

Self-isolation makes training easier: Ricciardo

Reuters | London

Australian Daniel Ricciardo reckons self-isolation makes for a perfect training camp -- although it helps to be on the family farm in western Australia with a swimming pool and some machinery to play with.

Speaking in a live Instagram Q+A organized by his Renault Formula One team, the Australian talked about what he was doing to pass the time waiting for a coronavirus ravaged season to start.

The opening race in Melbourne on March 15 was cancelled, along with the Monaco Grand Prix, and Formula One has said it hopes to start a reduced season some time in the European summer.

Six races have been postponed and await rescheduling. "I know it's probably going to be a while till we race again, but I'm not allowing myself to go back into holiday mode," said Ricciardo.

"Training is definitely the thing that's keeping me with that competitive mindset. You get some anger out when you train, so that's my medicine for now."

"I feel like now it's kind of perfect to get in shape," added the 30-year-old. "We're forced



Daniel Ricciardo holds his helmet after a press meet

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to stay in, there's no jet lag, no airports, we can really create a

real training camp, which we don't always have."

Ricciardo said he expected to see other drivers looking pretty fit when they finally got back together again, even if they might have so much pent up aggression that they all collided at the first corner.

The Australian said he might just qualify last to avoid the carnage and cash in.

Ricciardo obligingly jumped into his swimming pool after agreeing to do so if enough people urged him to and revealed his other activities involved driving buggies and watching the sheep being sheared.

He also posted a picture on Instagram of himself singing along while driving a tractor.

Wimbledon to hold 'emergency meeting' with postponement or cancellation on cards

AFP | London

Wimbledon could be postponed or even cancelled after All England Club chiefs called an "emergency meeting" for next week to discuss whether to go ahead with this year's tournament amid the coronavirus outbreak.

Wimbledon is set to start in London on June 29, but the continuing spread of the virus has caused havoc with the sporting schedule and the grass-court Grand Slam could be the next major event to be delayed.

"The AELTC can confirm that it is continuing a detailed evaluation of all scenarios for The Championships 2020, including postponement and cancellation, as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak," an All England Club statement said on Wednesday.

"An emergency meeting of the AELTC Main Board is scheduled for next week, and in preparation we are communicating closely with the LTA, and with the ATP, WTA, ITF and the other Grand Slams."

The French Open was the first of this year's three remaining Grand Slams to be postponed due to the virus.

Originally scheduled to run from May 24 to June 7, the clay-court tournament was moved to September 20 by the French Tennis Federation in a move that angered some players.

The new date for Roland Garros is just one week after the US Open finishes and clashes with the Laver Cup, the popular exhibition team competition set up by Roger Federer and featuring leading players from Europe and the rest of the world.

Wimbledon, whose singles titles were won by Novak Djokovic and Simona Halep last year, is the crown jewel of the



Serbia's Novak Djokovic (R) holds the winner's trophy and passes runner up Switzerland's Roger Federer (L) during the presentation at the end of 2019 Wimbledon Championships.

sport's four Grand Slams.

But moving it deeper into the tennis calendar might be tricky after the outcry over the unilateral French Open switch.

Euro 2020 and the Tokyo Olympics have both been put back by a year to allow the health crisis to be resolved.

'Significant risk'

Pressure is growing on the All England Club to make a decision and organisers have ruled out playing the tournament behind closed doors.

"The build for The Championships is due to begin at the end of April," the statement said.

"At this time, based on the advice we have received from the public health authorities, the very short window available to us to stage The Championships due to the nature of our surface suggests that postponement is not without significant risk and difficulty. Playing behind closed doors has been formally ruled out."

Given it takes two months to get the Wimbledon site

ready for the event, a decision needs to be made soon and All England Club chief executive Richard Lewis expects the call will be made at the emergency summit.

"The unprecedented challenge presented by the Covid-19 crisis continues to affect our way of life in ways that we could not have imagined, and our thoughts are with all those affected in the UK and around the world," Lewis said.

"The single most important consideration is one of public health, and we are determined to act responsibly through the decisions we make."

"We are working hard to bring certainty to our plans for 2020 and have convened an emergency meeting of the AELTC main board for next week, at which a decision will be made."

The Indian Wells Masters 1000 was the first ATP Tour event to be hit by the impact of the pandemic.

The men's and women's tours are currently suspended until June 7, which includes the entire clay-court campaign.

Leeds players, coaches agree wage deferral so club staff can be paid

Reuters | London

Leeds United's players, coaching staff and senior management have voluntarily deferred their wages to ensure the club's 272 members of full-time and casual staff are paid in the coming months, the English second-tier club said.

The coronavirus pandemic has brought sport to a virtual standstill worldwide and English soccer is suspended until at least April 30, with the hiatus hitting the revenue of clubs across the country.

Leeds said the lack of matches among other things will cost the club "several million pounds" each month, which led to coach Marcelo Bielsa and his squad deciding collectively to defer wages to keep the club running in "uncertain times".

"My players have demonstrated an incredible sense of unity and togetherness and I'm proud of their actions," Leeds' director of football Victor Orta said.

French sports minister evokes Tour de France spectator ban



Cyclists ride down the Champs Elysees avenue with the Arc de Triomphe in background

AFP | Paris

French sports minister Roxana Maracineanu says this year's Tour de France could be staged without spectators in a bid to combat the coronavirus pandemic.

The French government is in talks with Tour organisers about the future of the June 27-July 19 edition of world cycling's top event which draws more than 10 millions fans annually to the roads of France.

All options are being considered including postponement or cancellation of the event which has been raced every year in peacetime since 1903, the minister said.

"Everything is imaginable. We have (imposed spectator bans) for other competitions

before, even though it won't have the same impact because the business model of the Tour doesn't depend on ticket sales like football or rugby," she told France Bleu radio station.

The postponement of the Tokyo Olympics and the Euro 2020 football championships has focused attention on the Tour which winds its way for thousands of miles through the towns and villages of France in a wide loop for three weeks ending on the Champs Elysees in Paris.

"I think that today everybody is aware and responsible about the period of isolation we are going through and everyone knows the reasons and the benefits that it can bring to all," she said.

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