

Sports

# Alpine launches program to find women F1 drivers

## 'Physical ability is no barrier for women'

PARIS: Formula One's Alpine team said physical ability is no barrier for women to compete in their sport as they launched a program to have a female driver in the next eight years. Only two women have ever started a Grand Prix, the Italian pair of Maria Teresa de Filippis, who qualified in three in 1958, and Lella Lombardi, who raced in 12 between 1974 and 1976, picking up a point. There has since been a belief that physical strength was a drawback to the progress of women in the sport.

That was backed up on Tuesday by Jamie Chadwick, champion of the W series, an all-female championship, who said reaching Formula One via its feeder series Formula Two and Three is "extremely physical." Alpine's CEO Laurent Rossi, however, rejected that notion, as the team launched a program to mentor women drivers. "The number one criteria is not physical ability, far from it," Rossi told AFP. "The proof is that Fernando Alonso continues to drive very well. If a 40-year-old man can drive in Formula One then a woman on top form at 28 years old is as capable."

Rossi said there were examples of women in other industries working in similar extreme conditions. "There are women who fly fighter jets, who are astronauts, who are used to much more powerful G-forces," he said. "It's something that society wanted to peddle for years, and is one of the cliches that need to be eradicated," he added. In the coming weeks Alpine will search for up to five candidates aged between 10 and 12, with a view to having at least one of them racing by 2030.

"We really have to be able to detect potential from as young as possible so they can follow the training program," Alpine's director of human resources Claire Mesnier said. "Right now, I'm not sure that I can say that we're exploring the whole talent pool, knowing 50 percent of humanity are women," she added. Mesnier said that Alpine's current drivers, two-time champions Alonso and Frenchman Esteban Ocon, are participating in the program. "Esteban and Fernando will be the main ambassadors," she said. Alpine next race is at the Austrian Grand Prix on July 10. —AFP



MONTREAL: Fernando Alonso of Spain driving the (14) Alpine F1 A522 Renault leads Carlos Sainz of Spain driving (55) the Ferrari F1-75 during the F1 Grand Prix of Canada at Circuit Gilles Villeneuve in Montreal, Quebec. —AFP

## France's coach hands Jolmes, Tanga debuts

TOKYO: France head coach Fabien Galthie on Thursday handed debuts to lock Thomas Jolmes and number eight Yoan Tanga for the first rugby Test against Japan in Toyota on Saturday. The 2023 World Cup hosts have brought a young squad to Japan with several of the players who led them to the Six Nations Grand Slam this season rested. Flanker Charles Ollivon returns to captain the side after missing the Six Nations through injury.

Several of Galthie's starting line-up played in the Barbarians' 52-21 thrashing of England at Twickenham two weeks ago. The coach said he wants to see his young side "grab the opportunity" in a France jersey. "It's a hungry team," said Galthie. "Everything is possible. We often tell the players when they come into the locker room 'it is you who takes the shirt'. We are here to put out and prepare the best team but it is you who are the authors of your own destiny."

Galthie said he had "no doubts" that flanker Ollivon was ready to resume the captaincy after suffering a knee injury in June 2021. He played a key part in taking Toulon to the European Challenge Cup final last month and impressed while leading the Barbarians. "He is very comfortable, he has regained his abilities and he is stringing together some matches," Galthie said.

"He has already proved himself with the game against England and he has a second captaincy and a new chapter with the France team." Japan head coach Jamie Joseph made six changes from the side that thrashed Uruguay 43-7 last weekend for his team's "massive challenge" against France. Three players have been ruled out because of COVID, with scrum-half Naoto Saito, hooker Shota Horie and full-back Ryuji Noguchi all unavailable. Temperatures are forecast to soar to 35 degrees Celsius by kick-off time in steamy Toyota. Joseph admitted his players will find it tough to deal with the heatwave conditions that have seen record June temperatures in Japan this week, but believes France "will find it even more challenging". "We've got to keep the game as fast as possible and back our ability to handle the heat a little bit better," said Joseph as he named his team.

"No doubt France will have tactics and ways of trying to slow the game up so that they can get plenty of rest." Joseph brought World Cup veterans Wimpie van der Walt and Ryohei Yamanaka back into the starting line-up as Japan look to get some game time under their belts. COVID disruptions mean the 2019 World Cup hosts have played only eight Test matches since reaching the quarter-finals on home soil two-and-a-half years ago. "It's a starting point for us," said Joseph. "We're way behind in terms of Test matches together, and then that's compounded by the fact that some of our key players are out through injury." South African-born wing Gerhard van den Heever keeps his starting place for Japan after winning his first cap at the age of 33 and scoring last week against Uruguay. Centre Dylan Riley, who also scored against the South Americans, wins his sixth cap. —AFP



Owen Farrell passes the ball during the British and Irish Lions training session. —AFP

## Farrell 'not happy' as Lawes named captain

PERTH: Eddie Jones admitted Owen Farrell "wasn't very happy" after Courtney Lawes was named England captain Thursday for the opening Test against Australia, a match the under-pressure coach is desperate to win. Veteran back Farrell had been Jones's go-to man as skipper since 2018, but ankle injuries forced him to miss the entire Six Nations this year with Lawes taking the armband.

