

BOXING

BOXER WILDER BEATS POVETKIN IN US TRIAL OVER CANCELED FIGHT

NEW YORK: Heavyweight boxing champion Deontay Wilder has won a fight with Russian boxer Alexander Povetkin - not in the ring, but in the courtroom - in a trial over a title bout that was called off after the Russian tested positive for a banned substance.

After less than an hour, a federal jury in Manhattan on Monday ruled in favor of Wilder in a civil trial, finding that Povetkin ingested meldonium after a World Anti-Doping Agency ban of the drug went into effect in January 2016.

That question had become key to

dueling lawsuits the boxers had filed against each other over the championship boxing match scheduled for May 21 in Moscow, which was called off after Povetkin tested positive on April 27 for meldonium.

Lawyers for Wilder and promoter DiBella Entertainment Inc had argued that Povetkin's positive urine test came after three negative ones earlier in April, which meant that the Russian took the drug after passing the earlier tests.

But lawyers for Povetkin and promoter Andrew Ryabinskiy's company, World

of Boxing LLC, said he had, like many other athletes, taken meldonium at a doctor's direction before the World Anti-Doping Agency had even announced plans to ban it.

Judd Burstein, a lawyer for Wilder, said he was "extremely happy" with the verdict. Povetkin's lawyer, Kent Yalowitz, on Monday called the verdict an "outrageous miscarriage of justice" and indicated he would seek to have it thrown out.

The lawsuits came after the World Boxing Council announced on May 13

that Povetkin had tested positive for meldonium and subsequently announced the postponement of his bout with champion Wilder.

In June, Wilder and DiBella sued Povetkin and Ryabinskiy's World of Boxing LLC, saying they were owed at least \$5 million for the defendants' breach of a contract requiring Povetkin to be produced for the match.

Povetkin and World of Boxing soon after countersued, seeking \$34.5 million for what they said was Wilder's own breach of contract for walking away

from the fight and defamation for engaging in a "smear campaign."

The World Boxing Council in August announced that, based on scientific and medical information it received, it was not possible to determine whether Povetkin ingested meldonium after Jan. 1, 2016, when it was officially banned.

In December, a super heavyweight title bout between Povetkin and Haitian-born Canadian Bermene Stiverne was called off after the Russian tested positive for a different banned substance, ostarine. — Reuters

SOCCER

TUDOR REIGN AT GALATASARAY AFTER RIEKERINK OUSTED

ISTANBUL: Istanbul giants Galatasaray are set to appoint former Croatian international Igor Tudor as new manager after firing Dutch manager Jan Olde Riekerink because of lacklustre results.

Galatasaray's top executives held an emergency meeting about the Dutchman's future following the 1-2 home defeat to lowly Kayserispor on Sunday, the Hurriyet daily and Dogan news agency said.

A formal board meeting later Tuesday confirmed the decision to fire Riekerink, who has only been at the club for a year, and appoint Tudor in his place, according to the reports. Tudor, who currently manages Karabukspor in Turkey, has agreed a 1.5 year deal with the Istanbul club, Dogan news agency said. The appointment is expected to be announced later in the day by Galatasaray, the reports said.

Fanatik daily said Galatasaray would pay Karabukspor a mere 150,000 euros (\$160,000) in compensation.

But the reports have already prompted an angry reaction from Karabukspor chairman Ferudun Tankut, who accused the wealthy Istanbul side of stealing his coach. He said the club had discovered the news from the media and said it would protest to the Turkish football federation against the "injustice", he suggested the club was discriminated against as it was from provincial

Anatolia rather than Istanbul.

"If Galatasaray has made such a move, then it's unethical," he said. A successful playing career saw Tudor, 38, notch up a decade worth of appearances as a defender for the Croatian national team and Juventus of Italy. He retired early with an ankle injury and then turned to management, first with his native Hajduk Split and then PAOK of Greece and Karabukspor who he joined in 2016.

