



LONDON: Argentina's Tomas Cubelli goes to pass the ball as he is tackled by Australia's Allan Ala'Alatua during The Rugby Championship game between Argentina and Australia at Twickenham stadium in London, Saturday. —AP

## CHEIKA WANTS 'EDGIER' AUSTRALIA AFTER BEATING PUMAS

**TWICKENHAM:** Wallabies coach Michael Cheika said his side will need to be sharper when they return to face England in December after ending the Rugby Championship with a 33-21 win over Argentina at Twickenham.

Samu Kerevi scored two of Australia's four tries, while forwards Adam Coleman and Dean Mumm also crossed the Pumas' line in the first Rugby Championship match played outside the southern hemisphere.

Bernard Foley kicked Australia's remaining 13 points on Saturday but the resilient Wallabies were a man down for 20 minutes after both Coleman and Michael Hooper were yellow-carded for high tackles.

This was just Australia's third win in nine Tests since they were beaten by New Zealand

in last year's World Cup final at Twickenham.

In June, the Wallabies went down 3-0 in a home Test series to an England side coached by former Australia boss Eddie Jones.

They will have a chance to turn the tables when they face England at Twickenham on December 3 as part of their end of year tour.

"I just want to have a bit more edge around everything," said Cheika when asked what he wanted Australia to improve before they returned to London. "We need to start chasing what we want out of a game a little bit harder." He added: "The team's been changing so much, I probably didn't realise it would change as much as it has. A lot of our guys have really stood up to be counted and we're creating some competition, and that

should bring a bit of edge with it."

### 'MASSIVE TASK'

Victory saw the Wallabies finish runners-up to the All Blacks, who won all six of their Rugby Championship matches.

Next up, Australia have the daunting challenge of trying to stop an outstanding New Zealand side from setting a new world record for a major nation of 18 successive Test wins when they meet their trans-Tasman rivals at Auckland's Eden Park on October 22. What Cheika labelled a "massive task" is made all the harder by the fact New Zealand are unbeaten at Eden Park in the professional era.

The All Blacks have won a remarkable 35 successive Tests at their 'fortress' since losing to

France and drawing with South Africa in Auckland back in 1994. "I'll start thinking about that tomorrow," said Cheika. "We've got to let the boys enjoy this victory." Argentina squandered several try-scoring opportunities preventing them from realising their ambition of two wins in this season's Rugby Championship. They finished bottom and face Japan in Tokyo in a fortnight. "We felt we could have won the game," said Argentina coach Daniel Hourcade.

"We were not able to win the game because we made mistakes that stopped us scoring, and that also gave them too many points." Argentina, beaten by Australia in last year's World Cup semi-final at Twickenham, opted to move a home fixture to England's headquarters. It was a commercial rather than sporting

decision but Pumas captain Agustin Creevy had no regrets following a match where his side enjoyed plenty of backing from a crowd of more than 48,000.

"I don't know what would have happened had we played in Argentina," said Creevy. "Of course for us, playing in Argentina is the best option in terms of crowd support. But today we had a very good crowd, and at some moments we felt like locals because of the support," the hooker added.

Whether another Rugby Championship match is staged in the northern hemisphere remains to be seen but Cheika, impressed by the size of Saturday's attendance, commented: "You can't say much more about 48,000 fans coming to a game of two neutrals." —AFP



DOHA: Boels Dolmans Cycling Team's cyclists pose on the podium after winning the gold medal in the women's team time trial event as part of the 2016 UCI Road World Championships yesterday, in the Qatari capital Doha. — AFP

## STEVENS RETIRES ON HIGH, TEAM CLAIMS WORLD TITLE

**DOHA:** American Evelyn Stevens will head into retirement with a fourth world title after helping Boels Dolmans to women's team time-trial victory at the World Championships in Qatar yesterday. Boels Dolmans, who also include reigning road race world champion Lizzie Deignan (formerly Armistead) and four-times world champion Ellen van Dijk, brushed away the opposition to finish the 40km course in 48mins 41.62secs. That was almost a minute ahead of their nearest rivals, Germans Canyon Sram Racing, who finished in 49:29.86.

