

What to WATCH

SONY SIX & TEN 2
Australian Open
 Live from 6:00am and 2:30pm
STAR SPORTS 3
ICC U-19s World Cup
Super League Quarterfinal-1

India v Australia
 Live from 2:00pm

KOBE BRYANT

(1978 - 2020)

Dear Basketball,

From the moment
I started rolling my dad's tube socks
And shooting imaginary
Game-winning shots
In the Great Western Forum
I knew one thing was real:

I fell in love with you.

A love so deep I gave you my all —
From my mind & body
To my spirit & soul.

As a six-year-old boy
Deeply in love with you
I never saw the end of the tunnel.
I only saw myself
Running out of one.

And so I ran.
I ran up and down every court
After every loose ball for you.
You asked for my hustle
I gave you my heart
Because it came with so much more.

I played through the sweat and hurt
Not because challenge called me
But because YOU called me.

I did everything for YOU
Because that's what you do
When someone makes you feel as
Alive as you've made me feel.

You gave a six-year-old boy his Laker dream
And I'll always love you for it.
But I can't love you obsessively for much longer.
This season is all I have left to give.
My heart can take the pounding
My mind can handle the grind
But my body knows it's time to say goodbye.

And that's OK.
I'm ready to let you go.
I want you to know now
So we both can savor every moment we have left
together.
The good and the bad.
We have given each other
All that we have.

And we both know, no matter what I do next
I'll always be that kid
With the rolled up socks
Garbage can in the corner
:05 seconds on the clock
Ball in my hands.

5 ... 4 ... 3 ... 2 ... 1

Love you always,
Kobe

*The poem, written by Kobe, appeared on Players'Tribune following his retirement.



NEYMAR DEDICATES GOAL TO KOBE

Neymar dedicated his second goal in Paris Saint-Germain's 2-0 win at Lille on Sunday to basketball legend Kobe Bryant, whose death on Sunday in a helicopter crash shocked the world. The Brazilian slotted home the 52nd-minute penalty that put PSG two goals up in the French Ligue 1 clash and went over to the television cameras by the side of the Stade Pierre Mauro pitch to make the number 24 with his fingers in honour of Bryant's shirt number. "It's deeply saddening for the world of sport and for all of us," said Neymar to Canal+ after the win, which put PSG 10 points clear at the top of the league. "Not just for basketball fans, but for everything he did for sport."

-- AFP



WHAT THEY SAID

"I have no words... All of my thoughts are with Kobe's family and friends. It was a pleasure to meet him and share good times together. A real genius has left us."

-- Lionel Messi on Facebook

"So sad to hear the heartbreaking news of the deaths of Kobe and his daughter Gianna. Kobe was a true legend and inspiration to so many. Sending my condolences to his family and friends and the families of all who lost their lives in the crash. RIP Legend," Cristiano Ronaldo wrote on twitter.

-- Cristiano Ronaldo on Twitter

"Kobe was a legend on the court and just getting started in what would have been just as meaningful a second act. To lose Gianna is even more heartbreaking to us as parents. Michelle and I send love and prayers to Vanessa and the entire Bryant family on an unthinkable day."

-- Former US President Barack Obama

"There's no words to express the pain I'm going through with this tragedy of losing my niece Gigi & my brother @kobebryant I love u and u will be missed. My condolences goes out to the Bryant family and the families of the other passengers on board. IM

SICK RIGHT NOW"

-- Bryant's former Lakers teammate Shaquille O'Neal

"Most people will remember Kobe as the magnificent athlete who inspired a whole generation of basketball players. But I will always remember him as a man who was much more than an athlete."

-- Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, six-time NBA champion and league's all-time scoring leader

"Like everyone, I'm stunned and saddened to hear the horrific news about Kobe Bryant. Thoughts are with his family and loved ones at this terribly sad time #RIPKobeBryant."

-- Australian cricket legend Shane Warne

"My biggest sports idol is this man right here. Your work ethic and mentality inspired me so much from as soon i understood what it took to become a pro. You were enjoying your new chapter in your life and to leave us just like that is devastating. I love you so much! You the goat"

-- Inter Milan's Belgian striker Romelu Lukaku on Instagram, with a photo of Bryant

"My friend, a legend, husband, father, son, brother, Oscar winner and greatest Laker of all-time is gone. It's hard to accept. Kobe was a leader of our game, a mentor to both male and female players."