The defeat against Kayserispor left Galatasaray in third place in the Super Lig behind leaders and defending champions Besiktas and surprise package Basaksehir.

The 2015 champions Galatasaray have a team packed with stars such as Germany's Lukas Podolski and Dutch playmaker Wesley Sneijder, and for the management the title is a must.

Riekerink told the Fanatik daily that he had not been informed of the discussions about his future. "It would be normal if the decision taken at that meeting was discussed with me first," he said.

The Turkish Super Lig is notorious for its revolving door managerial jobs but the situation at Galatasaray has been extreme even by local standards.

If Tudor's appointment is confirmed, he will be the sixth manager to take charge of the club since 2014. — AFP



POETLAND: Portland Trail Blazers guard Damian Lillard falls to the court as he drives to the basket during overtime of an NBA basketball game against the Atlanta Hawks in Portland, Ore., Monday. Atlanta won in overtime 109-104. — AP

BASKETBALL

DENVER NUGGETS STUN GOLDEN WARRIORS

DENVER: Nikola Jokic got his second career triple-double as the Denver Nuggets tied an NBA record with 24 3-pointers while shocking the Golden State Warriors 132-110 on Monday night. The Nuggets tied the 3-point mark set by the Rockets in December against New Orleans. They missed two 3-pointers in the final minute, and Jamal Murray passed up an uncontested 3 to dribble out the clock. They finished 24 of 40 from beyond the arc. The Warriors were just 8 of 32 from long range, including 1 of 11 by Stephen Curry. Jokic set career highs in rebounds (21) and assists (12) to go with 17 points, and rookie Juancho Hernangomez scored a season-high 27 points, including six 3s. Will Barton added 24 points and Jameer Nelson had 23.

HAWKS 109, TRAIL BLAZERS 104, OT
Tim Hardaway Jr. scored 25 points and Dennis Schroder added 22 as Atlanta scored the final 12 points of overtime to beat Portland. Dwight Howard added 19 points and 16 rebounds for the Hawks, who won their fifth straight against the Blazers. Paul Millsap made the tying basket as time expired in regulation. CJ McCollum had 26 points for the Blazers, who traded starting center Mason Plumlee to Denver a day earlier. Damian Lillard added 21.

SPURS 110, PACERS 106
Kawhi Leonard scored 32 points as San Antonio clinched its NBA-record 20th consecutive winning season with a victory over Indiana. LaMarcus Aldridge scored 10 of his 19 points during the final 6 1/2 minutes as the Spurs improved to 42-13 in the season following Tim Duncan's retirement. They have had a winning record every season since 1997-98, when Duncan was a rookie, and broke a tie with the Utah Jazz, who had 19 straight winning seasons from 1985-2004. Paul George scored 27 points and Myles Turner had 22 for the Pacers, who have lost four straight - three on their home court.

CELTICS 111, MAVERICKS 98
Isaiah Thomas had 29 points and eight assists while his backcourt mate Marcus Smart added 19 points against his hometown team as Boston beat Dallas. Kelly Olynyk scored seven of his 15 points during a 12-2 run that started with the Celtics leading by one in the fourth quarter as the Atlantic Division leaders won for the 10th time in 11 games. Boston pulled within two games of Cleveland atop the Eastern Conference. Rookie Yogi Ferrell had 20 points for the Mavericks.

WIZARDS 120, THUNDER 98
Russell Westbrook sat down for good midway through the third quarter while Oklahoma City was in the midst of missing 24 consecutive shots as Bradley Beal and John Wall carried Washington to a stunningly lopsided victory. Westbrook entered the game leading the NBA in scoring average at 31.2 and third in assists at 10.2 per game, along with a total of 26 triple-doubles, but he finished with

only 17 points - equaling his second-lowest total of the season - on 5-for-19 shooting. He had four assists and four rebounds. Westbrook missed nine field-goal attempts in a row during that eye-opening, team-wide drought when the Thunder were being outscored 32-5 from late in the second quarter to late in the third. Beal scored 22 points, making 6 of 7 3-point tries. Wall had 15 points and 14 assists.

