

The Peninsula SPORT

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Confident Kerber eyes top spot

Armstrong Vas
The Peninsula

German World No. 2 Angelique Kerber, the number one seed at this week's Qatar Total Open, is eager to claw her way back to the top of the WTA rankings summit.

Getting her 'confidence back' and winning more matches consistently are also two of the goals in the new season, the former Australian Open winner said yesterday.

"It's really important to play good tennis, to try to improve my game. This is actually my goal," Kerber, 29, said yesterday.

Kerber said winning more matches and playing bold tennis remained a top priority as she aims to regain the fantastic form of 2016 which saw her win the Australian and US Open titles besides a silver medal at the Rio Olympic Games.

"I will do my best in the next few weeks, few months. If you play good tennis, then you have (positive) results. This is actually for me the most important thing, to win matches again, getting the confidence back. The we will see what's happen in the next few months," Kerber said.

The German dethroned the seemingly invincible Serena Williams on September 12 last year to become the oldest woman and the first German since Steffi Graf to take the number one spot.

But her loss in Round 4 at the Australian Open and Serena's victory Down Under saw her surrender the ranking after 20 weeks at the top.

Kerber had a somewhat lacklustre start to the season, losing in the quarter-finals in Brisbane, and the first round in Sydney before falling to CoCo Vandeweghe of US at the Australian Open.

"You know, I had like few weeks off where I

played matches," said the left hander who has 10 singles titles against her name.

"After Australia I went back and I spent few days at home, doing nothing actually, just being at home. It was very cold. But then I started practicing again," she said.

Kerber said she feels battle ready for the Qatar Open challenge after the rest at home.

"I think it was not bad to get a bigger rest, to get ready for these two (Qatar and Dubai) tournaments. I'm feeling good. The first rounds are always a little bit tougher because you have to get used to the tournament feeling again, to the match things. But, yeah, I think that I'm ready," she said.

Kerber was one of the few seeded players who checked into Doha very early to get accustomed to the conditions in Qatar.

The former World No.1 has been handed a bye in the first round, along with

Star cast at Qatar Total Open

► **Top seed at this week's Qatar Total Open, the German World No. 2 is eager to claw her way back to the top of the WTA rankings summit.**

► **Also playing this week in Doha are the world numbers three, five, six and seven - Karolina Pliskova, Dominika Cibulkova, Agnieszka Radwanska and Garbine Muguza.**

German World No. 2 Angelique Kerber



three other seeded players, and will face the winner of the tie between Irina-Camelia Begu of Romania and Danila Kasatkina of Russia.

Kerber played Kasatkina this year and lost to her in Sydney and is ready to set even the record if the Russian wins against her first round opponent and meets her in the second round.

"She's a tough opponent. You know, it's always tough to play against the young girls that are coming right now," Kerber said.

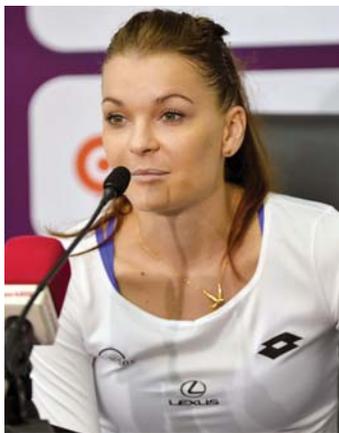
"I'm looking forward to the game. If I have the chance to play against her (Kasatkina) in my first round, it would have been a good match. Yeah, I am ready to play. It will be a tough match. I played against her in Sydney. She played a good match. I was not playing my best at that time."

The German said Kasatkina has made rapid progress since last year.

"She's a young player. She improved a lot from the last year," Kerber said in response to another question.

Last year Kerber lost in the second round in Doha in straight sets to China's Zheng Saisai. -- after receiving a bye in the first.

If Kerber wins this week



Poland's Agnieszka Radwanska speaks during a press conference held at the Khalifa International Tennis and Squash Complex in Doha yesterday.

in Doha and next week in Dubai, she will regain the coveted number one spot from Williams.

Besides Kerber, the other seeded players who are taking part in the February 13 to 18 tournament include Karolina Pliskova of

Czech Republic, Dominika Cibulkova of Slovakia, Agnieszka Radwanska of Poland, Barbara Strycova of Czech Republic, Elena Vesnina of Russia, Timea Bacsinszky of Switzerland and Garbine Muguza of Spain.

Cibulkova targets rise in WTA Tour rankings

The Peninsula

Slovakian World No. 5 Dominika Cibulkova is confident of improving her rank at this week's Qatar Total Open.

