

CHELSEA APOLOGIZES FOR KENEDY'S NASTY MESSAGES

LONDON: Chelsea has apologized for social media comments by Brazilian player Kenedy which it accepts "caused great offence and hurt the feelings" of the country during the Premier League champions' pre-season tour. The 21-year-old Kenedy's since-deleted Instagram posts featured a profanity relating to China and a message mocking a security guard he photographed. Chelsea says Kenedy has been "strongly reprimanded and disciplined," adding on its website that it "solemnly and sincerely apologizes" to the Chinese people. The messages were posted ahead of Chelsea's 3-0 victory over Arsenal in Beijing on Saturday. Chelsea says "the negative impact we have seen over the last two days has left us shocked and saddened. Once again, we sincerely apologize for the hurt caused to our Chinese fans as well as to the Chinese people." — AP



SALVADORAN PLAYERS BANNED AFTER BITING INCIDENTS

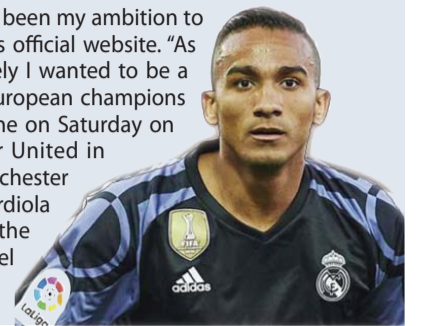
LOS ANGELES: Henry Romero received a six-game ban and Darwin Ceren for three on Saturday for "anti-sporting" behavior in a CONCACAF Gold Cup match in which they bit US players.

Los Cuscatlecos defender Romero bit Jozy Altidore on the back in El Salvador's 2-0 Gold Cup quarter-final loss to the United States and also grabbed the US forward's nipple and twisted it. Midfielder Ceren, who plays for Major League Soccer's San Jose Earthquakes, bit Omar Gonzalez during the contest.

CONCACAF's disciplinary committee announced the sanctions shortly before the United States' semi-final clash against Costa Rica kicked off on Saturday in Dallas. CONCACAF, which did not specify the biting incidents in their announcement, said the suspensions would affect only "official matches. El Salvador have already been eliminated from 2018 World Cup qualifying." — AFP

DANILO COMPLETES MAN CITY MOVE

LONDON: Real Madrid right-back Danilo completed his move to Manchester City yesterday, the Brazilian joining Pep Guardiola's Premier League giants on a five-year contract. The 26-year-old will now link up with City on their pre-season tour of the United States after agreeing personal terms and passing his medical. "There has been strong interest from other clubs, but it has always been my ambition to play for Pep Guardiola," Danilo told his new club's official website. "As soon as I heard of his interest, I knew immediately I wanted to be a City player," he added. His departure from the European champions had been confirmed by Real boss Zinedine Zidane on Saturday on the eve of his team's meeting with Manchester United in California. According to the BBC he moves to Manchester on a £26.5 million (29.5 million euros) deal. Guardiola had made full-backs his top transfer priority in the close season having released Pablo Zabaleta, Gael Clichy and Bacary Sagna. — AFP



SOUTHPORT: Jordan Spieth of the United States plays a shot on the 1st hole during the final round of the British Open Golf Championship, at Royal Birkdale, Southport, England, yesterday. — AP

NOAH GOODWIN RALLIES TO WIN US JUNIOR AMATEUR

ANDOVER: Noah Goodwin rallied to beat Matthew Wolff 1 up in 100-degree heat Saturday in the US Junior Amateur final to become the third player to win a year after losing the title match. The 17-year-old Goodwin, from Corinth, Texas, was four holes down with eight to play at Flint Hills National before pulling off the second-biggest comeback in tournament history. "It's every junior's dream to win the U.S. Junior," Goodwin said. "It's the most prestigious junior event in the entire world. Everybody knows about it, and to add my name among the greats like Jordan Spieth and Tiger Woods just means everything to me."

Goodwin works with Spieth's instructor, Cameron McCormick, and the noted teacher was quick to send his pupil a congratulatory text message. "That just means a lot," Goodwin said. "He's done so much for my game. I can't really express my gratitude for Cameron. I wouldn't be where I am without him."

The match ended when Wolff conceded Goodwin's 6-foot birdie putt on the par-5 36th. Wolff drove left into the water hazard and was facing a putt for

double bogey. Goodwin plans to graduate from high school early and enroll at SMU in January. The 18-year-old Wolff, from Agoura Hills, California, will be a freshman at Oklahoma State.

"It's tough to come out on the bottom, but I played great all week," Wolff said. Goodwin dropped 4 down when Wolff took the par-3 28th with a birdie. Goodwin won the par-5 29th with a 35-foot birdie putt and took the par-4 30th, par-3 32nd and par-4 33rd with pars to pull even. The only larger comeback came two years ago when Phillip Barbaree edged Andrew Orischak in 37 holes at Colleton River Plantation Club after trailing by five holes with eight to play. Andy Hyeon Bo Shim, in 2012 at The Golf Club of New England, also rallied from 5 down at the start of the afternoon 18 in beating Jim Liu, 4 and 3. The USGA lengthened the final from 18 holes to 36 in 2005.

