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American Cantlay wins Memorial by two strokes



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Tuesday, June 4, 2019
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GULF TIMES SPORT

2019 ICC CRICKET WORLD CUP

Hafeez the star as Pakistan bounce back to beat England

Joe Root and Jos Buttler slam tons for hosts in a losing cause as Pakistan end long streak of ODI defeats in style



Pakistan's Mohamed Hafeez (L) and Babar Azam bump gloves during their World Cup match against England at Trent Bridge yesterday.

AFP
Nottingham

Pakistan shocked England by 14 runs at Trent Bridge yesterday as they ended a long losing streak in one-day internationals despite two centuries for the World Cup host nation.

Joe Root (107) and Jos Buttler (103) were guiding the tournament favourites towards an imposing target of 349 after Pakistan left England needing a World Cup record chase. The pair put on 130 for the fifth wicket but both were out shortly after

reaching their hundreds and the tail had too much to do.

It was a remarkable turnaround for Pakistan, whose opening match of this World Cup had seen then slump to 105 all out in a seven-wicket defeat by the West Indies at the same ground.

That defeat was their 11th straight loss in completed one-day internationals, including the recent 4-0 series defeat by England. But they started strongly at Trent Bridge yesterday and made 348 for eight, Mohamed Hafeez top-scoring with 84.

No side had previously made more batting second to win a World Cup match than Ireland,

with 329 for seven against England at Bangalore in 2011.

England's chase got off to a bad start when Jason Roy was lbw on the sweep to leg-spinner Shadab Khan to leave them 12 for one.

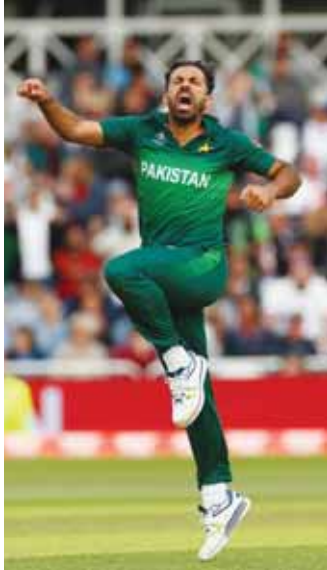
Jonny Bairstow, whose opening partnership with Roy has been a key factor in England's rise to number one in the one-day international rankings, then fell for 32 when he was caught behind off Wahab Riaz. It was the spinners who struck next, England captain Eoin Morgan (nine) bowled by Hafeez before Pakistan captain and wicket-keeper Sarfaraz Ahmed held an edged cut by all-rounder Ben Stokes

(13) off Shoaib Malik. But Buttler and Root both hit towering sixes off Hafeez as England accelerated on a pitch where they had twice set the world record for the highest ODI total.

Buttler completed a typically dashing fifty off 34 balls when he pulled Shadab for six as England, who only last month chased down a target of 341 to beat Pakistan in the fourth ODI at Trent Bridge, started to take charge.

Root pulled Hasan Ali for four to go to 97 before his quick single off Riaz saw him to a 15th ODI century in 97 balls, with nine fours and a six. But he fell soon afterwards, steering Shadab to Hafeez at short third man to end a stand of 130 with Buttler.

Wicketkeeper Buttler, one delivery after completing a 75-ball century, was also caught at short third man when he guided Mo-



Pakistan's Wahab Riaz exults after taking the wicket of England's Chris Woakes.

hamed Amir to fellow left-arm quick Riaz.

Chris Woakes (21) kept England in the hunt before he was caught behind off Riaz and, at 320 for eight, a target of 29 off 12 balls proved too much.

Earlier, Hafeez led a vastly improved Pakistan batting effort that saw Babar Azam (63) and Pakistan captain Sarfaraz Ahmed (55) also making fifties.

England, who launched their World Cup campaign with a 104-run thrashing of South Africa, were surprisingly sloppy in the field, while their fast bowlers were expensive — Jofra Archer's 10 wicketless overs cost 79 runs.

Pakistan attacked from the start, with openers Fakhar Zaman and Imam-ul-Haq sharing a stand of 82.

Babar completed a run-a-ball fifty while Hafeez pressed on after being dropped on 14 when Roy floored a sitter at mid-off.



England's Joe Root celebrates after reaching his century against Pakistan yesterday, but his effort went in vain as his team fell short of the target by 14 runs.