Americans Twenty16-Ridebiker, the first team out on the course, which started in Lusail where the 2022 football World Cup final will be played, finished third. It was a sweet end for Stevens, 33, who was also part of the winning teams in 2012, 2013 and 2014.

"I came into this season knowing this was

my last race, it's nice to have a goal and it makes it very special to win," she told AFP. She now plans to return to Wall Street and work in finance, where she previously worked before cycling professionally. The race was held in sweltering conditions, where the temperature reached as high as 35 degrees Celsius (95 degrees Fahrenheit). Prior to the championships beginning, organisers had announced they would consider shortening races because of the heat, though yesterday's event went the full planned distance.

The race also featured a spectacular crash involving Anouska Koster from the Netherlands, riding for Raboliv, who ploughed into a barrier and had to pull out of the race. The championships run until October 16, with the men's team time trial taking place later yesterday. —AFP

## DEPARTING MARTIN HELPS ETIXX WIN WORLD TITLE

**DOHA:** Tony Martin gave Etixx-Quick Step a parting gift as he helped them claim the men's team time-trial title at the World Championships in Qatar yesterday, his last race for the Belgians. Etixx won a tight race in a time of 42mins 32.39secs, just eleven seconds ahead of BMC to reverse last year's result. Australia's Orica-BikeExchange finished third with early race leaders Team Sky fourth. "It's really very emotional for me," time-trial specialist Martin said afterwards. "It was the last race for the team, they have been a family for me in the last five years and I knew it was a last chance to lead the team to a great victory."

Martin, a three-time world champion, will join Katusha next year. Boels Dolmans, who also included reigning road race world champion Lizzie Deignan (formerly

Armistead) and four-times world champion Ellen van Dijk, brushed away the opposition to finish the course in 48mins 41.62secs. That was almost a minute ahead of their nearest rivals, Germans Canyon Sram Racing, with Americans Twenty16-Ridebiker third. It was a sweet end for Stevens, 33, who was also part of winning teams in 2012, 2013 and 2014. "I came into this season knowing this was my last race, it's nice to have a goal and it makes it very special to win," she told AFP. The woman's race also featured a spectacular crash involving Anouska Koster from the Netherlands, riding for Raboliv, who ploughed into a barrier. The races were held in sweltering conditions, where the temperature reached as high as 35 degrees Celsius (95 degrees Fahrenheit). —AFP



DOHA: BMC Racing Team's cyclists compete in the men's team time trial event as part of the 2016 UCI Road World Championships yesterday, in the Qatari capital Doha. — AFP

## STEVE HANSEN KEEPS ALL BLACKS GROUNDED AS HISTORY BECKONS

**WELLINGTON:** New Zealand coach Steve Hansen warned his history-making All Blacks yesterday not to get too far ahead of themselves as they were showered with praise following their record-breaking 57-15 thrashing of South Africa.

Former All Blacks captain Sean Fitzpatrick, speaking on SkySports in England, hailed the current side as "the best ever" after the nine-try demolition took them to a world record-equalling 17th consecutive victory. The Planet Rugby website rated the All Blacks "phenomenal", particularly in the second-half when they scored 45 points and conceded only six, describing the performance "as one-sided a game as you will see at Test level". The All Blacks embarrassed the Springboks in their Durban fortress, producing their highest score and biggest-winning margin against their arch rivals in 93 Tests dating back to 1921.

They became the first team to go through a Rugby Championship season scoring four or more tries in each Test, and if they beat Australia when they clash in Auckland on October 22 they will become the most successful ever top-tier side.

Their current streak of 17 wins in a row equals the world record set by the 1965-69 and 2013-14 All Blacks, and the 1997-98 Springboks. "The @AllBlacks are playing a different game to anybody on the planet at the moment. Just a joy to watch. Power pace and skill," tweeted former Wales and British and Irish Lions backrower Scott Quinnell. But Hansen said while the current crop of All Blacks were "a good side" and determined to get better, he noted that Australia have a history of upsetting them.

"I wouldn't get too far ahead of ourselves," Hansen said in Durban. "If we're going to go one step further we've got to make sure we prepare really well. Australia are a good rugby side."

