

ZENT CERUMO RC F finishes in 2nd to end the race in impressive fashion for Lexus

Petronas Tom's RC F tops AUTOBACS SUPER GT series race in Suzuka

SUZUKA, Oct 5: The No. 36 Petronas Tom's RC F driven by Daisuke Ito and James Rossiter ended the "44th International Suzuka 1000 km" race with an impressive performance to finish first at the 2015 AUTOBACS SUPER GT 500 series race, held recently at the Suzuka Circuit in Mie Prefecture. For the team it was their second consecutive Suzuka 1000 km victory, following their win here last year.

The No. 38 ZENT CERUMO RC F driven by Yuji Tachikawa and Hiroaki Ishiura completed the dominance of the Lexus RC F by finishing second in the race.

Rossiter and Ito lie third in the driver's championship, with Ishiura and Tachikawa two points ahead in second. In the manufacturers' standings, Petronas Tom's are placed second, two points above ZENT CERUMO, with three rounds still to contest.

During the race, the pivotal moment occurred during the routine pit stops around the 25th lap. On this pit stop, it was the No. 36 Petronas Tom's RC F team that demonstrated outstanding pit work to get back in the race several

seconds faster than their rivals after just 51 sec of stopped time. By the time all the cars had finished their first pit stop on the 35th lap, the No. 36 Petronas Tom's RC F had managed to return to the race in 2nd position. After the 62nd lap, it moved up into the lead. By this time, the track was completely dry, and probably due to rapid changes in other conditions like the track surface temperature, there were rapid changes in the respective paces of the cars.

However, there was no wavering in the speed and strength of the No. 36 Petronas Tom's RC F and it continued to build its lead over the rest of the competition, only giving up the lead for brief moments due to the timing of its pit stops. The result was that over the last 30 laps of the race, car No. 36 enjoyed a solid lead of more than 60 sec over the No. 38 ZENT CERUMO RC F which finally finished in 2nd place.

Takayuki Yoshitsugu, Chief Representative, Middle East and North Africa Representative Office, Toyota Motor Corporation said, "This win at Suzuka in such challenging conditions



Lexus RC F at Suzuka Race.

was significant as it demonstrated the superb performance of the Lexus RC F and the driving prowess of both sets of drivers in the No. 36 Petronas Tom's RC F as well as the No. 38 ZENT CERUMO RC F".

Yoshitsugu added: "Pushing these

cars to the limit in such challenging conditions gives us great insights in making ever better cars. This win is also a tribute to our loyal fans and customers who come to these races and follow us around the circuit and we sincerely appreciate their support".



Lexus RC F Zent team in action.

Speaking on this occasion, Daisuke Ito, said, "The race was held in difficult conditions, but I kept running determined not to lose hope until the very end. James succeeded in moving us up in position, and I believe we were able to change to slick dry-condition tires

with good timing. After a number of races where we were unable to get a good result, I'm very happy that I have finally been able to get a win and I want to help keep this momentum going and try to win the championship".

Japan's Kei Nishikori quashes Croatian 'rebellion' in Tokyo

Berdych beats Garcia-Lopez to win Shenzhen Open

TOKYO, Oct 5, (AFP): Defending champion Kei Nishikori survived a courageous ambush attempt from Croatian teenager Borna Coric to reach the second round of the Japan Open on Monday.

Playing his first match since helping Japan preserve their place in the Davis Cup world group with victory over Colombia last month, second seed Nishikori had to work extremely hard for his 2-6, 6-1, 6-2 win in Tokyo.

Coric, who stunned Andy Murray in Dubai earlier this year, threatened to spring

another upset after exploding from the blocks to take the first set, sealing it with a vicious kick serve which forced Nishikori into a wild return.

But Nishikori, who currently features in a Japanese television commercial for instant noodles dressed as a samurai and smashing a hapless blond-haired opponent with a sword instead of a racquet, awoke from his slumber just in time. He came roaring back to take the second set before finishing the job in brutal fashion — an ace to give him match point and a huge serve to the body, flooring the 18-year-old Coric.

