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Riyadh Season P1: Lebron/Galan-Tapia/Coello and Sanchez/Josemaria-Brea/Gonzalez are the title contenders

Looking at rankings, finals could not have been better. World number one **Arturo Coello** and **Agustin Tapia** against the 'Galacticos' **Juan Lebron** and **Ale Galan** in the men's draw, **Ari Sanchez** and **Paula Josemaria** against **Delfina Brea** and **Bea Gonzalez** in the women's: these will be the two matches - scheduled to start at 3pm CET - from which the champions of the **Riyadh Season P1**, the long-awaited tournament that inaugurates the season of the **Premier Padel** in the Saudi capital, will emerge on Saturday.

MEN In Riyadh, the fairytale of **Nachi Sager** and **Salvador Oria**, the Spanish pair who started from the qualifiers, was interrupted in the semi-finals. Against the favourites **Coello** and **Tapia**, the number 2 seeded pair, winners of **four Premier Padel** titles last season (**Rome, Madrid, Mendoza** and **Paris**), the number 54 and the number 106 in the FIP ranking played an excellent first set, showing off great strokes like their opponents, but lost their service in the sixth game, allowing their multi-titled rivals to close 6-3 in 31 minutes. In the second set, the six matches already played made themselves felt in the legs of Sager and Oria, who were forced to retire with Coello and Tapia ahead 3-2 and service at their disposal. Tapia and Coello, as in the 2023 semifinal in Mendoza, will face **Lebron** and **Galan**, the number 1 seeded pair on the draw, who once again shattered the dreams of **Franco Stupaczuk** and **Martin Di Nenno**, who had already been defeated in the epic final of the **Milan P1** at the beginning of December. The first set was in the sign of the Spanish pair, who fought their way through the first three games - only the first two lasted 14 minutes - and dug the decisive furrow that allowed them to close 6-2. Stupaczuk and Di Nenno, however, had character and class to spare, and after having broken their opponents' serve in the fifth game, they won the second set 6-4, saving themselves from 0-40 when serving for the set. Going to the third set, Galan and Lebron were back on their shields, getting the break in the fourth game: the Superpibes tried to react, they had the chance for the immediate counterbreak, but were unable to convert it and had to bow out 6-1 at the end of almost two hours of play.

WOMEN The two favourite, top seeded pairs will as well compete for the women's title in the Saudi capital. After triumphing last season in the **Premier Padel** tournaments in **Madrid** and **Milan**, Brea and Bea will also try to repeat themselves in the event that opens the Premier Padel circuit season. Against **Jessica Castelló** and **Claudia Jensen** (6), who in the quarter finals had eliminated **Marta Ortega** and **Gemma Triay** (3), the 'Superpibas' conceded for the

first time in Riyadh more than two games in the same set, but in the end they prevailed with an authoritative 6-4, 6-3, closing the match at the fourth match-point, in one hour and 38 minutes. Delfina Brea and Bea Gonzalez thus took their revenge against Castelló, who last season in Paris - paired with **Osoro Ulrich** - had beaten them in the quarter-finals. **Ari Sanchez** and **Paula Josemaria** also won in straight sets, leaving **Alejandra Salazar** and **Tamara Icardo** (4) no chance: the double 6-3 in favour of the Paris Premier Padel champions, gained in an hour and 13 minutes, says a lot about the course of a semi-final always controlled with authority but also patience by the number 1 seeded players.

The women's final scheduled for tomorrow at 15:00 CET (17:00 local time) on the **Padel Rush Central Court** will be a great replay of the Madrid final, when Brea and Bea won 7-6 in the third set at the end of an incredible match that lasted 3 hours and 22 minutes. The men's final will be played next.

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