Jones opted to stick with experienced blindside flanker Lawes for the opening Test of the three-match series, although Farrell returns, having last played in the 32-15 win over the Wallabies in November 2021. "Owen's a bloke who expresses his feelings clearly. He wants to be captain. When I told him he wasn't going to be captain, he wasn't very happy," said Jones. "Courtney Lawes has got a good sense of togetherness, he's calm, engaging with the players. He's the right fit for this tour."

Veteran scrum-half Danny Care was handed a first start since 2018 while big forward Billy Vunipola is back for the first time since March last year. Australia also sprung some surprises with lock Cadeyrn Neville and hooker David Porecki awarded debuts in a powerful pack, while playmaker Quade Cooper got the nod over James O'Connor. Farrell will start at inside centre with Joe Marchant at outside centre. Joe Cokanasiga and Jack Nowell are on the wings and Freddie Steward at full back.

Jonny May, second only to Rory Underwood in England's list of all-time leading try-scorers, was

not in the match-day 23 after contracting COVID on arrival in Perth last week. In another blow for the squad, Bath lock Charlie Ewels suffered a knee injury in training on Wednesday and has been ruled out of the tour. Hooker Jamie George joins props Ellis Genge and Will Stuart up front with Maro Itoje and Jonny Hill in the second row. Tom Curry is openside flanker and Australian-born Vunipola makes his first appearance for England since the Six Nations last year at No.8.

### Expectations high

England have won all eight of their Tests against the Wallabies since former Australia coach Jones took charge after the 2015 World Cup, including a 3-0 series whitewash six years ago. But performances this year have been lacking and Jones admitted he was under the gun. "Every international coach is under pressure, I'm under pressure because the results aren't good enough," he said. "Our expectations are high, the media's expectations are high, everyone's expectations are high and that's ok." Australia coach Dave Rennie stressed the importance of the lineout maul against England, an area where Neville excels. "Nev is a very big man... very important to us from the set-piece point of view, very good at the maul, lineout and scrum. Same with Porecki," he said.

Angus Bell, Darcy Swain, Allan Alaaloa, Rob Leota and Rob Valetini join them in the pack with flanker Michael Hooper leading the side again in his 119th Test. Veteran Cooper won the battle for the No.10 shirt ahead of O'Connor, who failed to make the bench, and will reunite with fellow Japan-based backs Samu Kerevi and Marika Korobete. Cooper will also reignite his partnership with scrum-half Nic White for the first time since leading the Wallabies to five straight Test wins in 2021. —AFP

## Fainga'anuku to debut against Ireland, COVID hits All Blacks again

AUCKLAND: Powerhouse wing Leicester Fainga'anuku will make his All Blacks debut after being named Thursday in the side to start the first Test against Ireland as COVID struck down another New Zealand coach. Canterbury Crusaders standout Fainga'anuku will start on New Zealand's left wing at Eden Park in Auckland on Saturday, while another uncapped Pacific Islands-born player, bruising Waikato Chiefs forward Pita Gus Sowakula, will be on the bench.

Ireland coach Andy Farrell named all four of his New Zealand-born players in the match-day 23 for the opening Test of a three-match series. Jamison Gibson-Park will start at scrum-half with James Lowe on the wing while Joey Carbery and Bundee Aki, who captained Ireland against the Maori All Blacks on Wednesday, are on the bench. They are joined in the replacements by Cian Healy, despite the veteran prop limping off during the 32-17 defeat in Hamilton. Veteran fly-half Johnny Sexton will captain the side in his 106th international.

All Blacks scrum guru Greg Feek on Thursday became the seventh member of the New Zealand coaching or playing staff to test positive for COVID-19 this week. Head coach Ian Foster, who also tested positive and has been in isolation along with assistants John Plumtree and Scott McLeod, conceded that the disrupted build-up had not been ideal. "Clearly it's been intriguing but it is what it is," said Foster, who could be cleared to rejoin the team on Saturday.

"We're excited with the team we're putting out there and it doesn't change that there's a statement that we want to make on the first Test of the year," he said via video link. Second-row forward Scott Barrett was a surprise choice at blindside flanker, after niggles to Akira Ioane and Dalton Papalii. Barrett's last start in the unfamiliar role came in the 2019 World Cup semi-final defeat to England where he was replaced at half-time, leading to widespread criticism. "I don't spend too long thinking about the 2019 game," Foster said. "This one, we're very clear about the strategy."

"He's bringing a bruising defense and a ball-carrying art to his game now. He's probably our most dynamic lock ball-carrier at the moment so we can probably utilize that a little bit at six." The powerful 22-year-old Fainga'anuku replaces Will Jordan, who is one of three players with COVID, along with Jack Goodhue and David Havili. Farrell said the All Blacks can cope with the disruption better than any international team, pointing to the quality of the Maori performance in outclassing his midweek side. —AFP

# Classifieds

## Hospitals & Clinics

Sabah Hospital	24812000	Al-Razi Hospital	24846000
Amiri Hospital	22450005	Physiotherapy Hospital	24874330/9
Maternity Hospital	24843100		
Mubarak Al-Kabir Hospital	25312700		
Chest Hospital	24849400		
Farwaniya Hospital	24892010		
Adan Hospital	23940620		
Ibn Sina Hospital	24840300		

## Clinics

Kaifan	24849807
Shamiya	24848913
Shuwaikh	24814507
Abdullah Salem	22549134
Nuzha	22526804
Industrial Shuwaikh	24814764
Qadsiya	22515088
Dasmah	22532265
Kaizen center	25716707
Rawda	22517733
Adaliya	22517144
Khaldiya	24848075

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