"I'm 100% convinced I can improve on the rankings. This is the mentality I need to have. I need to have the mentality (that) I can improve my ranking. I can see it go even further," the 27-year-old said during a press briefing held in Doha yesterday.

She also said that she is trying to get used to new top-5 rankings.

"I'm in this situation for the first time. Of course, you feel bigger pressure. The players just come on the court and they really want to beat you because they have nothing to lose. To be in top five is still different position. I'm trying not to panic that this is something new for me. I'm trying to work on myself every day and get used to it," she added.

Cibulkova, seeded third in Doha, will play against Russia's Anastasia Pavlyuchenkova or a qualifier in the second round of the Qatar Total Open.



Dominika Cibulkova

QRF to host Beach Touch Rugby on National Sport Day at Katara



The Peninsula

The annual Beach Touch Rugby challenge of Qatar Rugby Federation (QRF) will be held on the National Sport Day (NSD) in association with Woood and Katara, organisers of the event informed.

The NSD event is limited to 16 teams only and will be played at Beach no.5 from 8am to 6pm.

The beach challenge is sponsored WOQOD and is expected to have plenty of passion and flair but the QRF's emphasis is on 'sports fun in the sun'.

The 16 teams vary in diversity

and skill. Some of the teams are rugby clubs or touch rugby teams while some will represent schools or corporate organisations. There are two teams who have never played rugby before (WOQOD and Katara) will provide a fresh group of players impressing on health and fitness in the work place.

Teams will be divided into 4 preliminary pools of 6 teams. The top eight qualify for the quarter-finals.

There will be light entertainment for families and kids, DJ music, beach prizes, and lots giveaways. The event is free and open to everyone.

PARTICIPATING TEAMS

POOL A: Blue Thunder, Blue Phoenix, Al Khor, Al Shaheens

POOL B: Hurricanes, Double Blue, Pirates, Blue Falcons

POOL C: Kandy Reds, Storm, Katara Wolves, Sherborne

POOL D: Colombo Blues, Chiefs, Qatar 1, WOQOD

Bangladesh battle to save Test as India scent victory

Hyderabad
Reuters

India's spinners sent back the top three Bangladesh batsmen in the second innings of the one-off Test at Hyderabad yesterday to keep the hosts on course for victory.

Chasing an improbable target of 459 in four sessions for a win, Bangladesh reached 103-3 at stumps on the fourth day of their maiden Test in India, the world's top-ranked nation.

Shakib Al Hasan was unbeaten on 21 for Bangladesh with Mahmudullah nine not out at the other end.

Off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin, who during the day became the fastest to reach 250 wickets in Tests, dismissed Tamim Iqbal (3) and Mominul Haque (27) while spin partner Ravindra Jadeja picked up the wicket of Soumya Sarkar, who made 42.

Sarkar and Mominul added 60 for the second wicket but both left-handers were out in the space of 14 deliveries, dampening the touring side's hopes of



India's captain Virat Kohli (left) and Ravichandran Ashwin celebrate the wicket of Bangladesh's Shakib Al Hasan on the third day of a solo Test match between India and Bangladesh at the Rajiv Gandhi International Cricket Stadium in Hyderabad on Saturday.

saving the Test match. Cheteshwar Pujara hit an unbeaten 54 off 58 balls as India declared their second innings on 159 for four at tea.

The hosts batted for 29 overs and scored at a rate of more than five runs per over with useful contributions from captain Virat Kohli (38) and Ajinkya Rahane (28). Paceman Taskin and Shakib shared the four Indian wickets.

In the morning session, Bangladesh captain Mushfiqur Rahim registered his fifth Test hundred before his side were bundled out for 388 as the hosts took a first-innings lead of 209.

The 29-year-old wicket-keeper-batsman was the last man out for his side on 127 with Bangladesh's innings ending shortly before lunch. Kohli opted against enforcing the follow-on after his bowlers needed almost an entire session to pick up Bangladesh's last four wickets.

Resuming on 322-6, the visitors got off to a bad start as seamer Bhuvneshwar Kumar breached the defence of half-century Mehedi Hasan with

the fourth ball of the morning without a run being added to their overnight total. Paceman Umesh Yadav, the most impressive of India's bowlers, got Tajul Islam to glove one back to wicketkeeper Wriddhiman Saha, raising fears for Mushfiqur that he could run out of partners before reaching three figures.

However, Taskin Ahmed stayed with his captain for a 39-run ninth-wicket stand, during which Mushfiqur scored freely. The diminutive right-hander top-edged Ishant Sharma for a six and then reached his century when the lanky bowler miss-fielded near the boundary to allow a four.

