asia's pioneering pro league has not finalized yet the opening date and schedule



The opening of PBA's 46th season is getting delayed due to the pandemic

— after the implementation of the enhanced community quarantine (ECQ) and modified ECQ prevented them from an initial April 18 start.

"I think we can start by the first week of June depending on the situation and the result of our meetings," said Marcial as he remained optimistic the PBA could hold an All-Filipino and an import-laden second conference this year despite the rising COVID-19 cases.

The governors are still evaluating whether the league will again go into a bubble or a closed-circuit environment (home-gym-home).

A local government unit (LGU) is also offering itself as host of the Philippine Cup.

With Clark, Pampanga — the place where the PBA held its 2020 Philippine Cup bubble — looking unavailable as it will host the FIBA Asia Cup Qualifiers set from June 16 to 20, the PBA is looking at other options, if and when it decides to hold another bubble.

Earlier, Marcial said that the league is now looking at a potential June opening — still with a two-conference format



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