

Sports

All Blacks batter Aussies 37-20 to complete Bledisloe sweep

'It's going to be exciting to come here again next year'

YOKOHAMA: World champions New Zealand crushed old foes Australia 37-20 in Japan yesterday to complete a 3-0 Bledisloe Cup series whitewash. Fly-half Beauden Barrett scored 17 points and was five-from-six with the boot in Yokohama as the All Blacks piled more pressure on the struggling Wallabies and under-fire coach Michael Cheika.

Barrett dived over for the pick of New Zealand's five tries just before the hour mark to cap a dazzling individual performance. The Wallabies, meanwhile, slumped to a ninth defeat in their last 12 Tests after being dominated in all departments.

Liam Squire, Kieran Read, Ben Smith and Rieko Ioane also touched down for the rampant All Blacks, who came into the Japan Test having won nine of the last 10 matches against their trans-Tasman rivals.

"It's going to be exciting to come to here again next year," said New Zealand skipper Read, whose side will be chasing a World Cup hat-trick at the 2019 competition in Japan. "It's a massive tournament and we have to come prepared but hopefully we can produce the same as we got tonight."

Sonny Bill Williams set up New Zealand's opener on his 50th Test appearance with a clever pass for Squire to crash over after sustained All Blacks pressure. A long Kurtley Beale penalty cut the deficit before Read rolled off a scrum to score easily, helped by some matador Wallabies defending. Australia hit back just before half-time with some direct build-up play that allowed Sefanaia Naivalu to bulldoze over in the corner to cut New Zealand's lead to 17-10.

AWED GASPS

Barrett and Bernard Foley traded penalties early in the second half before Barrett exchanged slick passes with Ioane to race clear for a brilliant third try for New Zealand that triggered awed gasps from a crowd of 46,000.

Barrett's conversion put the All Blacks up by 12 points, and when Silatolu Latu was sin-binned for a retaliatory slap to Codie Taylor's face it was effectively game over for the Wallabies. Smith added insult to injury moments later when he found space to dive over and make it 32-13, although Australia grabbed a late consolation try through Israel Folau, who impressed in his first Wallabies start at centre.

However, there was still time for the prolific Ioane to complete a man of the match display by chalking up his 22nd try in 21 Tests, collecting an outrageous through-the-legs pass from Barrett to score in the corner.

"That certainly wasn't the outcome we were going for," said Australia captain Michael Hooper.

"There were positives and negatives, but yet again we've given too many opportunities to New Zealand and they're so clinical in those areas." New Zealand face Japan in Tokyo next weekend before flying to Europe to complete their five-match tour against England, Ireland and Italy. The Wallabies, who lost six of eight games before a stunning 45-34 comeback win over Argentina earlier this month eased some of the pressure on Cheika, play November Tests away to Wales, Italy and England. — AFP



YOKOHAMA: Australia's fullback Dane Haylett-Petty (3rd R) is tackled during the Bledisloe Cup rugby union Test match between the New Zealand All Blacks and Australia at Yokohama International Stadium in Yokohama yesterday. — AFP

Discover America Week kick starts with fun run, walk

By Ben Garcia

KUWAIT: Discover America 2018 Fun Run/Walk was held on Friday at the Boulevard, Salmiya. It was attended by several people from all walks of life including US Ambassador to Kuwait Lawrence Silverman. The event was a prelude to kick-start the 6th Annual Discover America Week, which this year will take place over two weeks. During the next fourteen days the US Embassy will organize 25 programs promoting different aspects of the United States.

"We will highlight American culture, food, restaurants, fashion, music, film, education, tourism, business, automobiles, and healthy lifestyles. More than two dozen US restaurants and retail stores will also be offering special promotions during the two weeks. I encourage you all to participate where you can. I would like to highlight the 10-kilometer bicycle ride we are organizing on Saturday morning at Kuwait University," he said. The ambassador pointed out that events are a great opportunity to put a spotlight on the



—Photos by Joseph Shagra

strong US-Kuwaiti friendship, and explore areas to broaden and deepen this relationship," he added.

Silverman also thank the Al-Mutawa pharmacies where they provided tests for blood pressure and also testing blood sugar levels for anyone interested. "Testing for blood sugar can help show if you are at risk for diabetes so I encourage everyone to see what their blood sugar levels are," he said. He also thanked Nike and the Ali Abdulwahab Company for sponsoring Fun Run and to Pro-

Vision for coordinating all of the event's logistics.

Winners (Male)

1. Eduardo Valcarce Merayo
2. Mohammad Salman
3. Ahmad Qanbar

Winners (Female)

1. Amal Al-Roumi
2. Taiba Al-Nouri
3. Anna Wrzeszcz.



Verstappen tops Mexico practice, Hamilton struggles

MEXICO CITY: Max Verstappen completed an impressive Friday 'double top' as he and Daniel Ricciardo finished one-two for Red Bull in second practice for this weekend's Mexican Grand Prix. The young Dutchman, aiming to repeat his 2017 victory in the Mexican capital, clocked a best lap in one minute and 16.720 seconds to outpace his Australian team-mate by 0.153 seconds, before being halted by a late hydraulics failure.

A similar showing in qualifying on Saturday could make him the youngest pole-sitter in Formula One history, beating a record currently held by Sebastian Vettel. "We have a good car with good downforce and good mechanical grip, which you could see also in Monaco - and it worked really well," said Verstappen, who turned 21 last month.