He was finally out, caught down the leg side to Ashwin, who reached 250 Test wickets with the dismissal. Umesh finished with three wickets, while Ashwin and Jadeja picked up two wickets apiece.



Durant fires 34 points to guide Thunder to big win

Los Angeles
AFP

Kevin Durant was in hostile territory as he returned to Oklahoma City on Saturday, but shut out the noise to lead the Golden State Warriors to a 130-114 victory over his former team the Thunder.

Durant scored 34 points and pulled down nine rebounds in his first game in Oklahoma City since he departed as a free agent for Golden State after last season.

The jeers and catcalls greeted him at pre-game warm-ups and didn't let up until the Warriors had stretched their league-leading record to 46-8.

"It was a fun game," Durant said. "I actually thought it would be a little louder. To be on the other side of it, to be able to calm all these guys down as they boo you is kind of fun."

"I've got to embrace it," Durant added.

"That's all I can do. And

keep playing my game." Stephen Curry and Klay Thompson scored 26 points each for the Warriors, who withstood a 47-point performance from Russell Westbrook, once the other half of a star duo with Durant in Oklahoma.

The two traded a couple of on-court barbs, which Durant passed off as normal trash talk, and despite the palpable tension Warriors coach Steve Kerr said it wasn't the worst such reception he'd seen from fans for a former favorite.

That was the greeting LeBron James got in Cleveland in 2010, after he'd departed for the Miami Heat.

"I think that one might have been a little nastier," Kerr said. After winning two titles in Miami, James famously returned to Cleveland and led the Cavaliers to last season's championship.

He was in full flight on Saturday, scoring 27 points in the Cavs's 125-109 victory over the Denver Nuggets.

Irving added 27 points of his own and Love scored 16 for Cleveland, who led by as many as 22 points in the third quarter.

After a tight first half, the Cavaliers scored the first 18 points of the third. Denver missed their first seven shots of the second half and turned the ball over twice as Cleveland surged ahead.

SCOREBOARD	
India (1 innings):	687-6 decl
Bangladesh (1 innings):	
T Iqbal (run out)	24
S Sarkar c Saha b Yadav	15
M Haque b Ashwin	27
Mominul b Ashwin	28
S Al Hasan c Saha b Ashwin	82
M Rahim c Saha b Ashwin	127
S Rahman b Jadeja	16
Mehedi Hasan b Kumar	51
Tajul Islam c Saha b Yadav	10
Ishan Ahmed c Rahane b Jadeja	8
K Islam Rabbi (not out)	0
Extras (lb-w)	15
Total (all-out)	388
Fall of wickets:	1-38, 2-44, 3-64, 4-109, 5-216, 6-255, 7-322, 8-339, 9-376, 10-388.
Bowling:	Kumar 21-5-23-1, Sharma 20-5-69-1, Ashwin 25-5-98-2, Yadav 25-6-84-3, Jadeja 33-8-70-2.
India (1 innings):	
M Vijay c Rahim b Ahmed	7
L Rahul c Rahim b Ahmed	10
C Pujara (not out)	54
V Kohli c Mahmudullah b Shakib	38
A Rahane b Shakib	28
R Jadeja (not out)	16
Extras (lb-w)	6
Total (for 4 wickets)	159
Fall of wickets:	1-12, 2-23, 3-90, 4-128.
Bowling:	Tajul 6-1-29-0, Ahmed 7-0-43-2, Shabaz 9-0-50-2, Hasan 7-0-32-0.
Did not bat:	W Saha, R Ashwin, M Kumar, U Yadav, I Sharma.
Bangladesh (1 innings):	
T Iqbal c Kohli b Ashwin	3
S Sarkar c Rahane b Jadeja	42
M Haque c Rahane b Ashwin	27
Mahmudullah (batting)	29
Shabaz Ahmed (batting)	7
Extras (lb-w)	1
Total (for 3 wickets)	103
Fall of wickets:	1-11, 2-71, 3-75.
Bowling:	Kumar 5-2-14-0, Ashwin 16-6-34-2, Sharma 3-0-19-0 (nb), Yadav 3-0-9-0, Jadeja 8-2-27-1.

NBA RESULTS			
Boston	112	Utah	104
Houston	133	Phoenix	102
Dallas	112	Orlando	80
Golden State	130	Oklahoma	114
Cleveland	125	Denver	109
Philadelphia	117	Miami	109
Milwaukee	116	Indiana	100
LA Clippers	107	Charlotte	102

Rangers' Lundqvist makes NHL history with 400th win

New York
AFP

The New York Rangers's Henrik Lundqvist (pictured) became the first European-born goalie to win 400 career NHL games on Saturday as his team rallied for a 4-1 victory over the Colorado Avalanche.

