

Rovanpera wins Safari Rally in Toyota 1-2-3-4 finish



Kalle Rovanpera in action  
Reuters | London

Kalle Rovanpera won Kenya's Safari Rally yesterday, with the young Finn leading a Toyota sweep of the top four places to stretch his world championship lead to 65 points.

The last time Toyota managed a 1-2-3-4 finish was at the same event in 1993 won by Juha Kankkunen.

Welsh team mate Elfyn Evans finished second, 52.8 seconds behind the 21-year-old, with Japan's Takamoto Katsuta third and eight-times world champion Sebastien Ogier fourth.

"I have to say, this was the hardest rally I have ever done," said Rovanpera, who battled through mud and torrential rain on Saturday and took his fourth win in six rounds.

"To have four cars like this with no issues: it is clearly the strongest and fastest car. The team did a fantastic job."

Hyundai's Thierry Neuville, fifth in the rally and second in the championship, won the final 'Hell's Gate' Power Stage for five bonus points.

Bagnaia wins Dutch MotoGP after Quartararo crashes out

Game on in the title fight as Francesco Bagnaia wins a wild Dutch GP

Bagnaia back in World Championship contention as Quartararo crashes twice at Assen

AFP | Amsterdam

Italy's Francesco Bagnaia won the Dutch MotoGP yesterday to reignite his title challenge after championship leader Fabio Quartararo crashed out of an incident-packed race.

Frenchman Quartararo fell twice, flipping spectacularly over his handlebars in the second incident although he walked away afterwards, shaking his fists in anger at his error.

Bagnaia, in contrast, stayed out of trouble on his Ducati to record his third victory of the season and a welcome full points score after failing to finish in the last two races.

"I am so happy after two difficult races," the Italian said.

In a great day for Italian riders, Marco Bezzecchi on a Ducati for Valentino Rossi's VR46 team was second while Spanish rider Maverick Vinales rounded out the podium in the 11th race of the 20-season.



Francesco Bagnaia celebrates with the trophy

Quartararo heads into the summer break with a 21-point lead over Aleix Espargaro, who was fourth yesterday.

The Frenchman fell on the fifth then on the 13th lap out of 26 in front of an enthusiastic crowd in the Netherlands.

Even if he quickly got back on his feet, he had to give up after this second accident.

The Frenchman got off to a bad start and was quickly overtaken by Aprilia rider Espargaro.

It was while he was trying to recover second place, in an attempt on the inside of a bend, that Quartararo lost control of his Yamaha, ending up in the gravel although he was soon back in the saddle, albeit in last place.

But a few laps later, his race was over after an acrobatic tumble.

**Change of fortune**

"I made a rookie's mistake. I attacked as it is was the last lap and the last bend," Quartararo said of his first fall, which he said had left something feeling "not right" with his bike.

As soon as the race was over he apologised to Espargaro for forcing him off the track in the

BETTER YOU KNOW

Bagnaia stayed out of trouble on his Ducati to record his third victory of the season and a welcome full points score after failing to finish in the last two races

I made a rookie's mistake. I attacked as it is was the last lap and the last bend

FRANCESCO BAGNAIA

the championship last year, he had looked poised to challenge for the title just a few weeks ago, but subsequently slipped to 91 points off the pace before this round of the season at the circuit known as the "Cathedral of Speed".

Ahead of the next race at Silverstone on August 7 the 25-year-old from Turin moved up from sixth to fourth, cutting the gap to Quartararo to 66 points.

In third overall is Johann Zarco, who said he had suffered a "very difficult" day after trailing in 13th on his Ducati-Prima.

"It was really hard maintaining my pace and little by little I slipped out of the fight," he said.

"So I'm disappointed, obviously, but it's good to get another three points on the board and to see I'm still in third place in the standings.

"But it's no fun to come in an exhausted 13th!"