"They've got a history of turning up when there's a record on the table." The Wallabies stopped the All Blacks' last record run with a 12-12 draw in Sydney in 2014, while in 2010, when the All Blacks were on a 15-match winning streak, they were beaten 26-14 by Australia in Hong Kong. The All Blacks have convincingly beaten the Wallabies twice already this year — 42-8 in Sydney and 29-9 in Wellington.

Hansen said while there was no guarantee they would win the third encounter, setting records and creating history was their aim. "They're a team that want to get better and do things other teams haven't done. That's been the case with this group since 2012. We're trying to find different horizons all the time."

Fitzpatrick, in his praise of the All Blacks, noted they have not missed a beat despite losing 800 caps worth of experience-including legends Richie McCaw and Dan Carter-after winning the World Cup last year. "This team has taken rugby to a new level," Fitzpatrick said.

"They put a line in the sand after the World Cup last year, lost all that experience, seamlessly have gone into this team and created their own identity." —AFP



DURBAN: New Zealand's Anton Lienert-Brown, left, avoids a tackle by South Africa's Faf de Klerk, during the rugby championship match between South Africa and New Zealand, at Kingsmead stadium in Durban, South Africa, Saturday. — AP

## CLERMONT DOWN TOULOUSE TO RECLAIM TOP SPOT

**PARIS:** Clermont returned to the top of the French League with a tight 29-25 victory over Toulouse in the Top 14 yesterday. They had briefly been replaced at the league summit on Saturday when La Rochelle held Toulon to a 17-17 draw. But Clermont opened up a three-point lead as tries from Arthur Iturria and Remi Lamerat, alongside 19 points from the boot of Morgan Parra, gave them a vital win.

Toulouse outscored Clermont by three tries to two on the back of a dominant pack that forced a penalty try after scores from Samoan pair Census Johnston and Joe Tekori. But indiscipline cost the 19-time French champions who had to content themselves with a losing bonus point that leaves them sixth. Clermont were off to a flyer after a glaring error from Toulouse scrum-half Samuel Marques in the fifth minute.

His pass deep in Toulouse territory was intercepted by Clermont fly-half Camille Lopez and although he was tackled inside the visitors' 22 by Kiwi Luke McAlister, he managed to offload to lock Iturria to score under the posts. Scrum-half Parra converted and shortly afterwards landed a penalty to boot. Toulouse hit back on 17 minutes from a close-range line-out. They got the rolling maul into gear and prop Johnston barged over to score, although Portugal's Marques hit the post with the conversion attempt. Parra knocked over a penalty off the upright and then a mazy, darting run from Wesley Fofana took Clermont right up to the Toulouse tryline, and although Australian hooker Nathan Charles was held up a

few centimetres short, a few plays later Lamerat managed to burst through.

Parra converted but Toulouse got back into the match before the break as lock Tekori bulldozed over from close range, through Parra and wing Noa Nakaitaci, after the visitors ran a succession of penalties after the half-time buzzer.

The pendulum seemed to be swinging in Toulouse's favour as Clermont's No.8 Fritz Lee was sin-binned for a high tackle on Jean-Marc Doussain with Marques kicking the penalty.

But almost immediately Parra replied to stretch back the hosts' lead to 23-15.

Clermont were struggling at the set-piece, though, and prop Thomas Domingo was yellow-carded after collapsing a scrum five yards from his own line, leaving Clermont with 13 players.

Their seven-man scrum couldn't handle the pressure and soon gave up a penalty try, with Marques converting to make it a one-point game. Yet almost immediately, Toulouse's Fijian wing Semi Kunatani stupidly got himself sin-binned for trying to kick the ball out of Parra's hands and the scrum-half made the visitors pay by landing his fourth penalty as Lee returned to the fray.

With both teams back to full strength, Florian Fritz kicked a monstrous penalty from inside his own half 10 minutes from time to make it 26-25 but Parra had the last word with his fifth penalty after Toulouse collapsed a maul in the day's other game. Lyon moved up three places to ninth with a 27-22 win over Pau. —AFP