Sweden's Lundqvist made 32 saves and Kevin Klein scored twice as the Rangers stretched their winning streak to five consecutive games.

Fans at Madison Square Garden were on their feet in the closing minute cheering Lundqvist, who became just the third goalie in league history to win 400 games with one franchise. He's just the 12th goaltender overall to win 400 career games.

The Rangers, trailing 2-1 after two periods, scored twice in the opening 5:36 of the third to regain the lead.

Klein hammered a slap shot past Avalanche goaltender Calvin Pickard at 2:50, and Rick Nash scored his 16th goal of the season less than three minutes later off a gorgeous set-up from Derek Stepan. Kevin Hayes scored an empty-net goal with 1:38 to play to put the game away.



Bacsinszky beats wasp sting as Fed Cup hots up

Paris
AFP

Switzerland's Timea Bacsinszky overcame being stung by a wasp to beat French rival Alize Cornet in the Fed Cup as three of the four World Group ties ended all-square on Saturday.

The Swiss were 1-1 against France in Geneva while defending champions the Czech Republic also split the opening rubbers with Spain in Ostrava as did top-flight debutants Belarus against the Netherlands in Minsk.

The United States were closing in on a 2-0 lead over Germany when rain halted action in Hawaii.

Bacsinszky downed Cornet 7-5, 6-4 but only after needing treatment when she was stung on her arm by a wasp at 3-3 in the first set of the clash at Geneva's Palexpo arena.

The Swiss number one immediately dunked her left elbow in a courtyard bucket of water before leaving the court for further treatment on the sting.

When she returned, she broke Cornet's serve before going on to secure eventual victory on a fourth match point.

"Who would have thought that we would have wasps in Switzerland in February," said Bacsinszky, the world number 16. She added: "The last time I



got stung was a long time ago, and I ended up in hospital, so I had a little panic today."

France, the runners-up to the Czechs last season, eventually levelled the quarter-final when 23rd-ranked Kristina Mladenovic eased past her best friend Belinda Bencic 6-3, 6-4.

The Czechs were tied 1-1 with Spain after number-one players Karolina Pliskova and Garbine Muguruza won their

opening rubbers. World number seven Muguruza, the French Open champion, beat 17th-ranked Barbora Strycova 6-0, 3-6, 6-1 before third-ranked Pliskova levelled the tie after seeing off world number 70 Lara Arruabarrena 6-4, 7-5.

The Czechs are seeking their fourth straight Fed Cup title after winning five of the last six editions of the team competition. Spain last won the

trophy in 1998. The home side are without 12th-ranked two-time Wimbledon champion Petra Kvitova who is recovering from a hand injury she suffered when fighting a knife-wielding burglar last December.

The winners of the tie will face either 17-time champions United States or Germany who are playing in Hawaii.

In Minsk, Kiki Bertens

FED CUP (WORLD GROUP)	
In Ostrava (Indoor, hard)	
Czech Republic 1 Spain 1	
Garbine Muguruza (ESP) bt Barbora Strycova (CZE) 4-0, 3-6, 6-1	
Karolina Pliskova (CZE) bt Lara Arruabarrena (ESP) 6-4, 7-5	
In Maui, Hawaii (Outdoor, hard)	
United States 1 Germany 0	
Alison Riske (USA) bt Andrea Petkovic (GER) 7-6 (12/10), 6-2	
CoCo Vandeweghe (USA) leads Julia Goerges (GER) 6-3, 3-1	
In Minsk (Indoor, hard)	
Belarus 1 Netherlands 1	
Aliaksandra Sasnovich (BLR) bt Michaella Krajcek (NED) 4-6, 6-3, 6-2	
Kiki Bertens (NED) bt Aryna Sabalenka (BLR) 3-6, 7-6 (8/6), 6-4	
In Geneva (Indoor, hard)	
Switzerland 1 France 1	
Timea Bacsinszky (FRA) bt Alize Cornet (FRA) 7-5, 6-4	
Kristina Mladenovic (FRA) bt Belinda Bencic (SUI) 6-3, 6-4	

rallied from a set down to beat Aryna Sabalenka of Belarus to draw the Netherlands level at 1-1.

World number 24 Bertens won 3-6, 7-6 (8/6), 6-4 in her first ever meeting with the 18-year-old Belarussian.

Earlier, Aliaksandra Sasnovich, ranked 128th, put Belarus into the lead as she battled back from a set down to beat Michaella Krajcek 4-6, 6-3, 6-2.



