

BURGESS MADE ENGLAND CAPTAIN FOR 4 NATIONS

LONDON: Sam Burgess' successful return to rugby league after a nightmare spell in rugby union has been capped with his being named England captain for the first time yesterday. The 27-year-old-whose fast-tracking into the England World Cup rugby union squad last year proved disastrous for him and the team-will be the skipper for the upcoming Four Nations tournament announced coach Wayne Bennett. "Sam will be our captain. He leads from the front," said Bennett at a press conference yesterday. Burgess, who plays for South Sydney Rabbitohs in the National Rugby League, replaces Sean O'Loughlin, who has been ruled out because of injury. Burgess, though, will sit out the 'friendly' against France on Saturday as he is serving a suspension. However, he will lead out the team in the Four Nations-which England have never won-opener against New Zealand in Huddersfield the weekend after. England go on to play Scotland on November 5 and Australia on November 13. Burgess, whose twin brothers George and Tom are also in the squad, endured a dreadful time when he made a high profile switch to rugby union in 2014 when Bath signed him on a lucrative three year contract. — AFP

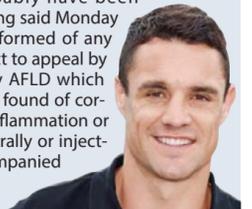


NIGERIAN FOOTBALLER SHOT DEAD IN OKAKI

ABUJA: Nigeria Premier League defender Izu Joseph has been shot dead in his hometown of Okaki in oil-rich southern Bayelsa state, it was reported yesterday. The player's father said Joseph was killed accidentally by troops battling Niger delta militants on Sunday. Initial reports said Joseph was killed at a restricted area by soldiers on a raid, with his identity as a footballer only established after he had been shot. The powerful central defender joined Shooting Stars from Bayelsa United when the Ibadan club were still in the second-tier Nigeria National League. He was man of the match at champions Rangers when Shooting Stars drew 1-1 this past season. The Sports Writers Association (SWAN) commented: "It is indeed a great loss not only to 3SC, but also to the football fraternity in Nigeria." It urged government to beef up security across the country to prevent a "recurrence of the avoidable incident that claimed the life of our valuable footballer, Izu Joseph." Nigerian troops are deployed to the Niger delta where militants have been attacking oil facilities since the start of the year, cutting output and hammering government revenue at a time of low crude prices. — AFP

DAN CARTER CLEARED BY DOPING PROBE

PARIS: Former All Black great Dan Carter has been cleared of doping following a probe implicating the star fly-half and two other Racing 92 players, L'Equipe sports paper said yesterday. Carter "has been cleared and was notified on Saturday," following an investigation by the medical commission of the French Rugby Federation, the newspaper said. Carter along with fellow former All Black Joe Rokococo and Argentinian winger Juan Imhoff were questioned by the commission last week after testing positive for corticosteroids following last season's Top 14 final in which Racing beat Toulon 29-21. Carter and Kokoromiko contributing 20 points between them. L'Equipe said that Rokococo and Imhoff "will probably have been informed of the same outcome". However, Racing said Monday neither the players nor the club had been informed of any decision as yet. The commission ruling is subject to appeal by the players or the French anti-doping agency AFLD which ordered the original tests in which traces were found of corticosteroids, which can be used against pain, inflammation or allergies. The substance is illegal when taken orally or injected in either the blood or muscle, unless accompanied by a Therapeutic Use Exemption (TUE). — AFP



Zain Jet Ski team 2016.

ZAIN WELCOMES NATIONAL JET SKI TEAM WORLD CHAMPIONS

KUWAIT: Zain, the leading telecommunications company in Kuwait, welcomed Kuwait's National Jet Ski team champions in Kuwait Airport after the team achieved 10 titles during their participation in the recently concluded World Jet Ski Championship held in the United States, as the company is the main sponsor of the team for the sixth consecutive year.