Nishikori, who has won titles in Memphis, Barcelona and Washington this year, will take on big-serving American Sam Querrey in the last 16 after he beat Ukraine's Alexandr Dolgoplov 7-6, 6-4 in an absorbing first-round match.

Switzerland's French Open champion Stan Wawrinka, who heads a quality field in Tokyo, opens his bid against Czech Radek Stepanek on Tuesday.

Wawrinka will not be relishing his second-round match if he deals with Stepanek, however, as the world number four would play Japan's Tatsuma Ito, the player who dumped him out of the tournament in the first round last year.

Ito beat countryman Yoshihito Nishioka 3-6, 6-0, 7-5 on Monday.

Tomas Berdych of the Czech Republic beat Spain's Guillermo Garcia-Lopez on Monday in a straight set tiebreaker to claim the rain-plagued Shenzhen Open.

Top seed Berdych defeated Garcia-Lopez, the number four seed, 6-3, 7-6 (9/7) for the title.

The final, originally set for Sunday, was delayed by one day as rain on

TENNIS

Saturday washed out semi-final play in the southern Chinese city.

Berdych downed Spain's Tommy Robredo, the number three seed, on Sunday in straight sets while Garcia-Lopez upset second seed Marin Cilic of Croatia, the winner of last year's US Open. The tournament carries prize money of \$607,940.

Eugenie Bouchard retired in tears and Jo-Wilfried Tsonga suffered dizzy spells before crashing to his worst defeat of the year in an incident-packed China Open first round on Monday.

Bouchard has not played since she was concussed in a locker-room fall at the US Open, and she lasted just 10 games against Andrea Petkovic before having her blood pressure checked and exiting in Beijing.

The Canadian sobbed into her towel and was comforted by Petkovic before she rose and walked out, waving grimly to the crowd, with the scoreline standing 6-2, 1-1 to her opponent.

Earlier Tsonga refused to blame Beijing's notorious air pollution as he was hit by dizzy spells before falling at the first hurdle 7-6 (7/4), 6-2 to little-known Austrian Andreas Haider-Maurer.

Tsonga was down in the second set when he staggered on court and took a time-out, in which he had his heartbeat checked with a stethoscope and was given medication.

It was not long before the out-of-sorts Tsonga limply succumbed to Haider-Maurer, who at world number 64 becomes the lowest ranked player to beat the Frenchman this season.



Kei Nishikori of Japan returns a shot to Borna Coric of Croatia during their first round match of the Japan Open tennis tournament in Tokyo on Oct 5. (AP)

World Champ'ship will be clean: AIBA boss

Fighters step into Washington ring

WASHINGTON, Oct 5, (AFP): Stepping into the Bald Eagle Recreation Center in Washington is to step out of a neighborhood better known for street violence, armed robbery and assault, and into a state-of-the-art boxing gym home to world-class athletes.

The center is stocked with two elevated rings, rows of fleshy punching bags and all the workout equipment an aspiring athlete could dream of. But the equipment is just a small part of the gym's draw; most come for father-figure coaches who have built this safe harbor in a rough part of town.

"When we become adults, we forget the struggles of the younger people, so we lose the connection with them. I've never lost that, I connect with them from day one," one of the founders, Barry Hunter, said.

Tracing the border with Maryland, the suburb of Washington Highlands is just a 20-minute drive from the White House, yet reports of late-night gunshots, armed robbery and violence are common within this predominantly African-American neighborhood. Tyrek Irby, 21, came to Bald Eagle to turn a past marked by neglect and street fighting into a future as a world-class boxer.

"I learnt from other people's mistakes. I've seen friends lose their lives on the streets... That was about the time when my daughter was born, and I realized I had to change my life around.

"I got off the streets, I stopped smoking and doing stupid stuff, and now my focus is just my daughter and boxing. That's it."

Currently ranked number one in the US amateur light welterweight category, and number two in the world, Irby was growing up in a lawless, violent culture of street fighting when he discovered the "sweet science" of organized boxing. He joined the Headbangers team at Bald Eagle and now has his sights on a World Series Boxing title.