-- Basketball legend Michael Jordan on Twitter

"Absolutely devastated to hear this news today. So many childhood memories of waking up early and watching this magician doing things on the court that I would be mesmerized by. Life is so unpredictable and fickle. His daughter Gianna passed away too in the crash. I am absolutely heartbroken. Rest in peace. Strength and condolences to the family."

-- India captain Virat Kohli on Instagram

"Rest in peace, my friend".

-- Former Brazil and Barcelona forward Ronaldinho on Twitter

"I woke up this morning with the horrible news of the tragic death of one of the greatest sportsmen in the world. Kobe Bryant, his daughter Gianna and other passengers. My condolences to his wife and families. I am in shock."

-- Rafael Nadal on Twitter

World media in mourning

AFP, Paris

Journalists from inside and outside the world of sport lined up to pay tribute to NBA champion and two-time Olympic gold medalist Kobe Bryant after his death in a helicopter crash.

US Sports magazine Sports Illustrated ran with a single black and white photo of Bryant in profile and the headline: "Kobe Bryant, 1978-2020".

Below, it posted links to every cover that had featured the star.

"How does that happen?" wrote Bill Plaschke in the Los Angeles Times, the newspaper of the city that adored Bryant, who won five NBA titles with the Los Angeles Lakers.

"He didn't even need a helicopter. For 20 years he flew into greatness while carrying a breathless city with him."

At the other end of the country, the New York Times website carried a lengthy profile of Bryant, hailing his "extraordinary career" as well as mentioning 2003 rape accusations that were levelled against him.

Kobe Bryant "personified the modern sports alpha," wrote Jason Gray in a Wall Street Journal article



headlined "What Kobe Bryant Meant".

"On the court, he was the alpha, really-for better, and, sometimes, worse, in greatness and defeat, demanding to put the whole game on his shoulders when it mattered most, and even when it didn't matter much at all."

The grief was just as strongly felt in Europe, particularly Italy, where Bryant spent part of his childhood and where his father played professional basketball.

In Italy, the La Gazzetta dello Sport ran with the headline "La Tragedia" -- "The Tragedy" -- and paid tribute to Bryant's "fluent Italian", picked up

during his stay in the country.

La Gazzetta also posted a video of a young Bryant playing basketball in Pistoia in Tuscany.

The Corriere sports daily recalled Bryant's love for Italy and its football -- he was an avid AC Milan fan -- quoting Roma legend Francesco Totti as saying he was "honoured to have known the American champion".

In France, where Bryant also briefly lived when he was a teenager, L'Equipe dedicated nine pages to the star's death, underneath a photo of Bryant posing against the Paris skyline.

"Basketball alone does not define me," he told the French publication in 2017.

Marca, the most popular sports magazine in Spain talked of "pain and glory" after the death of Bryant.

"Most players are either consumed by the marathon of the NBA or worn down by the grind of 82 games, plus playoffs, year upon year," wrote Roy Ward in Australia's Sydney Morning Herald.

"Kobe was one of the rare ones who transcended the grind. He worked himself until he could stand up to every road trip, every injury, every boo; every missed shot and every loss."

Coronavirus stops China-bound athletes

SPORTS REPORTER



already claimed scores of lives in China.

The Asian Indoor Championships were scheduled to take place in Hangzhou, some 600 kilometres from the Wuhan -- the epicentre of the virus -- from February 12 to 13. The six Bangladeshi athletes were chosen on the basis of their performance in the recently-concluded National Athletics

Championships.

"China sent us an e-mail mentioning that the championships have been cancelled. China is badly hit by Coronavirus and we believe the hosts took the right decision in such a situation," Bangladesh Athletics Federation's general secretary Abdur Rokib Montu said.

Sprinters Hasan Mia and Ismail Hossain, high-jumper Mahfuzur Rahman, long-jumper Al-Amin, runners Zahir Rayhan and Al-Amin were supposed to take part in the meet.

Montu, meanwhile, informed that two athletes -- MN Zaman and Mohammad Razu Ahmed -- will take part in 20km walking competition which will be held in Jharkhand, India from February 14 to 16.



The winners of the Mujib Borsho Cup Golf Tournament -2020 pose for photographs with the chief guest Major General Kazi Sharif Kaikobad, director general of Bangladesh Ansar & VDP at the Army Golf Club in Dhaka recently. Dhaka Bank sponsored the four-day meet.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

Nadal settles Kyrgios score

AFP, Melbourne

Rafael Nadal won a grudge match with Nick Kyrgios to reach the Australian Open quarterfinals and keep the heat on Roger Federer's record for Grand Slam titles on Monday.

