

Teqball clubs in Afghanistan participate in tree-planting program



KABUL: Three teqball clubs in Afghanistan have begun a tree-planting program in the country's capital Kabul as part of sustainability efforts.

The International Federation of Teqball (ITFQ) said the clubs followed guidance published by the

governing body's Sustainable Development Handbook.

The handbook was published in March, and ITFQ said the aim

was to ensure teqball stakeholders work with more of an environmental and social consciousness. ITFQ joined the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change's Sports for Climate Action initiative as a signatory to the Sports for Climate Action Framework in September 2019.

Entering the teqball community was a sustainable way as claimed to be among the sport's key priorities. The governing body has praised the development of teqball in Afghanistan after the National Federation was established in November 2019.

The Afghanistan Teqball Federation is led by Mohammad Youna Popolay, who is also the secretary general of the Afghanistan Olympic Committee.

ITFQ says development programs are helping to raise the sport's profile in Afghanistan.

The players from the country participated at the 2019 Teqball World Championships, while the country is also expected to compete at Asian Beach Games in Saudi Arabia.

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Hits and Misses: England lose feelgood factor in Scotland draw



There has been a feel-good factor about England over the past few days since they earned some minutes of coverage over Croatia by beating their 2018 World Cup semi-final opponents in the warm-up game.

But the team falling head on Wednesday for a first time since the 2018 World Cup semi-final was a disappointment.

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French GP: Lewis Hamilton on Friday practice 'struggle' as Valtteri Bottas leads Mercedes' Red Bull challenge

Lewis Hamilton and his Friday practice at the French Grand Prix was a "struggle" despite Mercedes' return to form at Paul Ricard, as Valtteri Bottas spearheaded the world champions' charge in a close fight with Red Bull.

After a well-deserved respite stretch on the Monaco and Baku street circuits - where they scored a grand total of seven points from a potential 18 - Mercedes have, at title leaders Red Bull, expected, bounced back on the more traditional F1 circuit in the south of France, coming in first practice and only 0.008 off Max Verstappen in the second session.

But that improved W12 car, it was Bottas and not Hamilton who appeared the more at ease, with the Finnish driver ahead of his teammate in both sessions, even as supposedly slower tyre compound as Pirelli P2s.

And despite all fitting second and third on Friday, Hamilton was not entirely happy. Asked how he felt in comparison to the last two weekends, he admitted: "Not much different, so be honest."

"Even though the position is quite a bit different to Monaco and Baku, it's been quite a struggle this weekend, probably for everyone."

"I don't know if it's the track surface, or the temperature, or how much tyre, it's difficult to say but we're still sliding around and it's a struggle for me."

Hamilton, 33, felt Bottas in P1 and P2s is "a different ball game" to him in every aspect, but he was happy to see his teammate leading the race, despite plenty of off-track action, one decision of spins and even a few crashes on Friday.

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"We've made lots of changes," he added. "We will probably do a lot of engine work with these new engine rules, it's difficult to say but we're still sliding around and it's a struggle for me."

"The times don't look terrible, it's slow and we're up at the front but at least we're in the battle."

Hamilton and Bottas have swapped Mercedes' chassis for this weekend, a planned move

from the Silver Arrows, although both drivers and team boss Toto Wolff have downplayed that having an effect on the results. Instead, it looks like the decision was just a matter of timing.

Butterfly-disappearing season in which he has yet to finish ahead of Hamilton in a race - got even worse in Azerbaijan as he struggled around the points throughout the weekend, but he appears to be confident again in France.

"It's hard to say if it's the chassis or the track conditions, but it's a better feeling than two weeks ago when I was not," said Bottas, who looks to be the man to beat considering his pace on the medium tyre in P2.

He started the weekend on the right foot as he finishing quite well in the first practice, but it was Carlos Sainz who dropped back in the unclassified, while Verstappen was the fastest.

Who are the France favourites, Mercedes or Red Bull?

While Mercedes and Bottas' teammate won the more notable Friday story, Red Bull are still right there in the fight, as they have been all season. The team, 20 points clear of Mercedes in the constructors' standings, didn't seem to have the new pace of Bottas but Verstappen still finished

on top in the second session after making some changes.

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US Open: Richard Bland becomes oldest player to share lead after 36 holes at Torrey Pines

Richard Bland has already enjoyed a few weeks in the limelight since winning at the US Open in 1976, but he has now become the oldest player to share the lead after 36 holes at Torrey Pines.

Bland, 67, has been