

# Bezzecchi holds off Bagnaia in Dutch MotoGP sprint race

● **Marco Bezzecchi bounces back into title fight**

AFP | Amsterdam

Pole-sitter Marco Bezzecchi won the Dutch MotoGP sprint race at Assen yesterday ahead of world champion Francesco Bagnaia.

Fabio Quartararo completed the podium after third-placed Brad Binder was demoted to fifth following a penalty for track limits.

Bagnaia took command of the 13-lap dash around the classic motorcycling venue at turn one from Binder as pole man Bezzecchi was caught napping, dropping to third.

Bezzecchi bided his time and moved back to race second, leaving Bagnaia in his crosshairs.

Ten laps to go and Bezzecchi muscled past his good friend and compatriot to regain the lead, quickly opening up a half second gap.

At the midway point it was Bezzecchi's race to lose.

And the Italian, who dominated practice and set a record



Ducati's Italian rider Marco Bezzecchi competes during the Moto GP qualifying practice session

lap time in qualifying, didn't disappoint, even extending his lead at the line to 1.294sec.

Riding for Valentino Rossi's VR46 Ducati-satellite team he displayed a touch of the Italian legend Rossi's showmanship, climbing a camera gantry to milk the applause from his growing number of fans.

"I felt amazing today on the bike," he said after his first sprint win.

"I made a mistake on the first corner and lost two places.

"But I kept myself calm and my pace was good I came back

and I'm very happy.

"I hope the fans enjoyed it - see you tomorrow!"

Bagnaia delighted in what he termed an "unexpected" second place after a "disastrous" Friday practice.

"I was really annoyed on Friday, I couldn't get the right settings on my bike.

"Thankfully we saved the situation, honestly it's hard to believe!"

For France's 2021 world champion Quartararo this was a welcome change of fortune as he climbed the podium for only

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the second time this term after the demotion of Binder.

"I feel sad for Brad because I know how frustrating it is to lose a podium on a penalty," said the Yamaha rider who is competing this weekend with a fractured toe.

Six-time world champion Marc Marquez started and finished in 17th after crashing in the first qualifying session to continue the miserable period he's going through with Honda.

Bagnaia goes into Sunday's eighth round of the season leading the championship by 21 points from Jorge Martin (sixth), with Bezzecchi a further 10 points back in third.

# Kvitova ousts Garcia to reach Berlin semi-finals



Petra Kvitova celebrates winning against Caroline Garcia

AFP | Berlin

Former Wimbledon winner Petra Kvitova edged Caroline Garcia 6-4, 7-6 (7/3) to seal her spot in the semi-finals of the rain-hit WTA German Open in Berlin yesterday.

The seventh-seeded Czech -- Wimbledon champion in 2011 and 2014 -- built on a solid first serve to defeat her third-seeded rival.

"I never played her on this surface and it was an advantage for me," said the 33-year-old Czech.

"It's sweet revenge after my defeat in the Cincinnati final (last year)."

The quarter and semi-finals are being played yesterday, after rain washed out play on Friday in the traditional Wimbledon warm-up.

France's Garcia, the world number four, had been in the game until conceding her serve in the seventh game of the first set which the Czech won in 52 minutes.

She saved break points in the second set, notably at 4-4, but was unable to match Kvitova in the tie-break with the Czech player sweeping 7 points to 3.

Kvitova next takes on 22nd-ranked Ekaterina Alexandrova who advanced to the last four after fellow Russian Veronika Kudermetova withdrew.

Croatia's Donna Vekic beat Russia's Elina Avanesyan 6-2, 7-6 (7/0) to reach her first grass-court semi-final in four years.

She next plays Greek sixth seed Maria Sakkari who battled past Czech Marketa Vondrousova 7-6 (9/7), 6-1 to reach her fifth semi-final of the year.

# Busquets joining Messi at Inter Miami



Sergio Busquets  
AFP | Miami

Inter Miami announced on Friday they are signing former Spain and Barcelona midfielder Sergio Busquets to team-up with Lionel Messi at the Major League Soccer club.

Messi said earlier this month he was moving to Miami and he will now be re-united with his former Barca team-mate Busquets.

Inter Miami posted a tweeted heralding the arrival of the player.

"Si, Busi" read the twitter post, referring to Busquets' nickname. The tweet included quotes praising Busquets from several people in the game including former Spain coach Vicente del Bosque.

# Mohsen Mohammedseifi is every promoter's dream, says BRAVE CF president

TDI | Manama

Mohsen Mohammedseifi's devastating first-round KO victory at BRAVE CF 72 and his subsequent post-fight interview have led BRAVE CF president Mohammed Shahid to call the five-time Wushu Sanda champion "every promoter's dream".