The world number one, labelled "super salty" by Kyrgios after he criticised the Australian's behaviour last year, fought off a furious challenge to go through 6-3, 3-6, 7-6 (8/6), 7-6 (7/4).

As the tennis world mourned the death of Kobe Bryant, Kyrgios arrived at Rod Laver Arena wearing an LA Lakers shirt, and 15-year-old Coco Gauff had tributes to the basketball great scrawled on her trainers during the doubles.

There was also controversy as Australia's Margaret Court, often criticised for her deeply conservative views, was honoured for her 1970 calendar-year Grand Slam.

Nadal and Kyrgios had been feuding after some bad-tempered matches but the Spaniard said he was impressed by what he'd seen from the often-temperamental Australian at this tournament.

Kyrgios fought back to challenge Nadal in a high-octane clash played in good spirit, with a polite handshake afterwards -- a far cry from some of their previous exchanges.

"When he is playing like today with this positive attitude he gives a lot of positive things to our sport," said the Spaniard.

"He's one of the highest talents we have on our tour and I like the Nick Kyrgios during the whole of this tournament."

The 19-time Grand Slam winner will next play Austria's Dominic Thiem -- his victim in the last two French Open finals -- as the clay king targets Federer's all-time record of 20 Major titles.

Elsewhere, powerful Swiss Stan



Rafael Nadal pumps his fist after beating Nick Kyrgios in the fourth round of the Australian Open in Melbourne on Monday.

PHOTO: AFP

Wawrinka beat fifth seed Daniil Medvedev 6-2, 2-6, 4-6, 7-6 (7/2), 6-2 to set up a quarterfinal with Germany's Alexander Zverev, who overcame close friend Andrey Rublev 6-4, 6-4, 6-4.

And Simona Halep rose to number two in the world with a 6-4, 6-4 victory over Elise Mertens, taking a big step forward in a rapidly clearing women's draw.

The Wimbledon champion from Romania, who avoided an exodus of top seeds in the previous round, will next play Estonia's Anett Kontaveit, a 6-7 (4/7), 7-5, 7-5 winner against Iga Swiatek of Poland.

"She's strong. I'm here just to face any challenge I have. So I'm not thinking negative," Halep said of Kontaveit. "I just want to go there and to give my best."

Angelique Kerber, the 2016 champion, was the latest big name to fall as she went down to Russia's Anastasia Pavlyuchenkova 6-7 (5/7), 7-6 (7/4), 6-2.

Pavlyuchenkova's quarter-final will be against Garbine Muguruza, the two-time Grand Slam champion who is resurgent since reuniting with coach Conchita Martinez, beating Kiki Bertens 6-3, 6-3.

"It's like couples, we all want Brad Pitt and Jennifer Aniston to get back together, right?" joked Martinez, the 1994 Wimbledon champion.

Earlier, Martina Navratilova and John McEnroe were among the big names to criticise Court, the 24-time Major-winner whose 1970 sweep of the Grand Slam titles was marked with a short ceremony at Rod Laver Arena.

Navratilova said the devout Christian's deeply conservative views were "actually hurting people", while fellow American legend McEnroe called Court a "crazy aunt".

"There's only one thing longer than the list of Margaret Court's achievements: it's her list of offensive and homophobic statements," McEnroe said in a video for Eurosport.

Napoli stun Juventus

AFP, Milan

Piotr Zielinski and Lorenzo Insigne scored in the second half as struggling Napoli shocked champions Juventus 2-1 to spoil coach Maurizio Sarri's return to the Stadio San Paolo on Sunday.

Juve missed the chance to open up a six-point lead on Inter Milan at the top of the table, after Antonio Conte's side were earlier held 1-1 by Cagliari, their third consecutive draw.

Zielinski broke the deadlock after 63 minutes finishing off a rebound after Insigne was denied by Juve goalkeeper Wojciech Szczesny.

Insigne volleyed in a second after 86 minutes to an explosion of joy among the crowd.

Cristiano Ronaldo pulled a goal back as the game headed into injury time for his 13th goal in nine consecutive games in all competitions.

Kane ton lifts Zim to 352/6

AFP, Harare

A fine second Test century by Sean Williams enabled Zimbabwe to dominate the opening day of the second Test against Sri Lanka in Harare on Monday, as they reached 352 for six at the close.

The Zimbabwe captain, who won the toss and chose to bat first, made 107 from 137 balls.