

Pochettino plays down decision to take off Messi in PSG win



Lionel Messi looks at Mauricio Pochettino as he walks off the pitch in PSG's game against Lyon

AFP | Paris

Paris Saint-Germain coach Mauricio Pochettino defended his decision to take off Lionel Messi as the former Barcelona man made his home debut in Sunday's Ligue 1 game against Lyon.

Messi was outstanding in the first half at the Parc des Princes but began to fade from the game after the break and was replaced by Achraf Hakimi for the final quarter of an hour with the score 1-1 at the time.

PSG won 2-1 with a stoppage-time headed goal by substitute Mauro Icardi.

"Everyone knows we have great players, a squad of 35. It is my decision. We can only have 11 players on the field at one time," Pochettino said.

"I only think about the best decision in each game, for each player, just as every coach does.

"We are here to make decisions. Sometimes people will be happy with them, sometimes they won't be."

Messi appeared to reject

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MAURICIO POCHETTINO

Pochettino's hand as he walked past his coach towards the Parc des Princes bench.

Pochettino dismissed any suggestion the six-time Ballon d'Or winner was unhappy, saying: "I asked him how he was and he said he was fine."

Messi, who hit the woodwork from a free-kick in the first half, is still looking for his first goal in a PSG shirt.

Kolkata beat Bangalore in Kohli's 200th IPL game

AP | Abu Dhabi

Kolkata Knight Riders spoiled Virat Kohli's 200th appearance for Royal Challengers Bangalore in an emphatic nine-wicket victory in the Indian Premier League yesterday.

Kohli, who is quitting the Bangalore captaincy after this season, won the toss but scored only 5 as Andre Russell (3-9) and Varun Chakravarthy (3-13) routed Bangalore for 92 with an over to spare.

Kolkata, desperately needing a victory to stay in the competition for the playoffs, raced to 94-1 in just 10 overs with Shubman Gill (48) missing out on a deserved half-century and Venkatesh Iyer unbeaten on 41 off 27 balls.

Gill tried to complete a half-century with a big hit off legspinner Yuzvendra Chahal but holed out at long off when Kolkata needing just 11 more runs.

"Bit of a wake up call so that we know what we should work on," Kohli said. "You can make the argument that we were rusty but as professionals you're expected to turn up and adjust. Sometimes it can take you a game, I hope not two."

Earlier, Kohli hit a cover drive to the boundary off fast bowler Prasidh Krishna's first over before falling lbw to the paceman off the next ball while attempting to flick the ball to square leg.

Russell took the spine out of Bangalore's batting with an



Venkatesh Iyer of Kolkata Knight Riders plays a shot

BETTER YOU KNOW

Venkatesh Iyer of Kolkata Knight Riders scored 41 off 27 balls in his debut match, playing a crucial role in the win

immaculate yorker that clean-bowled AB de Villiers off the first ball the South African faced.

Varun, included in India's T20 World Cup squad as the

Brief Scores
Royal Challengers Bangalore (Devdutt Padikkal 24, KS Bharat 16; Varun Chakravarthy 3-13 Andre Russell 3-9)
Kolkata Knight Riders (Shubman Gill 48, Venkatesh Iyer 41; Yuzvendra Chahal 1-23)

fifth spinner, hurried the middle order collapse by dismissing Glenn Maxwell (10), Sachin Baby (7), and Wanindu Hasaranga (0).

Varun also featured in a run out of Kyle Jamieson and wrapped up the innings by taking a clean catch of last man Mohammed Siraj (8), giving Russell a third wicket.

Kolkata moved up to fifth in the standings, and Bangalore remained at third.

Van Dijk wins world time-trial title for second time

Dutch ace Ellen van Dijk beats Olympic medallists to win title at cycling worlds

AFP | London

Eight years after her first world championship title, Ellen van Dijk got over the disappointment of missing out on the Olympics by winning a second gold medal in the women's time trial yesterday.

Taking advantage of a flat course through the Flanders region of Belgium, the Dutch rider kept the pedals of her bike churning in a perfectly paced cadence to beat her closest rival Marlen Reusser of Switzerland by 10.29 seconds at the road cycling world championships.

"For me, time trial is my favorite discipline," said Van Dijk, who won her first time trial world title in 2013. "It's something I love with all my heart, and it just feels like it's my discipline. I knew it was going to be a really good course for me, and I put everything into this. It's a dream come true."

Van Dijk, who suffered serious injuries two years ago including a broken arm and broken pelvis, was not selected for the Tokyo Games this summer after she was diagnosed with COVID-19 earlier in the season.

"This was always a big goal



Netherlands' Ellen Van Dijk competes during the Women Elite individual time trial race

of me, this time of the year, to be super good here especially after I could not ride the Olympics, which of course was a big disappointment," she said. "And also my Spring classics did not work out because I got the coronavirus."

Van Dijk signaled her return to top form this month at the European championships, where she won the road race and finished runner-up in the time trial.

While Van Dijk was able to keep a fast tempo over the 30.3-kilometer course, Reusser ran out of gas near the end and had to be content with a runner-up finish on the day she turned 30. She also claimed silver last year and was runner-up

at the Tokyo Olympics.

Reusser led at both intermediate checks but faded over the last 10 kilometers.

"In the last couple of weeks she beat me in every time trial, so I knew it would become super, super difficult and I would have to ride the best, best ever time trial," Van Dijk said. "When I saw she lost seconds in the end then I could not quite believe it. It has been a dream for so long."

The Swiss athlete beat Van Dijk to win the European championship.

"It was also a big dream of mine to win today," Reusser said. "It was the biggest goal of my season, I have to say I'm really disappointed."

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ELLEN VAN DIJK

Van Dijk was so fast that she caught Lisa Klein with 9.5 kilometers left before the finish line in the historic center of Brugge, the city known as the Venice of the North for its picturesque canals and bridges. The German rider rolled off the starting ramp 1 minute, 30 seconds before Van Dijk.

Olympic champion Annemiek van Vleuten, another Dutch rider, was third, more than 24 seconds off the pace.

She said the flat course did not suit her but was graceful in defeat, saying the rainbow jersey will look good on her teammate next year.

Aged 46, two-time world champion Amber Neben of the United States finished fourth, just weeks after suffering fractures in her pelvis during a training ride.

FIFA to consult football leaders on international calendar

AFP | London

FIFA has invited football's national federations to an online summit on September 30 to discuss the international calendar, in its push to hold the World Cup every two years instead of four.

World football's governing body wants to launch a "new consultation phase" for the international women's and men's calendar, set to expire at the end of 2023 and 2024 respectively.

"There is a broad consensus within the game that the international match calendar should be reformed and im-



FIFA logo is seen at the entrance of its headquarters

proved," FIFA said in a statement yesterday.

"Following invitations to stakeholders, including all confederations, at the beginning of September, discussions are being organised in the coming weeks.

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