Qatari Olympians (from left) Mahmoud Zaky, Fares Ibrahim and shooter Sarah Mohammed (right) and golfer Saleh Al Kaabi (second right) join the discussions during a press briefing held at the Qatar Olympic Committee Headquarters yesterday.

Qatari stars urge active public engagement on National Sport Day

The Peninsula

Qatar's Olympic heroes have called for the nation to get out and join them on National Sport Day. Qatar's National Federations will be organising activities for all ages and abilities across Qatar on February 14 and Team Qatar will be present to give the public top tips and advice.

National Sport Day is an annual public holiday for the whole of Qatar to come together and celebrate sport. It provides an opportunity to try new sports, pick up old ones and have fun with friends and family.

Team Qatar's Olympians will be joining the festivities and providing inspiration and guidance following Qatar's most successful-ever Olympic and Paralympic Games last year in Rio de Janeiro.

Speaking at a media briefing held at Qatar Olympic Committee to highlight the achievements and sporting journeys of Team Qatar, Olympic weightlifter Fares Ibrahim, said: "On National Sport Day I will be in Katara at the Weightlifting Federation activity. I ask everyone to come down to Katara and try weightlifting – you might become a champion! It's a great sport to take up and you can start at any age and reap the benefits of weightlifting."

At just 18 years old, Ibrahim has already achieved outstanding success in his young career. In 2016, he finished third in the World Youth Championships, achieved eighth place at the Rio 2016 Olympic Games in a field of incredibly experienced athletes, and finished the year with three gold medals at the Asian Junior Weightlifting Championships. The weightlifting federation will be organising activities on National Sport Day at Katara and Fares will be on hand to meet the public and share his experiences.

Further Olympians and Paralympians will be joining the National Sport Day celebrations across Doha. History-making Paralympic silver medalist Abdurrahman Abdelgader and Sara Masoud will be at the Qatar Paralympic Association to raise awareness about the opportunities to participate in para-sport. Qatar's first-ever female Olympian, Nada Arakji, will be sharing her tips at Hamad Aquatic Centre.



Olympic weightlifter Fares Ibrahim



Qatari golfer Saleh Al Kaabi



Mahmoud Zaky



Sarah Mohammed

Rising athletics star and Ambassador from Doha's successful bid to host the 2019 World Championships in Athletics, Dalal Al Ajmi, will be joining the kids' athletics festival at Katara. Also at Katara will be captain of Qatar's 2015 World Handball Championship silver medal winning team, Abdurazzaq Murad and Kamal Mallah, who were also part of the team that reached the quarterfinals of last year's Olympic Games.

Speaking ahead of National Sport Day, Mahmoud Zaky, said: "Winning silver in the 2015 World Championships was an indescribable feeling. Since I've started handball this I was far the best moment for me."

"It was a big achievement and I hope we can keep achieving at this level. Handball is a very enjoyable game – my advice to all is to set a goal in sport and to try to surpass that goal and to challenge yourself. Handball is the kind of sport that keeps you on the edge of your seat – you never know what can happen and I urge everyone to try it and they will definitely enjoy it."

The Qatar Olympic Committee has re-started its monthly media briefings to share information about the #YallaQatar campaign, which aims to raise awareness about Team Qatar, provide an insight into their

sporting careers and what it takes to become a top-level athlete, and to encourage the whole nation to unite behind them in support. Further athletes present at the briefing were shooter Sarah Mohammed and golfer, Saleh Al Kaabi.

Sarah Mohammed was a member of the Qatari team who won team silver in the skeet shooting at the recent Arab Shooting Championships in Kuwait. The women's trap shooting team also won silver and a further medal came from Recm Al Sharhani, who won individual bronze in the skeet shooting. Speaking about her experiences, Sarah Mohammed said: "The Arab

Shooting Championships in Kuwait was a good experience for me. It was a bit difficult because the weather was very cold at the time, which we weren't used to here, but we still managed to do well and won a silver medal in the team skeet event. Success is never guaranteed, you win some and lose some and through that you learn the true meaning of sportsmanship."

Al Kaabi achieved a career best when he finished second at the Qatar Amateur Championships in January, automatically qualifying for the Commercial Bank Masters, both which took place at Doha Golf Club.

The 22-year-old Aspire Academy graduate also recently won December's SGF Open amateur tournament in Saudi Arabia and finished third in the at November's King Hamad Trophy in Bahrain. His ambition is to qualify for the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games. Speaking about his career, Al Kaabi said: "The Qatar Open Tournament was a major international competition that brought together some of the very best amateur golfers from around the world. Thankfully I was able to place second in this tough competition. It was also an honour for me to compete in the Qatar Masters against

the best pro golfers in the world – I did my best and hope to improve even more in the future. I will compete in the Gulf Championships in Bahrain 19th February – which I've been preparing very hard for."