Mohsen Mohammedseifi brutally knocked out Noor El Islam in the first round and proceeded to call out Abdusalham Uulu Kubanychbek, the reigning, defending Lightweight champion of the world. In an otherwise entirely Farsi-spoken interview afterwards, Mohsen broke into his English to challenge Abdusalham.

"Give me Kubanych, give me Kubanych", he said, while making the motion for the belt.



Mohsen Mohammedseifi celebrates his victory

While his experience in mixed martial arts is not at the level, Mohsen's huge experience in Wushu Sanda, where he's considered to be one of the greatest of all time, lends

him confidence for the task at hand should he be considered for a title shot in the near future.

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"These guys come into MMA with a few bouts, and you don't really see the whole picture when you look at their records. Guys like Kubanza, who's 4-0, and Mohsen Mohammedseifi now. Yes, in pro MMA they don't have that many bouts, but the wealth of experience they possess in competition, in amateur MMA, it really is superior to other fighters who are only fighting pro MMA right off the bat"

MOHAMMED SHAHID

you don't really see the whole picture when you look at their records. Guys like Kubanza, who's 4-0, and Mohsen Mohammedseifi now. Yes, in pro MMA they don't have that many bouts, but the wealth of experience they possess in competition, in combat sports competition, in amateur MMA, it really is superior to other

fighters who are only fighting pro MMA right off the bat", said BRAVE CF president Mohammed Shahid, who tweeted right after Mohsen's fight, that he was, indeed, every promoter's dream.

"Mohsen Mohammedseifi! This guy is a dream fighter for any promoter in the world! Power!"

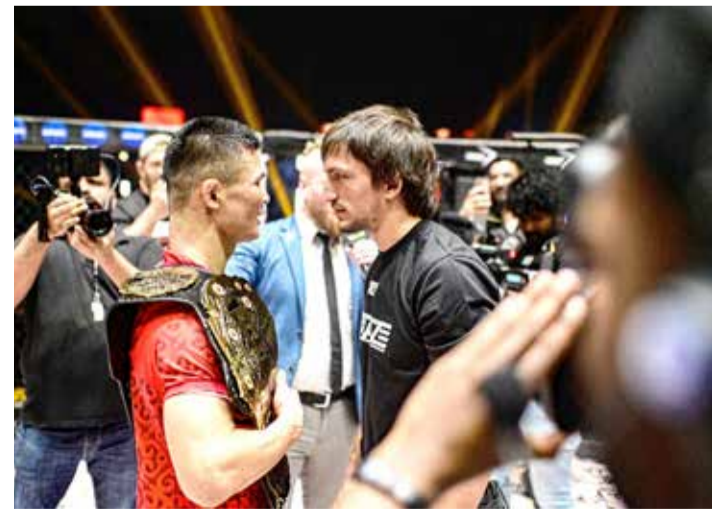
# New champion Nemat surprised by face-off with first challenger, 'ready for everything'

● **Nemat Abdrashitov pays tribute to coaches, teammates and BRAVE CF as he fulfilled his dream, before staring down Omar Solomanov**

TDI | Manama

BRAVE Combat Federation finished its latest Kombat Kingdom series with a new champion, as Nemat Abdrashitov defied the odds to upset reigning titleholder Roman Bogatov in a dogged, five-round performance that truly showcased how well-rounded he really is.

Seen mainly as a finisher,



Nemat Abdrashitov and Omar Solomanov during a stare down

with three stoppages in as many BRAVE CF outings, the new champion showcased a new side to his

MMA game - counter-wrestling, submission attempts and an endurance that matched that of his

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NEMAT ABRASHITOV

opponent.

While he was celebrating his victory, Abdrashitov was surprised by Omar Solomanov, who had been watching BRAVE CF 72 and went up to the cage

for a staredown. The two men seemed in good spirits, with Omar congratulating the new titleholder on the win, despite having picked the former champion Bogatov. Nemat challenged Solomanov to bring his best when the two meet later in the year.

"We'll see what happens with Omar Solomanov now as my first challenger. I will prepare very hard for this fight as always. Let's see what he can do to me come fight night and if he can even do anything at all".

Abdrashitov also made a point to thank Roman Bogatov, the former champion, for accepting his challenge and said it had been a long road until the belt. A visibly emotional Nemat paid tribute

to his coaches and to BRAVE CF, and its president Mohammed Shahid.

"Thank you to Roman, he's a very tough fighter. I waited very long for this belt, I prepared really hard for this. I'd like to thank all my coaches and my team. Thank you to BRAVE Combat Federation, president Mohammed Shahid, and all involved. I'm very happy".

BRAVE CF returns next for BRAVE CF 73 on August 12, when the most global MMA organization returns to Colombia as part of the BRAVE Pan-American Combat Week. In the main event of the evening, Jose "Shorty" Torres takes on Nkosi Ndebele for the vacant Bantamweight world title.