Scorecard

PAKISTAN INNINGS		
Imam-ul-Haq c Woakes b Ali	44	
Fakhar Zaman st Buttler b Ali	36	
Babar Azam c Woakes b Ali	63	
Mohamed Hafeez c Woakes b Wood	84	
Sarfaraz Ahmed c and b Woakes	55	
Asif Ali c Bairstow b Wood	14	
Shoaib Malik c Morgan b Woakes	8	
Wahab Riaz c Root b Woakes	4	
Hasan Ali not out	10	
Shadab Khan not out	10	
Extras (b1, lb8, w11)	20	
Total (8 wickets, 50 overs)	348	
ENGLAND INNINGS		
J. Roy lbw b Shadab	8	
J. Bairstow c Sarfaraz b Riaz	32	
J. Root c Hafeez b Shadab	107	
E. Morgan b Hafeez	9	
B. Stokes c Sarfaraz b Malik	13	
Did not bat:	Mohamed Amir	103
Fall of wickets:	1-82 (Zaman), 2-111 (Imam), 3-199 (Babar), 4-279 (Hafeez), 5-311 (Asif), 6-319 (Sarfaraz), 7-325 (Riaz), 8-337 (Malik)	
Bowling:	Woakes 8-1-71-3 (2w), Archer 10-0-79-0 (4w), Ali 10-0-50-3, Wood 10-0-53-2 (2w), Stokes 7-0-43-0, Rashid 5-0-43-0 (1w)	
	J. Buttler c Riaz b Amir	103
	M. Ali c Zaman b Riaz	19
	C. Woakes c Sarfaraz b Riaz	21
	J. Archer c Riaz b Amir	1
	A. Rashid not out	3
	M. Wood not out	10
	Extras (lb3, w5)	8
	Total (8wickets, 50 overs)	334
	Fall of wickets:	1-12 (Roy), 2-60 (Bairstow), 3-86 (Morgan), 4-118 (Stokes), 5-248 (Root), 6-288 (Buttler), 7-320 (Ali), 8-320 (Woakes), 9-322 (Archer)
	Bowling:	Shadab 10-0-63-2, Amir 10-0-67-2 (3w), Riaz 10-0-82-3 (1w), Hasan 10-0-66-0 (1w), Hafeez 7-0-43-1, Malik 3-0-10-1

FOOTBALL

Qatar eager for Brazil test as Copa beckons

By Sports Reporter
Doha

Qatar Coach Felix Sanchez feels playing heavyweights Brazil and Argentina will provide an opportunity for his players to test their skills against star players. The Qatar squad are training in Porto Belo, a coastal town near Rio, as they prepare for the Copa America, which will be held across Brazil June 15 to July 7. While they are scheduled to face Lionel Messi's Argentina in the group stages, the Asian Cup champions will take on Neymar's Brazil in a friendly match on Thursday at 3:30am Qatar Time at the Mane Garrincha Stadium in Brasilia.

On his players facing Messi and Neymar, Sanchez said: "Messi and Neymar are certainly two great stars of unique ability. Going up against them will be of great benefit to our players. As for the psychological part, I believe we have professional players



Qatar's Karim Boudiaf jumps over an obstacle as he takes part in a training session yesterday in Porto Belo, Brazil.

who know well what's required of them in such confrontations. But in general, I see these two games as a great opportunity to face two teams and all their players, not just two stars. That's where the benefit is in these kinds of games."

Sanchez, who was speaking to fifa.com, believes Qatar's participation in Copa America will be a 'significant step' for his young team, who are more or less will spearhead the country's World Cup Challenge in 2022 at home. "Our participation in the Copa

America can be seen as a significant step in our journey towards the World Cup, a journey that we started some time ago. In Brazil, we'll play against experienced teams that are certainly of a higher calibre than what we saw at the Asian tournament. Our group in-

cludes Argentina, whose abilities are well known, and Colombia, who are exceptionally good performers, whether at World Cups or the Copa America. Paraguay also boast a pedigreed history. So, I believe these matches will serve as an important staging post for me and the players. They'll tell us where we currently stand and what we need to do in the next phase," he said.

"You have to always focus on your overriding goal. The state of Qatar is heading towards a historic event: hosting the 2022 World Cup. We need to make sure the squad are in top form and up to the nation's expectations. This means that we'll not be participating just for its own sake, but that we're determined to leave our mark on World Cup history, especially since this will be Qatar's first World Cup," Sanchez added.

The 43-year-old coach said he wants his players to show the South American audience the progress they have made in recent times and also gain experi-



Qatar coach Felix Sanchez gestures during a training session.

ence playing in a high-profile tournament. "Since our squad has many young players, we look forward to gaining as much experience as possible in this high-profile tournament. Specifically, that means experiencing the Latin American style of play and taking part in a major tournament in front of many fans."

"It will also allow us to address important details on and off the pitch. I want the team to perform in a proper and honourable way and demonstrate that they've progressed. That's not just measured in accumulating points and progressing to the next round, but if that happens, it would of course be great," Sanchez added.



PREVIEW

Captain Naib says rain could boost Afghanistan's chances against Sri Lanka

Naib believes his team has a better chance of success against Sri Lanka, who are struggling

AFP
Cardiff, United Kingdom

Afghanistan captain Gulbadin Naib has played down the weather threat ahead of their World Cup match against Sri Lanka today, saying a rain-shortened game would suit his aggressive side. Forecasts predict persistent rain in Cardiff, which could play havoc with Afghanistan's bid to get their first win in this year's tournament.

