Aston Villa beat Arsenal in race for £35m Buendia with signing imminent

Aston Villa have beaten Arsenal in the race for Norwich playmaker Emi Buendia, Goal can confirm, with Dean Smith's side agreeing a fee of around £35 million ($50m) with add-ons.

The 24-year-old, who made Argentina's senior squad for the first time during the latest round of international fixtures, has seen his stock rise since arriving in England back in 2018.

It is not known if the Gunners tabled an offer for Buendia, with Villa now sorting out the final details of a club-record signing that could be announced as soon as Sunday.

Norwich secured a club-record fee for Buendia, who has been one of their star players over the last few seasons.

Buendia put in a strong performance in the Premier League in 2019-20 but was unable to prevent the Canaries from relegation to the Championship.

The playmaker opted to stay with Norwich in 2020-21 and turned in a stellar campaign that saw him named Championship player of the season and help secure his club's promotion back to the Premier League.

Buendia scored 15 goals and added 16 assists in the Championship last term.

Mikel Arteta continues to weigh up his options when it comes to additions in his creativity department.

Martin Ødegaard impressed during his short-term loan from Real Madrid and remains of interest to the Gunners.

He is, however, returning to Real Madrid and it remains to be seen what role he'll have under new head coach Carlo Ancelotti.

Buendia was an alternative option that was on the Emirates Stadium radar for some time.

But Villa, who have seen questions asked of Jack Grealish's future and will not be signing Ross Barkley on a permanent basis, swooped ahead of the Gunners to land the Argentine star.

Goal

Teams take to Colerain's new cricket field for first time Saturday

COLERAIN: A new field in Colerain Township is opening up opportunities for local athletes while providing a way for fans of the sport to share their culture with the community.

The field is the first of its kind in this corner of Ohio and will help promote both the sport and South Asian culture. Before the Colerain field, fans and players of the sport had to travel to Columbus, Ohio or into Kentucky.

"We've been going to different states and different cities to play leagues and tournaments," said Narad Gautam, team captain for Cincy Warriors Cricket Club.

The township provided a space for the brand-new cricket field, which hosted its first ever match on Saturday. During the first ever match played at Dravo Park, the Cincy Warriors Cricket Club stepped onto the field in the early afternoon.

Tara Dahal, with the Nepali Language and Arts Center, worked with the team and Colerain Township to make the new field possible. Colerain provided the space and the team provided volunteers to transform it into a true cricket field. "Our boys used to play cricket back in Nepal and when they came to the U.S. they did not get the ground," said Dahal.

Dahal and members of the team also pointed to Jackie O'Connell, director of Parks and Services for Colerain Township, as integral to the project's success. Had the field not been possible, Gautam said he and his family were considering a change of address. "We were trying to move back to Hourson," said Gautam. "So we were that much into cricket. In Colerain Township we got our ground. So we are super excited, very happy. Now Cincinnati really feels like it's our home."

The team hopes to add a concrete, turf-top pitch, rope boundaries and bleachers in the future. It also has plans to offer youth programs to introduce children to the sport and share its impact on their culture with a new generation.

"And then here we will be introducing and training people, training youth, training kids so they know what is cricket," said Gautam. wepo

Russian tennis player Yana Sizikova arrested for sports corruption and fraud

Russian tennis player Yana Sizikova was arrested in Paris on Thursday evening for sports corruption and fraud in an organized group, two French law enforcement sources have told CNN.

She was arrested and taken into custody on Thursday for "sports corruption and fraud in an organized group, concerning acts that may have been committed in September 2020," according to the Paris prosecutor's office.

Sizikova was arrested shortly after losing her first-round doubles match at Roland Garros on Thursday, a Paris senior police source told CNN.

The 26-year-old is suspected of match-fixing in 2020 when she is alleged to have deliberately lost a doubles match in last year's Roland Garros tournament, according to the source.

CNN is trying to reach a representative for Sizikova for comment, while the International Tennis Integrity Agency said it was a matter for the French police.

The Russian Tennis Federation told Russian state news agency TASS that it is awaiting documents on the case of the Russian tennis player's arrest.

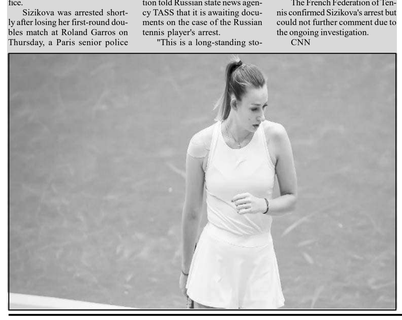
"This is a long-standing story.

There is an organization that is investigating fixed-term matches, this story has been going on since October. Until the documents on it are released, we cannot do anything. We are waiting," Federation President Shamil Tarpishchev told TASS.

TASS also reported that the Russian Embassy in France is taking the necessary measures to protect Sizikova's rights.

The French Federation of Tennis confirmed Sizikova's arrest but could not further comment due to the ongoing investigation.

CNN



What a Floyd Mayweather loss would actually mean for his brand and the sport of boxing

The sheer thought of this coming true is a bit hard to process. Hardly anyone is giving any serious consideration to the possibility, given how bookmakers around the world have listed the odds of the dramatic event happening.