Zain participated in the reception ceremony held in Kuwait Airport's Honoring Hall, where the team's sponsors and supporting organizations attended. The company expressed its keenness on encouraging Kuwaiti athletes to represent Kuwait in internationally renowned championships, and that its sponsorship of the team for sixth consecutive year falls under its strate-

gy towards supporting the youth and sports sectors. The company expressed its pride in the latest achievements the team accomplished, including 300 full points evenly with the USA competing with 32 other countries, as well as winning 10 medals, 4 of which are gold medals and 5 silver ones. Zain confirms its commitment towards Kuwaiti champions, which resembles the

company's endless confidence of the competencies of these young athletes and their capabilities in excelling in different fields.

As a leading telecommunications company in Kuwait, Zain is constantly looking to identify and support excellence across the sports sector. The company will continue to put Kuwaiti National teams and individual athletes at the forefront of its priorities and

pledges to continue motivating them to achieve all the recognition they deserve.

It is worth noting that the National Jet Ski team is authorized by the Kuwait Sea Sport Club to officially represent the country in regional and international Jet Ski championships. The team champions won a number of prominent titles during past and present participations.



EXETER: Players stand for a minute silence in memory of Munster head coach and former Irish international Anthony Foley who died on Sunday in a Paris hotel during the European Rugby Champions Cup rugby union match between Exeter Chiefs and Clermont Auvergne at Sandy Park Stadium in Exeter, south west England, on Sunday.—AFP

FLAGS AT HALF-MAST AS IRELAND MOURNS FOLEY

DUBLIN: Flags flew at half-mast yesterday in the southern Irish province of Munster as books of condolence were opened across Ireland with the country reeling from the sudden death of rugby great Anthony Foley. Munster head coach Foley, aged just 42, was found dead in his hotel room hours ahead of his side's European Champions Cup clash with French side Racing 92 on Sunday. Irish Taoiseach (Prime Minister) Enda Kenny was among those to pay tribute to Foley who enjoyed an illustrious career as a player which saw him win 62 Ireland caps as a robust back row forward. "Anthony was a legendary figure in Munster and Irish rugby. It is tragic to lose such a fantastic man at such a young age," Kenny said. That warm tribute to a man who also captained Munster to the 2006 European Cup title and epitomised Munster's battle cry 'Stand Up And Fight' was typical of the outpouring of grief for the father of two. One of Foley's fellow former Munster legends Ronan O'Gara—who ironically is now a coach at Racing 92 — described himself as 'heartbroken'. O'Gara, who with Foley won the European Cup and a Celtic League with Munster and a Triple

Crown with Ireland in 2004, added "we have lost an incredible man".

O'Gara's Racing head coach Laurent Labit paid Foley one of the greatest compliments one could in saying he was to Munster what the sublime fullback Serge Blanco had been in his day to Biarritz.

"It was not just in Munster and Irish rugby that Anthony Foley is respected," said Labit. "It is a terrible shock. He is respected in France for his performances for Munster and Ireland. He is part of the history of Munster, he is Monsieur Munster, the same as Serge Blanco in Biarritz or Philippe Sella in Agen. It is a tragedy."

Illustrating how deeply Foley had touched the rugby world in his playing days and then afterwards England's 2003 World Cup winning coach Clive Woodward tweeted his condolences.

"Shocked & so sad to hear about death of Anthony Foley. A true legend & a man who had total respect of teammates & opposition," said Woodward. Within hours of the news breaking at Sunday lunchtime, Thomond Park, Munster's home stadium in the city of Limerick, had become a virtual shrine. — AFP

STEELE RALLIES TO WIN PGA TOUR OPENER AT SAFEWAY OPEN

NAPA: Right when Brendan Steele thought he might have a chance to win at Silverado, all he could think about was how he lost. A year ago, Steele had a 54-hole lead in the PGA Tour's season opener when he made a sloppy bogey on the 12th hole, shot 40 on the back nine and threw it away. He was two shots behind on Sunday in the Safeway Open with little room for error when he three-putted No. 12 for bogey and figured he was done.