The public are able to try out shooting on National Sport Day at an open day at Lusail Shooting Range between 8.00am-1.00pm.

Golf activities will be taking place at Katara, together with handball, athletics, weightlifting, equestrian, boxing, basketball, sailing, rowing, cycling, triathlon, volleyball, air sports, karate, judo, taekwondo, table tennis, chess and rugby activities, with all national federations present. Football and further basketball activities will take place at Aspire Park, with a swimming open day taking place in Hamad Aquatic Centre.

The public can keep up to date with Team Qatar's journeys on the Qatar Olympic Committee's social media channels under the hashtag #YallaQatar. Upcoming key competitions include the Asian Winter Games in Sapporo, Japan which begins on February 19, where Qatar will have athletes competing in Curling, Ice Hockey and Speed Skating, and the CHI Al Shaqab 2017 in early March, which Team Qatar's Olympic equestrian athletes will be participating in.

Miller, McLeod among winners at Millrose

New York
AFP

Rio Olympic champions Shaunae Miller of Bahamas, Omar McLeod of Jamaica, Derek Drouin of Canada and Katerine Stefanidi of Greece won titles on Saturday at the 110th Millrose Games indoor athletics meet.

Miller, who dove across the line to edge American Allyson Felix for 400-meter gold last year in Rio, won the 300m in 35.71 seconds, matching the sixth-best time at the distance to beat American Ashley Spencer by .56 of a second.

McLeod, the reigning Olympic 110 hurdles champion and world indoor 60 hurdles king, took the 60 hurdles in 7.46 with American Aleec Harris second in 7.56.

Stefanidi defended her Millrose women's pole vault crown by clearing 4.82m with American Sandi Morris second at 4.72 in a rematch of their Rio Olympic duel also won by the Greek star.

Reigning world and Olympic long jump champion Drouin, who won in Rio despite stress fractures in his back, cleared 2.27 on his first attempt to edge compatriot Mike Mason for the victory on fewer misses.

American Dezerea Bryant won the women's 60m in 7.12, the fastest time in the world this year, with compatriot Morolake Akinosun second by .05 and China's Wei Yongli third in 7.26.

Reigning world and Olympic long jump champion Tianna Bartoletta, a member of the US Rio gold 4x100 relay, was sixth in 7.30.

Ajee Wilson, last year's world indoor 800 runner-up, won the Millrose 800 in 1:58.27, the year's best time and an American record, breaking the 15-year-old US mark of 1:58.71 by Nicole Teter.

"I'm over the moon," said Wilson, who beat US runner-up Charlene Lipsby by .37 of a second. Also setting an American record was Courtney Okolo in winning the 500m in 1:07.34.

Unheralded Clayton Vaughn edged 2010 world indoor runner-up Mike Rodgers by .003 of a second to win the 60 in 6.61m from lane seven.

Dutch standout Sifan Hassan, the world indoor 1500 champion, won the women's mile in a meet record 4:19.89.

Canada added two more titles with Kate Van Buskirk taking the women's 3,000 in 8:52.08 and Phylicia George winning the women's 60 hurdles in 7.98.

Other US winners were Vernon Norwood in the men's 500 in 1:00.11, Brannon Kidder in the men's 1,000 in 2:19.92, Eric Jenkins in the men's mile in 3:53.23 and Ben True in the men's two mile in 8:11.33.



Fabrizio Zanotti of Paraguay holds the trophy after winning the final round of the 2017 Maybank Malaysia Championship golf tournament held at Saujana Golf and Country Club outside Kuala Lumpur yesterday.

Zanotti wins Maybank Championship

Kuala Lumpur
AFP

Fabrizio Zanotti played an impeccable round yesterday, notching a nine-under-par 63 to clinch the Maybank Championship Malaysia with a one-shot victory over American David Lipsky in Kuala Lumpur.

The Paraguayan -- tied ninth after 54 holes on Saturday -- captured his first European Tour title since 2014 after firing home seven birdies. He topped off his success with an eagle on the 18th hole to finish 19-under overall.

"I think it was probably the best round of my career, so I'm very happy. It was a really good day, a really good week and I'm really happy," said the world number 187.

"I think it was at the 15th where I thought I might be able to win. When I made a birdie there, I thought, maybe I'll have a chance if I make two more birdies, but I made a birdie and eagle so it was great."

Overnight leader Danny Willett could not hold his lead, after scoring five bogeys to end the day one-over 75. He came in tied fifth with China's Haotong Li.