Although Irby has succeeded inside the



Victoria Samo Jordan, 'Washington gym takes fighters from streets into the ring' Marcus Luther (left), spars against an opponent from a team from New York at the Bald Eagle Recreation Center in Washington, DC on July 2. (AFP)

ring at full speed, he's had to learn the sport's discipline the hard way.

When he was given second place at a local tournament at Maryland University, he threw his runner-up trophy into the crowd in a rage and was impolite to the judges.

BOXING

The Potomac Valley Boxing Association, one of his sponsors and supporters from the start, wanted to suspend him, but settled for an in-house punishment that consisted of Irby scrubbing toilets, floors and equipment at the gym, unable to train for one month.

Bald Eagle began in a small school annex 27 years ago, where Hunter and Marshall Cunningham began training kids from the neighborhood. A few years ago, then-Washington mayor Adrian Fenty approached Hunter with the prom-

ise of building a new facility in recognition of the work they did with city kids.

In their new gym, inaugurated in 2012, Hunter and Cunningham have coached hundreds of kids and adults. Hunter has been a boxing coach for the US Olympic team and he is one of the most sought after trainers in the country.

But it is the row of belts and trophies in the glass display case at the gym that makes his eyes shine.

"This program has resurrected a lot of kids," he said, adding that some of his current coaches started as students.

The 2015 AIBA World Boxing Championships, which officially begin in Qatar on Monday, should be free from any refereeing controversy, the head of the tournament's governing body has told AFP.

Ching-Kuo Wu, speaking in Doha on the eve of the 10-day competition, said it was now "impossible" for the results of bouts to be manipulated by unscrupulous officials.

Boxing has long been dogged by questionable refereeing decisions at major tournaments, but Wu, the AIBA president, said those days have gone, at least for the world championships.

"I can tell you it's impossible for anybody to manipulate the competition now," said the reform-minded official. "I ask people, how can you manipulate? You tell me."

Wu added that a number of safeguards have been introduced to protect the sport's integrity.

These include AIBA selecting, paying and grading the best referees, rather than officials being selected by national boxing federations, he said.

Wu added that referees are also not allowed to bring smartphones into the boxing arena, so they can have no outside contact. "What happened in the past is that all the referees came with the national team. All the problems happened because of the system.

Reavie misses playoff chance

Argentina's Grillo wins Web.com Tour Finals

PONTE VEDRA BEACH, Florida, Oct 5, (AP): Argentina's Emiliano Grillo made a 25-foot birdie putt on the final hole Sunday to win the Web.com Tour Finals-ending Web.Com Tour Championship, and Rob Oppenheim got the last PGA Tour card when Lucas Glover shook up the order with a closing bogey.

The 23-year-old Grillo beat Chez Reavie by a stroke in the last of the four events that replaced PGA Tour qualifying school, finishing with a 1-under 69 for a 14-under 266 total on the Dye's Valley Course at TPC Sawgrass.

"I gave my best out there, and I think the best thing I did all day was making that putt on 18," Grillo said. "It's been a great week. I'm on the PGA Tour and it feels great."

Reavie had a chance to force a playoff, but missed a 15-foot birdie putt. He shot a 68.

The series featured the top 75 players from the Web.com Tour money list, Nos. 126-200 in the PGA Tour's FedEx Cup standings and non-members such as Grillo who earned enough money to have placed in the top 200 had they been eligible. The top 25 players on the Web.com Tour regular-season money list earned PGA Tour cards. They were competing against each other for tour priority, with regular-season earnings counting in their totals. The other players were competing for 25 cards based on series earnings.

Grillo earned \$180,000 for the victory to finish second on the series money list with \$283,667. Reavie, the winner in North Carolina in the second event in the series, made \$108,000 to top the list with \$323,067.

Oppenheim took the 25th and final card with \$32,206, edging Eric Axley by

GOLF

\$101. Oppenheim finished with a 67 to tie for seventh at 7 under and earned \$19,000. Glover's bogey on the final hole dropped the 2009 US Open winner from a three-way tie for 10th into a five-way tie for 12th, giving Oppenheim an extra \$800. Axley, 25th last year by \$31.66, missed the cut.