"I thought that was it for me," Steele said. "I thought I would have to do something special. Last year, I tried not to make mistakes." This time, he made birdies.

Steele overcame a four-shot deficit in the final round, closed with three straight birdies on rain soaked Silverado for a 7-under 65 and won by one shot over a faltering Patton Kizzire. It was Steele's first victory in 141 starts on the PGA Tour dating to his rookie season when he won the Texas Open. "This is a little bit of redemption from last year," Steele said. "It's nice to close it off this way."

It was a tough ending for Kizzire, who had a one-shot lead going into the final round and looked like a winner when he stuffed his tee shot into 2 feet for birdie on the 11th hole for a two-shot lead. He struggled to hit fairways the rest of the way, and while he dropped only one shot on the 12th, he couldn't keep Steele from gaining ground. Steele hit 2-iron onto the green at the par-5 16th for a two-putt birdie. His 18-foot birdie putt on the 17th curled in the left side of the cup. And then he hit wedge into the par-5 18th and poured in a 7-foot birdie putt.

"You've got to really make something happen, especially when the conditions are soft," Steele said. "I wanted to be aggressive and I didn't want to just kind of coast in and just make sure that I had a decent week."

He had a great week, which sends him back to the Masters for the first time since 2012. Kizzire drove left into the base of trees on the par-5 16th and had to chip out sideways, eventually making a 15-foot par save from the bunker. With a wedge on the 17th, he left it short and watched it spin back off the green, forcing him to save par again. His final chance was to birdie the final hole and force a playoff.

He drove left again, had to lay up and then missed the green with a 9-iron and failed to chip in. Kizzire closed with a 70. "It was intense," Kizzire said. "I didn't finish it off. I'm really disappointed, but I played well. It's a building block, for sure." Johnson Wagner stayed close the entire back nine but had to settle for pars over the final eight holes. He closed with a 70 and tied for third with Paul Casey (69), former Cal star Michael Kim (67) and Scott Piercy (70).

LONGEST TIME

Casey has finished no worse than fourth in his last four tournaments dating to the FedEx Cup playoffs. "So close, isn't it?" Casey said. "I mean, I played great. I had another wonderful week." Steele, who finished at 18-under 270, won for the first time since the anchored stroke for long putters was outlawed at the start of the year.

He made the switch right after the new rule was proposed in 2014, and while he putted well at times, he still had doubts he could make the big putts when they mattered. Sunday at Silverado answered those questions, along with getting rid of that sour memory from last year when he made five bogeys in six holes on the

back nine. "You don't often get that chance in life to really redeem yourself in the same way at the same place, and to basically do just the opposite," Steele said. The final round was delayed two hours by rain that began soaking Silverado on Friday and led to delays the rest of the way. The third round was not completed until Sunday morning, and Kizzire made a birdie on the final hole for a 66 to take his first 54-hole lead. And for the longest time, he made it last. Piercy fell back with a pair of bogeys at the end of the front nine. Casey also dropped careless shots. Phil Mickelson had his chances, too.

In his first domestic fall PGA Tour event in a decade, Mickelson was poised to make a charge on the back nine until missing too many chances. He closed with a 67 and tied for eighth. Mickelson has finished in the top 10 in one-third of his 549 career starts on tour.

Kizzire did well to stay in the game. After his bogey from a fairway bunker on No. 12, Kizzire holed a 15-foot par putt on the 14th after driving under a tree, made another 15-footer on the par-5 16th and a nervy 5-footer for par on the 17th to keep his hopes alive. He just couldn't make birdie, and it cost him. — AP



NAPA: Brendan Steele lifts up his trophy on the 18th green of the Silverado Resort North Course after winning the Safeway Open PGA golf tournament, Sunday, in Napa, Calif. — AP