CLIPPERS 88, JAZZ 72
Blake Griffin had 26 points, 10 rebounds and six assists as Los Angeles rolled over Utah. The Clippers controlled the game for all but a short stretch of the first quarter while the Jazz had a horrific shooting night. DeAndre Jordan brought the energy early, then Austin Rivers got hot in the second quarter before Griffin had a dominant 12-point third quarter. Jordan finished with 10 points and 13 rebounds and Rivers had 15 points. Rudy Gobert had 10 points and 14 rebounds for Utah.

MAGIC 116, HEAT 107
Evan Fournier scored 24 points and Elfrid Payton added 20 off the bench as Orlando beat Miami to snap a four-game losing streak. Serge Ibaka scored 17 points and Nik Vucevic finished with 13 points and 17 rebounds for Orlando, while Dion Waiters returned from a sprained ankle and scored 23 points for Miami, whose eight-game home winning streak was snapped. Goran Dragic scored 22 points for the Heat, who have lost two straight following a 13-game winning streak.

76ERS 105, HORNETS 99
Dario Saric had 18 points and 11 rebounds off the bench as Philadelphia beat slumping Charlotte for its third straight win. Charlotte guard Nic Batum failed to make good on his guarantee that the Hornets would beat the 76ers. He had 16 points on 5-of-12 shooting, but the Hornets lost for the 10th time in 11 games. Robert Covington had 17 points for

the 76ers while T.J. McConnell added 14 points and seven assists. Kemba Walker scored 29 points for the Hornets.

GRIZZLIES 112, NETS 103
Mike Conley scored 32 points while Marc Gasol had 19 points, nine rebounds and eight assists as Memphis beat hapless Brooklyn. Brandon Wright added 17 points and Vince Carter had 14 as the Grizzlies won for the fourth time in their last five games. Brook Lopez and Spencer Dinwiddie each had 17 points as the Nets lost their 13th straight overall and 15th straight at home to set a new franchise record for futility.

PELICANS 110, SUNS 108
Anthony Davis scored six consecutive points, the last two the go-ahead rebound basket with 40.3 seconds to play, as New Orleans escaped with a victory over Phoenix. The Suns missed three shots close to the basket in the final seconds, one by Eric Bledsoe and two by P.J. Tucker. Davis scored 24 points, four below his season average. Jrue Holiday added 18, and Tyreke Evans and E'Twaun Moore had 15 apiece for the Pelicans, playing a night after a loss in Sacramento. Bledsoe scored 37, the last on a 3-pointer that put the Suns ahead 108-107 with 1:12 to go.

BUCKS 102, PISTONS 89
Greg Monroe had 25 points and 13 rebounds and Michael Beasley added 23 points as Milwaukee beat Detroit, winning its first home game since star forward Jabari Parker got hurt. The Bucks led by 22 at one point and held a double-digit advantage for most of the second half. It was a confidence-building outing for a team adjusting to life again without Parker, the 20-point-a-game scorer who tore his left ACL last week for the second time in three seasons. Marcus Morris led Detroit with 26 points, while Andre Drummond added 21 points and 12 rebounds. — AP

NBA results/standings

Atlanta 109, Portland 104 (OT); Denver 132, Golden State 110; LA Clippers 88, Utah 72; New Orleans 110, Phoenix 108; Boston 111, Dallas 98; Washington 120, Oklahoma City 98; Milwaukee 102, Detroit 89; Memphis 112, Brooklyn 103; Orlando 116, Miami 107; San Antonio 110, Indiana 106; Philadelphia 105, Charlotte 99.