Austrian Bernd Wiesberger, who had gone on an 11 birdie binge on Friday, finished third, followed by France's Alexander Levy in fourth.

Dashboard launched to assess player performances

The Peninsula

Professor Valter Di Salvo, Director of Football Performance & Science yesterday launched the Qatar Football Analytics Dashboard (QFAD) – a set of tools that will help analyse and support the sporting performance of players in Qatar.

The Qatar Football Analytics Dashboard was unveiled at the start of a two-day workshop at Aspire Academy in Aspire Zone, Doha.

Attending the launch event were coaches from all 14 Qatar Stars League (QSL) clubs and they were joined by coaches for the national teams including Jorge Fossati, coach of the senior national team.

The Dashboard will enable all players in Qatar to be analysed and the results will be made available to clubs, coaches and the players themselves.

Available data will include distances covered on the field, players' ranking in terms of aspects of their game (eg passing) both in comparison to team-mates as well as players from other clubs, along with video analysis. The QFAD



Professor Valter Di Salvo, Director of Football Performance & Science speaks during the launch of the Qatar Football Analytics Dashboard (QFAD) at Aspire Academy yesterday.

represents the culmination of more than 18 months of work conducted by Professor Di Salvo and his team from the Aspire Academy Performance & Science department, working in

close conjunction with Qatar Football Association QFA and QSL. Meanwhile, the two-day workshop being held in Aspire Zone focuses on player performance and scientific analyses.

The first day of the workshop involved presentations to around 120 participants, comprising mainly football coaches working in Qatar.

The presentation today will be given to around 400 QSL players.

Describing the importance of the QFAD, Professor Valter Di Salvo said: "The Qatar Football Analytics Dashboard is primarily designed to support individual players by providing them with detailed personal data and information analysing their performance."

"Equipped with this information, they are able to push themselves continually to improve their game," he said.

"We want Qatari players to first compete with themselves and to push their performance to the limit, before they turn their attention to focus on their opposition."

Fossati congratulated Aspire Academy, QFA and QSL by saying, "This is a most welcome initiative and a very useful tool to support the development of football in Qatar. No doubt science has a useful part to play in improving and developing players' performance," said Qatar's national team coach.

QSL reschedules round 21 fixtures

The Peninsula

The Qatar Stars League (QSL) has formally announced a fixture change in relation to round 21 of the season.

The change involves the tie between Lekhwiya against Umm Salal, which was set to take place on February 16. The tie has now been moved to February 15 at Al Gharafa Stadium, at the same kick-off time of 16:45pm.

The date and location of the game has been changed at the request of Lekhwiya, as part of their preparations for their match against UAE side Al Jazira in the AFC Champions League. The tie is set to take place on February 20.

The decision on this issue has been made in coordination with the national team committee, which will give the national team players of Lekhwiya an extra days rest to avoid fatigue.

Burnley's Brady checks Chelsea charge in draw

Burnley AFP

Home debutant Robbie Brady scored a memorable free-kick to earn Burnley a 1-1 draw yesterday that prevented Chelsea moving 12 points clear at the Premier League summit.

Brady cancelled out an early strike from Pedro and while the point stretched Chelsea's lead to 10 points, their advantage will be trimmed to eight points if Manchester City win at Bournemouth today.

Brady's goal continued his recent run of success against Chelsea manager Antonio Conte, with the winger having also scored the winning goal for Ireland against Conte's Italy in the Euro 2016 group stage.

Burnley, whose home record is bettered only by second-place Tottenham Hotspur and Chelsea themselves, looked like they might be swept away following an electrifying start from the league leaders.



Burnley's Robbie Brady celebrates after scoring a goal against Chelsea during their Premier League game at Turf Moor yesterday.

But Sean Dyche's team, who had won seven straight games at Turf Moor after losing to Manchester City in mid-November, showed great resilience and deservedly equalised after 24 minutes through Brady.

A foul by Nemanja Matic on Joey Barton on the edge of the area presented Brady, a club-record £13m (\$16.2m, 15.3m euros) signing from Norwich City last month, with his chance. He took it in style, curling a magnificent 20-yard free-kick over the wall and into the top-left corner.

That cancelled out an equally impressive opener from Chelsea that was started, and finished, by Pedro in the seventh minute.

The Spanish winger helped begin the attack deep in his own half with a pass to Eden Hazard who, in turn, fed Victor Moses on the right.