Glover earned a card with a 14th-place finish on the series list.

Reavie and Patton Kizzire, the Web.com Tour's combined money leader with \$518,241, earned full tour exemptions and spots in the Players Championship. Reavie, the 2008 Canadian Open winner, finished 166th in the FedEx Cup.

"It's everything," Reavie said about becoming fully exempt. "A couple of years ago I was hurt and didn't know where was going to end up and here I am playing the best golf of my life and I've got a spot back on tour."

Kizzire closed with a 67 to tie for fifth at 10 under.

"It's hard to believe," Kizzire said. "I've always believed in myself, but it's hard to believe that I came out on top. I don't like to think about what I've done, I just like to keep going and try to do better."

Sam Saunders was third at 12 under after a 67. Saunders, Arnold Palmer's grandson, was sixth on the series list with \$114,950 after finishing 137th in the FedEx Cup. Rhein Gibson was



(Left to right): Emiliano Grillo of Argentina, Patton Kizzire and Chez Reavie of the United States pose for a portrait following the web.com Tour Championship at the TPC Sawgrass Dye's Valley Course on Oct 4, in Ponte Vedra, Florida. (AFP)



Kevin Harvick, driver of the #4 Budweiser/ Jimmy John's Chevrolet, wife DeLana and son Keelan celebrate in victory lane after winning the NASCAR Sprint Cup Series AAA 400 at Dover International Speedway on Oct 4, in Dover, Delaware. (AFP)

Johnson eliminated

Harvick dominates in 'must-win' race

DOVER, Del. Oct 5, (AP): Kevin Harvick dominated a race he had to win to advance to the second round of NASCAR's playoffs, while six-time champion Jimmie Johnson was eliminated from the field.

Harvick led 354 laps Sunday at Dover International Speedway and earned the third automatic berth in the 12-driver Chase for the Sprint Cup championship field. Harvick was mired in 15th in the standings and had to win to keep his title defense alive.

"Never quit. That's why right here, guys," Harvick said over the radio as he took the checkered flag.

Johnson entered fifth in the standings and, with 10 career wins at Dover, seemed a lock to advance. His No. 48 Chevrolet was forced off the track for 36 laps with a torn rear axle seal and he plummeted in the standings.

CAR RACING

Jamie McMurray, Paul Menard and Clint Bowyer also were eliminated as the Chase field was sliced from 16 to 12. Dale Earnhardt Jr tied with McMurray in points and earned the final spot on a tiebreaker.

Four more drivers will be eliminated in the next three-race segment that starts next week at Charlotte Motor Speedway.

Joe Gibbs Racing drivers Denny Hamlin and Matt Kenseth had already earned berths in the next round with wins in the first two Chase races. Carl Edwards also advanced along with Joey Logano, Ryan Newman, Kurt Busch, Brad Keselowski, Martin Truex Jr, Jeff Gordon and Kyle Busch.

Truex survived after he was sent to the rear for the field after his team made an unapproved adjustment to the right rear after inspection. Gordon's drive for a fifth championship is still alive in his final season.

another stroke back after a 65. He was 10th on the series list after finishing 33rd on the Web.com Tour regular-season money list.

Kyle Stanley (68) and South Africans Thomas Aiken (65) and Tyrone Van Aswegen (68) also tied for fifth. Stanley was 11th on the series list, Van Aswegen 17th, and Aiken 23rd.

Henrik Norlander was third on the money list with \$215,743, followed by Andrew Loupe at \$195,405. Norlander won the series opener in Indiana, and Loupe won last week in Ohio.

Roberto Castro also earned a card along with Michael Thompson, Tom Hoge, Brett Stegmaier, Hiroshi Iwata, Ricky Barnes, Derek Fathauer, Anirban Lahiri, Mark Hubbard, Robert Garrigus, Tim Wilkinson, Derek Ernst, Luke List and Brian Davis. Castro matched the course with a 62 to tie for 10th at 8 under.