Eastern Conference				Western Conference				
Atlantic Division				Northwest Division				
	W	L	PCT	GB				
Boston	36	19	.655	-	Utah	34	22	.607
Toronto	32	23	.582	4	Oklahoma City	31	25	.554
NY Knicks	23	33	.411	13.5	Denver	25	30	.455
Philadelphia	21	34	.382	15	Portland	23	32	.418
Brooklyn	9	46	.164	27	Minnesota	21	34	.382
Central Division				Pacific Division				
Cleveland	37	16	.698	-	Golden State	46	9	.836
Indiana	29	26	.527	9	LA Clippers	34	21	.618
Chicago	26	29	.473	12	Sacramento	23	32	.418
Detroit	26	30	.464	12.5	LA Lakers	19	37	.339
Milwaukee	24	30	.444	13.5	Phoenix	17	39	.304
Southeast Division				Southwest Division				
Washington	33	21	.611	-	San Antonio	42	13	.764
Atlanta	32	23	.582	1.5	Houston	40	17	.702
Charlotte	24	31	.436	9.5	Memphis	34	23	.596
Miami	24	32	.429	10	Dallas	22	33	.400
Orlando	21	36	.368	13.5	New Orleans	22	34	.393



Nasser Al-Khelaifi

DOHA: The next few days promise to be intense for Nasser Al-Khelaifi, chairman of Paris Saint-Germain and arguably the most recognisable face behind tiny Qatar's global sporting rise. Later night he will take his seat in the Presidenciel Stand at the Parc des Princes for the first leg of the crucial Champions League last 16 tie against Barcelona.

After that he will fly to his hometown of Doha to the more sedate surroundings of the Khalifa International Tennis Stadium, where five of the top-ranked seven women players in the world are vying to win the Qatar Open. A key figure in football, the dapper 43-year-old is possibly less well-known outside his own country as president of the Qatar Tennis Federation. In France, he has regularly been pictured with PSG stars such as Edinson Cavani and even once holding a first team shirt with former defender David Luiz after his transfer from Chelsea.

Like most Qataris, he maintains a discreet public profile at home, far more visible in Paris than in Doha, where he is as familiar for his role in tennis as for his ties to PSG. And it is to tennis that he owes his sporting career. On a recent power list of Qataris, he made seventh spot-below the head of Qatar Petroleum but above of the boss of Qatar Airways-and his occupation was listed as "sports". A former professional, he played in the Davis Cup and once against the 1995 French Open champion, Thomas Muster.

He may have only reached a career-high ATP ranking of 995, but those who played him say he was talented.

SPORTING POWER

And it was through tennis that he met Qatar's Emir, Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani, a path that would eventually lead to PSG. Qatar's 2011 purchase of the French

champions pushed this seemingly shy man into the spotlight. One year after winning the right to host the 2022 World Cup, it was another statement of Qatar's sporting ambitions.

It also demonstrated Qatar's business acumen in raising the country's profile, which has had various knock-on effects including a huge rise in the number of French tourists to the emirate.

But PSG's stuttering form this season-they are currently second three points behind Monaco-has led to the first sustained criticism of Khelaifi. One person close to PSG said he made mistakes by giving "certain key players too much power" during the club's transition in appointing a new coach and losing star names such as Zlatan Ibrahimovic. Those closest to him though say PSG are beginning to look strong again and deny rumours that he could be replaced if they lose to Barcelona. Leaving PSG is definitely not an option, one official told AFP this week, for one of the most powerful men in football who also happens to be the head of film and television group, Miramax.

Getting locals in Qatar to speak on the record about him, or other prominent individuals can be tricky.

Despite the extraordinary wealth of Qatar, Khelaifi's family, prior to the Gulf country finding vast gas and oil riches off its coast, were "gawas"-pearl divers. His family were involved in the industry-one of Qatar's staples before energy-for many generations.

It may sound romantic but it was a brutal job. Divers spent months away from home at sea, survived on rations and risked their lives to get enough pearls to ensure their families had money for the winter.

The Khelaifis are not alone among the now most prominent Qatari families to have worked in the industry. —AFP