After skipping past Brady's crude challenge, Moses crossed for Pedro, who had covered nearly 70 yards, and his low, angled shot gave Tom Heaton no chance in the Burnley goal. Burnley should even have taken a lead into the interval after Barton found full-back Matt Lowton, who only had Thibaut Courtois to beat but was denied by a solid block from the Chelsea goalkeeper.

The furious tempo of the game continued after the restart, with a mistake by Matic and an error by David

Luiz culminating in Gray gathering Barnes's pass and shooting straight at Courtois.

In response, and thanks to a Ben Bee mistake at the other end, Diego Costa had a shot blocked before Cesar Azpilicueta changed his luck with a long-range shot that just cleared the Burnley crossbar.

Yet another Chelsea attack ended in similar fashion a few minutes later with substitute Cesc Fabregas slicing a shot hopelessly wide from the edge of the penalty area.

Afield almost twisted and turned his way through on goal late on, but Luiz's challenge prevented him from giving Burnley six successive home league victories for the first time in 56 years.

QSL: Jimenez, Yasin among stars to excel in round 20

The Peninsula

The round 20 of the Qatar Stars League (QSL) which concluded last week saw five international level players step up with telling contributions for their teams.

Luis Jimenez

Former Chilean international Luis Jimenez put in a commanding performance in the centre of midfield as Al Arabi defeated Al Gharafa on Thursday evening.

The former Al Ahli man opened the scoring for his side moments after the second half restart, and looked assured in attack for Al Arabi.

Ahmed Yasin

Iraqi international winger Ahmed Yasin registered his first goals for Muathier, as Philippe Briol's side showed plenty of character to come back from two goals down to draw with Al Khor 2-2.

Yasin was on hand to head the ball into the back of the net on the 68th minute, and helped his side's comeback by calmly scoring the equalizer on the 74th minute.

Mohammed Musa

Current Qatar International defender Mohammed Musa put on a defensive master class to deny Al

Rayyan on Friday evening. Musa's running battle with fellow international Sebastian Soria was a real highlight of the game, with Musa often having the upper hand throughout the match. The no-nonsense defender was also a danger from set-pieces for his side.

Sardor Rashidov

Uzbekistan international Sardor Rashidov grabbed a brace as El Jaish returned to winning ways with a 2-1 victory over Al Shahania.

Rashidov has been a regular on the stars of the league feature this season, and his goals proved to be crucial to Sabri Lamochi's boys.

Even more impressive was the stunning free-kick that Rashidov scored from a full 30 yards to assure the win.

Xavi Hernandez

Al Sadd midfielder Xavi Hernandez put in a captains performance as his Wolves side ran out 3-1 winners over rock-bottom Al Wakrah on Saturday.

The former Spanish international grabbed a brace and looked stable in the center of the park, dictating the play.

The win also means that Al Sadd have closed the gap on league leaders Lekhwiya to just three points.



A combination of pictures showing players who excelled in round 20 of the Qatar Stars League last week.

Manchester United don't get enough credit, complains Mourinho



Manchester AFP

Manchester United manager Jose Mourinho (pictured) claims his side's attacking efforts would be halved more if someone else was in charge at Old Trafford.

United completely ousted Watford in Saturday's 2-0 Premier League win as goals from Juan Mata and Anthony Martial took Mourinho's men to within a point of the Champions League places.

Their display belied Mourinho's reputation as a defence-minded manager and he said United would get more credit for the quality of their football if he was not sitting in the dug-out.

"It was a very good (performance)," he said.

"It was the kind of football that if it was somebody else's team, you would say it was 'art', but because it was my team, you will just say it was 'very good'. But that is fine."

Mata's 32nd-minute goal

helped United break through Watford's defensive resistance on an afternoon when Mourinho's men had the run of the pitch.

Watford goalkeeper Heurelho Gomes was the busiest man in the stadium and after initially keeping United at bay, he could do nothing as Mata slide home Martial's cross from just three yards out. Martial had been one of those running Watford ragged and when he made it 2-0 on the hour, the game was well and truly over.

It was United's fourth

consecutive clean sheet and while that pleased Mourinho, he knows the club's fans demand to be entertained more than anything else.

"We are not a team scoring lots of goals so it is important to keep the clean sheets," Mourinho told his post-game press conference. "I am really happy with the performance."

"When I got the job they were saying at Manchester United you need to play football in a certain way and I agree. "Sixteen (league) games

unbeaten is an amazing record, but it would be the perfect record with two or three fewer draws at home."

Meanwhile, Watford Manager Walter Mazzari said: "Today we played as a group in a different way. Some of the chances United had were only because of things we did wrong."

"We need to grow as a team together. Passing more and taking less touches on the ball. If we didn't do these things then we have a chance to get at least a point."