BTA organises junior awards ceremony

TDT | Manama

Bahrain Tennis Academy (BTA) held its 18th Annual Junior Awards Ceremony for 10-and-under players at the Dilmun Club in Saar.

The ceremony was held to honour the most outstanding players of the 2021/22 season.

16 awards were presented across two sections: 'Best of 2021/22' (12 categories) and 'Player of the Year' (four age categories).

Some of the categories included Best Forehand, Most Improved Player and Best Attitude. Five players were short-listed for each award and then the winner chosen based on the criteria for each category while also taking into account each player's level and experience in the game.

Winners of the prestigious Player of the Year awards were Yousif Khonji (four-and-under), Aarush Shah (six-and-under), Emme Texmo (eight-and under) and Sarah Bermas (10-and-under). Other category winners were Dylan Barrie, Niall Darwish, Dhruvi Hemant, Ali Alaali, Andreas D'Souza and Ali Hadi Mubarak.

Sarah Bermas was the star of the ceremony by being nominated in ten categories and claiming five awards.



10-and-under award nominees and winners with BTA coaches

The awards were presented by BTA Director, Dan Barrie, who said, "We were thankful to have been able to complete our first full season in three years. The kids have really thrived by being able to get back to regular training."

McLaughlin breaks own 400 meters hurdles record with 'Track Town, USA' magic

Reuters | Washington

Focus, skill and a little bit of "Track Town, USA" magic propelled Sydney McLaughlin to break her own world record - again - in the 400 meters hurdles on Saturday.

The Olympic gold medallist won the US championships final in 51.41 seconds at Hayward Field, improving upon her own benchmark time at the American track haven of Eugene, Oregon.

The 22-year-old wrested the lead early and never gave the rest of the field a fighting chance, clinching her spot in the world championships in front of an adoring crowd.

"It's Track Town, USA, what can you expect?" said McLaughlin. "Any time I come here I can just feel something amazing is going to happen."

She previously set the record with a 51.90-second performance at the US Olympic trials in Eugene almost a year ago to the day, only to shatter that figure in Tokyo, collecting gold in 51.46.



Sydney McLaughlin

Wimbledon doesn't care what looks cool, says Kyrgios on strict dress code

Reuters | London

Nick Kyrgios would rather wear all black when competing at Wimbledon instead of adhering to the all-white dress code, with the Australian saying yesterday that the Championships were out of tune with what looks 'cool' on court.

The grasscourt major is famous for its strict dress code and does not even allow players to wear off-white or cream, while the measuring tape comes out to ensure the trim of colour on necklines or sleeves are no wider than a centimetre.

"I always want to wear all black, ob-



Nick Kyrgios

I think it would be cool to allow, like, a black headband or black sweatband. I think it would look cool. Obviously Wimbledon doesn't really care what looks cool... I don't think it will ever change

NICK KYRGIOS

viously," Kyrgios said with a smile at a news conference ahead of his first round match with British wildcard Paul Jubb.

"But I don't think it's something that's going to change, I don't know.

"I think it would be cool to allow, like, a black headband or black sweatband. I think it would look cool. Obviously Wimbledon doesn't really care what looks cool... I don't think it will ever change."

But the prestige associated with Wimbledon was still enough to lure Kyrgios to compete despite the lack of ranking points this year due to the ban on Russian and Belarusian players.

The decision essentially reduced Wimbledon to an exhibition event but the major's organisers are also dishing out record prize money to the tune of

40.3 million pounds (\$49.42 million).

Kyrgios, who said he did not agree with the ban as the sport's number one ranked Daniil Medvedev would not be playing, added that he did not pick tournaments based on the ranking points on offer.

"As a kid, when I watched Wimbledon, when I wanted to play it, I wasn't thinking about ranking points. I was thinking about playing in the most prestigious tournament in the world. That's all I'm here for," he said.

"There's people that are (saying) 'I'm not going to play Wimbledon because of ranking points. I'm going to go play a challenger that week'.