Last year, Goodwin fell 2 and 1 to Australia's Min Woo Lee at The Honors Course in Tennessee. Mason Rudolph (1950) and Tim Straub (1983) also won a year after falling in the title match. "It's a feeling that I'm still kind of trying to grasp," Goodwin said. — AP

US TEEN ROOKIE KORDA GRABS 2-SHOT LPGA LEAD

WASHINGTON: US teen rookie Nelly Korda, the daughter of retired Czech tennis star Petr Korda, fired a five-under par 66 to seize a two-stroke lead after Saturday's third round of the LPGA Marathon Classic.

Korda, who turns 19 next Friday, birdied four of the first seven holes and closed with birdies at the par-5 17th and 18th to stand on 15-under 198 after 54 holes at Highland Meadows Golf Club in Sylvania, Ohio. "There's still 18 more holes and a lot of golf left to be played, so I'm just going to stay patient and see how it goes," Korda said. "When you end on a birdie, you're just really excited to play the next day and get it going, so I'm definitely excited."

Korda, whose older sister Jessica is also on the circuit, seeks her first LPGA title. The world number 87's best finish in 14 LPGA starts this year was a share of fifth in January's season-opening Bahamas LPGA Classic. "Not really going to think about it too much," Korda said about playing in the final pairing. "I'm not going to get ahead of myself. I've done that a couple times this year and I'm just going to take it shot by shot." Starting the day one stroke off the lead after a second-round 64, Korda birdied the third hole and ran off three birdies in a row ending at the par-5 seventh. She closed the front nine with her lone bogey but finished with back-to-back birdies to seize the lead.

"It's a new position. I'm excited," Korda said of her first lead entering an LPGA final round. "My mentality hasn't changed. It's the same as the first two days. I just try to take it shot by shot." Petr Korda reached as

high as second in the world rankings and won the 1998 Australian Open title before retiring in 1999 while Jessica Korda, 24, has won four LPGA titles, most recently in Malaysia in 2015. South Korea's 28th-ranked Kim In-Kyung, who captured her fifth career LPGA title at last month's ShopRite Classic, fired a 68 to stand second on 200. Newly crowned US Women's Open champion Park Sung-Hyun fired a 67 to finish in a pack sharing third on 201 that included India's Aditi Ashok, Taiwan's Chien Pei-Yun and Americans Gerina Piller, Sandra Changkija and Lexi Thompson. "There are so many good young players out here on Tour that I don't even feel like I'm 18," Korda said. "But it's really cool." Ashok, who added the tournament to her schedule at the last minute in a bid to qualify for the Women's British Open in two weeks in Scotland, fired a 68. "This is my first time being in contention on the LPGA, but I'm assuming it's pretty much the same every tournament you're in contention," Ashok said. "I've won a couple times on the European Tour, so I'm going to hope that experience helps tomorrow."

Taiwan's rookie Chien, ranked 266th in the world, does not have a top-10 finish this season and has missed the cut in 10 of her 16 prior LPGA starts this year. "If I won I'd be very happy," she said. "It's very important because I play a lot of golf, trying to get qualified, the LPGA is pretty tough... Everybody is very hungry, very strong. I'm very lucky top 10." Piller, chasing her first LPGA title, fired a 70 to fall back. She has four runner-up showings in 34 career top-10 finishes. — AFP



SYLVANIA: Nelly Korda hits to the 18th green Saturday, during the third round of the LPGA Tour's Marathon Classic golf tournament at Highland Meadows Golf Club in Sylvania, Ohio. Korda birdie the hole. — AP

GOLF

SPIETH SETS OUT LOOKING TO WIN BRITISH OPEN TITLE

SOUTHPORT: Jordan Spieth set out in his final round at the British Open yesterday looking to win the third major of his career in glorious conditions at Royal Birkdale. Spieth, 23, sat atop the leaderboard overnight on 11 under par after shooting a flawless 65 on Saturday—his third consecutive round in the 60s—while compatriot Matt Kuchar was his nearest challenger at eight-under. The American duo were the last pairing to tee off in their final round, going out at 2:30pm local time (1330 GMT).

Spieth admitted on Saturday night he would be trying to put the nerves to one side until then and get some much-needed rest before starting his round. "It's a little bit tougher to sleep but I've been fine recently," he said of the pressure that comes with going out late in the day.

"I expect to be. If not, I can sleep during the day—we don't tee off until pretty late. "But I wouldn't rather be in any other position than where we're at. And we have an opportunity to have a really special day on the golf course. I'm excited about it."