But it's worth at least pondering after the amount of mud that has been slung by both sides as well as the infamous "Gotcha Hat" moment as a 44-year-old, retired five-division champion prepares to step inside the ring once more to face a 26-year-old social media star in an exhibition (Showtime PPV, 8 p.m. ET). Especially when you consider that the YouTuber will stand inches taller and outweigh him by upwards of 50 pounds.

Should Logan Paul (0-1) actually defeat Floyd Mayweather (50-0, 27 KOs) at Hard Rock Stadium in Miami Gardens, Florida, what would that even mean? Would the sun still come back up on Monday morning? Would the sport or the reputations of either fighter ever be the same again?

It's a (somewhat) realistic possibility that could have an interesting potential ripple effect.

"Wow, that's the unthinkable," Mayweather Promotions CEO Leonard Ellerbe reluctantly told CBS Sports. "Anytime you step into that ring and you have guys that are throwing punches at one another, any damn thing can happen. That's the reality."

For a event that has received so much attention -- in part, fueled by Paul's younger brother, 26-year-old Jake creating his own bad blood with Mayweather by stealing his hat and sparking a brawl -- the intrigue for consumers has seemed to center more around the potential for car-wreck spectacle entertainment or the hope of seeing Paul knocked out.

Any conversations of how Paul might use his physical advantages to either outbox or knock out Mayweather have been brief.

A big part of the reason, beyond the obvious gap in experience that has fueled the offshore betting odds, might be because of the affable and almost goofy nature of Paul's on-camera character. Part trash-talker and internet troll, Paul has built a podcasting and social media empire (including over 28 million combined YouTube subscribers) behind a very sarcastic persona that is never above taking shots at himself or -- in this case -- even his own chances of winning. "Think about it, the [PPV] poster says 'Bragging Rights.' If he beats me, what bragging rights are there?" Paul said. "You beat a YouTuber, good job. I beat Floyd, his whole life means absolutely nothing. Fifty wins but he lost to a podcasting, Pokemon collecting YouTuber. So, yeah, he has got a lot on the table. I'm just going in there no f---s given."

Paul's description of what the world might look and feel like following a Mayweather loss might not be far off. From Ellerbe's perspective, it's a large part of the fuel that has made Paul such a cocky underdog.

The difference, however, beyond the obvious ones like skill, is that Ellerbe knows Mayweather is ready and waiting for this kind of troll job attempt. Although he was caught off guard by the juvenile nature of the whole "Gotcha Hat" episode, as it pertains to what happens between the boxing ropes, Mayweather is nobody's fool.

"Can you imagine if something went wrong in this event? This would completely break the internet and Floyd is very mindful of that," Ellerbe said. "That's why Logan Paul is licking his chops because he is the bigger, stronger guy. Even though he doesn't have exceptional skills as the high level boxer, any damn thing can happen and Floyd is very mindful of that. You have weight classes for a reason."

Mayweather has talked a good enough game, particularly in Showtime's pre-fight documentary series, to present the appearance as if he may not be taking training as serious as needs to.

The quotes he dropped of "it really doesn't matter if I have an intense training camp or don't, this kid doesn't have a chance in hell," might be humorous but Mayweather is well aware of his age and didn't become the richest athlete of his era without being mindful to turn over every stone.

See P7

Azerbaijan grand prix: lando norris says grid penalty unfair

The McLaren driver was penalised for failing to pit immediately after one of four red flags during qualifying.

The usual five-place penalty was reduced because Norris "had only a very short time to react," stewards said.

"A bit gutted," Norris said. "I didn't feel like I did anything wrong. I felt [it] was the safest thing to do. It's a bad decision or an unfair penalty."

The decision drops Norris from sixth on the grid for Sunday's race to ninth.

McLaren team principal Andreas Seidl said Norris had just one second to decide on his course of action when the red flag was shown following a crash by Alfa Romeo's Antonio Giovinazzi as the Briton approached the pit lane entry.

The stewards' report said: "The driver admitted that he lifted the throttle, braked and was committed to and able to enter the pit lane.

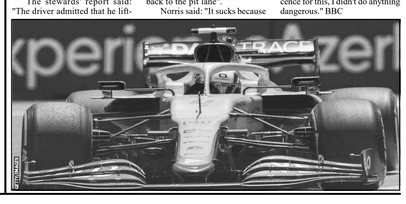
"At that moment he was not sure what to do and asked his team over the radio.

"Although the team ordered him immediately to enter the pits, it was too late and Norris crossed the finish line one more time.

"The Stewards assume that if a red flag is not respected during qualifying, a drop of five grid positions is appropriate. However, if you consider that the driver only had a very short time to react due to his position on the track, a drop of three grid positions is sufficient as an exception."

Article 31.6 of the F1 sporting regulations states that when a red flag is shown to stop the session "all cars must immediately reduce speed and proceed slowly back to the pit lane".

Norris said: "It sucks because I guess there's a rule [but] also sometimes there's some more leniency to certain situations when the driver's still done the best thing that's possible to do in that situation."

Norris was also given three penalty points on his licence, taking him to eight. Twelve points in one calendar year means an automatic one-race ban.

Norris said: "For all I knew, the pit lane could have been blocked and you're not allowed to enter the pit lane and then it could have been a different story, like: 'Why did you enter the pit lane? You shouldn't have done that.' So it's a tough one. "I didn't put anyone in harm's way. If anything, I took the safer option out of boxing [pitting] and not boxing and that makes it even worse. So I don't deserve three points on my licence for this, I didn't do anything dangerous." BBC