"I hope we are in a fight for pole, but we will find out tomorrow... Today has been good, but we have to keep working." Vettel, fighting to keep his ultra-slim title hopes alive, was fourth fastest for Ferrari while championship leader Lewis Hamilton was seventh for Mercedes.

Hamilton needs to outscore Vettel by five points to take his fifth drivers' title if the German wins. If Vettel fails to win, he will be champion wherever he finishes. Carlos Sainz was third for Renault with team-mate Nico Hulkenberg fifth, ahead of Brendon Hartley, who is fighting to keep his seat with Toro Rosso next year.

This meant that the top three cars, and five of the top six, were powered by Renault engines at the 2,200-metres altitude Autodromo Hermanos Rodriguez - only Vettel breaking the French manufacturer's domination in his Ferrari.

"This is the track with the least sensitivity to power," said Vettel. "But we expected that Red Bull would be strong.

"We didn't have a tidy lap so we should have been ahead of the Renaults. I think everyone is on the limit with the tyres, trying to get them to work - with the exception of the Red Bulls..."

But it was not a perfect day for Verstappen and Red Bull because the Dutch tyro's session ended with his car parked by the track after a suspected hydraulics failure. Kimi Raikkonen, victorious in Texas last weekend, wound up eighth in the second Ferrari ahead of fellow-Finn Valtteri Bottas in the second Mercedes and home hero Sergio Perez of Force India.

After dominating the opening session in the morning, the Red Bull duo were soon back in command as the air temperature rose to 25 degrees Celsius and the track to 49. The very warm conditions exacerbated the performance problems of the Ferrari and Mercedes teams as they struggled with tyres, a loss of power and car balance in the rarefied atmosphere.

This gave the Renault-engined cars, led by Red Bull, a chance to shine, notably Verstappen who can become the sport's youngest pole-sitter if he is fastest in qualifying today. He can beat the current record held by Vettel, who was 21 years and 72 days when he took his first pole at the 2008 Italian Grand Prix.

The keen Mexican crowd loved the action and the variety of names running at the top of the charts including both Ferrari men initially, Hamilton, Hulkenberg and, unexpectedly, Brendon Hartley before the Red Bulls took over.

Verstappen delivered his best lap midway through leaving both of the title protagonists panting in pursuit. "There's something not right with the car," complained Hamilton while Vettel merely told Ferrari: "That's all I've got..." — AFP

GAZOO Racing increases lead with another double podium in FIA World Rally Championship

TOKYO: The GAZOO Racing (GR) World Rally team has increased its advantage at the top of the manufacturers' championship standings after a double-podium finish at Wales Rally GB in the FIA World Rally Championship (WRC). Making it the fourth event in a row where two of the Toyota Yaris WRCs have finished inside the top three, Jari-Matti Latvala engaged in a thrilling final-day fight for the rally win, ultimately finishing in second place with Esapekka Lappi in third.

Commenting on the GR team's performance, Yugo Miyamoto, Chief Representative, Middle East and North Africa Representative office, Toyota Motor Corporation, said: "The outstanding achievements of our team and vehicles in claiming a fourth consecutive double-podium finish in the season at Wales Rally GB are a source of great pride for all of us at Toyota. Challenging events such as WRC push our drivers and vehicles to their limits and represent the perfect proving ground for future technologies. Everything we learn through our participation in racing events inspires our engineers as they strive to develop 'ever-better' cars. I would like to extend my gratitude to our fans for their unwavering support, which is a source of constant motivation in our quest to create vehicles that bring satisfaction and put a smile on our customers' faces."

The last day of the rally consisted of five stages, including three in the forests of North Wales and two all-asphalt stages finishing in Llandudno. Beginning the day 4.4 seconds away from the lead, Latvala in the No. 7 Toyota Yaris WRC made an excellent start to the morning, with a stage win on SS20 moving him into first

position. He continued to fight until the end and finished up just 10.6seconds shy of victory, as he took his third podium finish from the last four events.

On the other hand, Lappi, in the No. 9 Toyota Yaris WRC, began the day with a margin of just 1.7 seconds over the driver in fourth place, but immediately increased his advantage by winning SS19. He ended the rally more than half a minute clear as he made his third podium visit in the space of five rounds. With the results for Latvala and Lappi, GR World Rally team extends its manufacturers' championship lead to 20 points. Jari-Matti Latvala said: "It was a great battle, and I really enjoyed the fight. The first two stages were great for me, but it went away in the final loop. It was maybe down to the tire choice as I had one used soft tire, and it was not giving a firm grip on the gravel. This is a very important result for the team, the manufacturers' championship, and also for me."

Esapekka Lappi added: "I am pleased with this result. These are important points, especially for the team. In the morning loop, the performance was really strong as we defended our third place and managed to do the fastest time. We got a big gap, and after that, it was just about bringing the car safely to the finish, which we did."

Over the years, Toyota has been participating in many different forms of motorsports, including Formula One, the World Endurance Championship (WEC), and the 24-hour endurance race. Toyota's participation in these events was overseen by separate entities within the company until April 2015, when



Toyota established GAZOO Racing (GR), to consolidate all of its motorsports activities under one in-house brand. Representing Toyota's belief that 'the roads build the people, and the people build the cars,' GR highlights the role of motorsports as a fundamental pillar of

Toyota's commitment to making 'ever-better' cars. Harnessing years of experience gained under the extreme conditions of various motorsports events, GR aims to forge new technologies and solutions that bring the freedom, adventure, and joy of driving to everyone.