

Paris Olympics athletes and fans melt in 'brutal' heat

July 31 2024, by Peter STEBBINGS



Spain's Rafael Nadal (L) and Carlos Alcaraz (R) attempt to cool off at Roland Garros.

After heavy rain drenched last week's opening ceremony, the Paris Olympics on Tuesday wrestled with entirely different conditions as

temperatures soared to 35 degrees Celsius.

Just to add to the mix, France's meteorological service put the capital on a major storm alert, warning thunderstorms, heavy rain, hail and lightning were likely in the evening.

The forecasted return of some wet weather may come as relief to athletes, spectators and officials who baked in unforgiving weather throughout the day.

A report released last month ahead of the Games and backed by [climate scientists](#) and athletes had warned about the dangers posed by extreme high temperatures.

Paris has been struck by a series of record heat waves in recent years.

At Roland Garros, where Rafael Nadal and Carlos Alcaraz were in action in men's doubles, stadium announcers urged tennis fans to take breaks from the searing heat in cooler areas of the grounds.

Britain's Jack Draper called the conditions "brutal".

Players have been issued with refillable bottles but the world number 27 said it was impossible to keep the water cool.

"We were drinking hot water out there," Draper said following his exit to Taylor Fritz of the United States.

"It's not fun in those sort of conditions at all."

Officials at the tennis activated a heat protocol, allowing a 10-minute break between the second and third sets.

The stark contrast with Friday, when it bucketed it down at the opening ceremony and was considerably cooler, was not lost on German hockey player Christopher Ruehr.



France's Youssef Krou cools off in the beach volleyball.

Saturday was also wet, disrupting some events, before giving way to increasingly [warm weather](#) in recent days.

"It was a big, big step from the past days where it was raining and 20 degrees," said Ruehr, after scoring in a win over South Africa.

"But everyone has to cope with that, and now we're going to have an ice bath.

"We have ice vests, which is just a cool vest we put over our jerseys and just cool down a little bit, and we have ice towels."

British equestrian Carl Hester said it was vital to keep their horses cool in the competition at the sun-kissed Chateau de Versailles.

"If you're really thinking about your horse, you warm up in the covered arena to keep the sun off them and then you just come out for the performance," he said.

'It's worth it'

It was no less punishing for spectators at the open-air events, even if some venues had lamppost-like devices which provided spectators with a dousing of water rather like a weak shower.

At a fan zone in the heart of the capital at the Hotel de Ville, visitors enjoying the action on big screens fanned themselves with whatever came to hand and were helped to cool off by light sprays of water.

Asked if it was too hot to enjoy the sporting drama unfolding on the screens, Brazilian tourist Enzo Calgano, 30, said, "At the end of the day, the Olympics are more important than the hot weather."

Gabriela Rincon, a 34-year-old Mexican tourist, agreed.

"The truth is that there's a great atmosphere and it's worth it," she said.

"A bit of water, you need to stay hydrated, but the atmosphere makes it worth it."

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Citation: Paris Olympics athletes and fans melt in 'brutal' heat (2024, July 31) retrieved 31 July 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2024-07-paris-olympics-athletes-fans-brutal.html>

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