Behind Kuchar, there was a gap to 20-year-old Open debutant Austin Connolly born and brought up in Texas like Spieth but representing Canada—and current US Open champion Brooks Koepka, who were both on five under par. They teed off at 2:20pm and the final pair-

ings were hoping the perfect summer weather that greeted the earlier starters on Sunday held into the afternoon.

Japan's world number two Hideki Matsuyama and Branden Grace of South Africa were both four-under with the latter fresh from becoming the first player ever to shoot a round of 62 in a major championship on Saturday.

Chan Kim, Sweden's defending champion Henrik Stenson and world number one Dustin Johnson were all three-under, surely too far back to threaten Spieth.

MEMORIES OF AUGUSTA

Winner of the Masters and US Open in 2015, Spieth is looking to emulate the great Jack Nicklaus by getting his hands on a third different major before turning 24. Memories are still fresh of the Masters last year, when like this week he led after each of the first three rounds but choked when it came to the crunch.

He was five shots clear approaching the 10th on the Sunday at Augusta, only to drop six shots in three holes and eventually lose out to England's Danny Willett.

"I think I'm in a position where it can be very advantageous, just everything I've gone through, the good, the bad, and everything in the middle," said the world number

three when asked if he would use that experience to his advantage.

"I understand that leads can be squandered quickly, and I also understand how you can keep on rolling on one." In contrast to Spieth, the 39-year-old Kuchar has never triumphed in a major. But the last seven majors have all gone to first-time winners and five of the last six British Opens have been won by players aged 39 or older.

"Continue with good golf. Again, I'll be playing with him but not focused on him. My goal is to go out and play Royal Birkdale," said Kuchar ahead of his battle with Spieth for the Claret Jug.

The odds are in favour of a sixth American winner in 10 Opens to be held at Birkdale, on the Irish Sea coast in the town of Southport near Liverpool. Former winners include Arnold Palmer in 1961 and Tom Watson in 1983.

Those chasing Spieth will need to score low, just as Australia's Aaron Baddeley did early in the morning. He went round in six-under 64 but is +1 for the championship. Xander Schauffele of the United States had a 65 to sit at one-under overall. Crowds thronged the course from early on at Birkdale and organisers the R&A announced that a record attendance had been set for an Open outside St Andrews with 235,000 spectators over the week. — AFP

CARSON PALMER FEELS STRONG STARTING 15TH NFL SEASON

GLENDALE: For the first time in his career, Carson Palmer abandoned his usual pattern and didn't throw at all for several months. The 37-year-old quarterback says the results are obvious as he begins his fifth training camp with the Arizona Cardinals.

"It's hard to explain. You just feel better," Palmer said before the team went through its first training camp practice Saturday. "You feel like you have more zip, more velocity. ... I feel like I can go out and throw 150 balls in practice. I don't think I felt that way coming into camp last year." After their disappointing 2016 season, the Cardinals aren't getting much national attention this year. Experts point to Palmer's age and the fact his play diminished a year ago after his outstanding 2015 campaign. Palmer is entering his 15th NFL season and said when he was younger he never dreamed he would play so long.

"In football years, I think it's perceived once you get to 35 you're old," he said, "but if you can still put it on every day and play and work out and train and prepare mentally, I look at it as being experienced and mature."

Coach Bruce Arians acknowledged that a team's success is usually tied to the play of its quarterback. "I've been fortunate to be around some really, really good ones," he said. "It's always



Carson Palmer

fun going to practices and going to the stadium on Sunday when you have a good one. When you don't have one, it's rough."

So, much of any success Arizona has this season will depend on Palmer, who is used to that kind of scrutiny. "You get probably a little nervous at first as you're coming up," he said, "but you get kind of addicted to it and enjoy it and enjoy the pressure that comes with the position."

Palmer had his best season as a professional in 2015, throwing for 4,671 yards and 35 touchdowns, both career highs, with 11 interceptions. He guided the team to a 13-3 record and an appearance in the NFC championship game, a loss at Carolina.

The team had virtually everybody back last year, but staggered to a 1-3 start and finished 7-8-1. Palmer had his sixth career 4,000-yard passing season (4,233), but his touchdown total dropped to 24 with 16 interceptions. He was better the last half of the season, after Arians started giving him off for Wednesday's practice.

That led to the decision to severely limit his throwing in the offseason. Palmer said he followed orders. "I've been playing so long you get so ingrained in throwing in March, April and June," he said, "and then to not do it is just odd. It just feels like something's wrong. But I listened to experts, like coach Arians. ... I listened to their approach and I'm all in." Much is being made of that "window of opportunity" nearly closing for this group of Cardinals. This could be the final go-round for the trio of Arians, Palmer and Larry Fitzgerald. One or more of them might retire after this season. Palmer said he doesn't know how much longer he will play. "I still love it," he said. "I'm excited to be here." — AP