Naib's team were given a harsh lesson by holders Australia, who cruised to a seven-wicket win in the opening game for both teams in Bristol on Saturday. But Naib believes his team have a better chance of success against Sri Lanka, whom they beat by 91 runs in last year's Asia Cup in the United Arab Emirates, if the contest is reduced from the scheduled 50 overs-per-side due to the weather.

Asked yesterday if he was worried about rain derailing Afghanistan's hopes, a relaxed Naib told reporters: "It was also predicted for today, but it didn't rain so much. Tomorrow we just see what's the weather. I think maybe the weather will be the same. So if we can reduce the overs it will be much better for us."

Despite the defeat against Australia, Naib says Afghanistan were encouraged by parts of their performance and he hopes to build on that in the Sri Lanka match. "We've got to be positive. If you look, we missed out on 12 overs in the previous game, yet we scored 200-plus," Naib said. "If you have wickets in hand, so maybe the score is 300-plus something."

Sri Lanka were dismissed for a paltry 136 by New Zealand in their first World Cup match in

Cardiff and Naib plans to prey on those batting weaknesses. "I saw the Sri Lankans play on TV. They lost a few games in the last two years and they're struggling in one-day matches," he said.

"Yeah, we have the opportunity to do well against them," added the skipper, whose team lost to Sri Lanka at the 2015 World Cup. "But they are also a good team and we cannot it take easy. We can try to score big. If we play 50 overs maybe it will be difficult for them."

"If in the start the seamers are bowling well, automatically confidence goes to the spinner sides, we have good spinners with Rashid and Mujeeb and they can spin it anywhere. They can spin it in any kind of conditions so if we can get a good start with the bat, as they are traditionally a good bowling side, then we can do well with our bowling attack. I have full confidence in our spinners so we just want to build some momentum in the match, we really have momentum spinners like Rashid and Mujeeb in how they bowl!"

And although it is only early days in Afghanistan's second World Cup appearance, Naib insists he has already seen a drastic improvement in his side's performance compared to 2015. "If you look for the last game against Australia, we did well a lot of things there," he said. "I think we played how we played in the last two, three years cricket, so we improve a lot of things. I think it's good for us to play here at this level. If you play this kind of matches only this kind of team, you take a lot of positive things and it's work in the future."

Naib also declared pace bowler Hamid Hassan fit to face Sri Lanka. "Hassan was hit by the ball (in the last game) but he's feeling well," he said.



Captain Gulbadin Naib's Afghanistan were given a harsh lesson by holders Australia, who cruised to a seven-wicket win on Saturday. (AFP)

Bayern's Mueller backs India at World Cup

Munich: Bayern Munich forward Thomas Mueller has emerged as an unexpected fan of India's bid for glory at the Cricket World Cup. Mueller revealed India captain Virat Kohli had often supported the German national football team in the past, so he has returned the favour by backing the two-time World Cup winners.

The 29-year-old, himself a world champion with Germany in 2014, took to social media on Monday to declare his support for India, who start their World Cup campaign against South Africa in Southampton tomorrow.

Alongside a picture of him wearing an Indian cricket shirt and holding a bat in one hand, Mueller tweeted: "I wish all participants of the Cricket #WorldCup2019 good luck & thrilling matches."

"Especially I cross my fingers for @imVkohli, the captain of the Indian team. He's a fan of @DFB_Team and supported it multiple times in the past #Cricket #GermanyCheersForIndia."



Bayern Munich and Germany forward Thomas Mueller posted a picture of him wearing an Indian cricket shirt and holding a bat on his twitter account yesterday.

FOCUS

Sri Lanka must toughen up against Afghanistan: Malinga



AFP
Cardiff, United Kingdom

Veteran paceman **Lasith Malinga** said Sri Lanka must be mentally tough against Afghanistan as they seek to get their World Cup campaign up and running today. The 1996 world champions were thumped by 10 wickets in their opening match against New Zealand in Cardiff on Saturday.

Sri Lanka were routed for a paltry 136, giving their bowlers little chance, and New Zealand's opening pair of Martin Gupthill and Colin Munro coasted to their target in the 17th over. Malinga, who is playing in his fourth World Cup, said Sri Lanka had talent in their ranks but were short of experience in the conditions they were facing in England and Wales.

"Bowlers have a big role to play in tomorrow's game (also in Cardiff). We never know what's going on, who is bowling first or

second," he said. "But still, bowlers can change the game. I still believe that. Then I feel players need to get confidence, but we can improve our skills at the moment. We need to get mentally tough. And all the pressure is with us, yes, but we have to play with a free mind and do our best in tomorrow's game."

Malinga said Sri Lanka's batsmen must show more patience under pressure. "Patience is very important. We know these conditions, we can have someone get 60-70 runs and still the ball can move. Whoever the batsman is, he has to finish the game," Malinga said.

"I feel players need to get confidence... we need to get mentally tough. The pressure is with us, yes, but we have to play free and do our best. At the moment we want to be concerned with our own skill and how we're going to play. (It is) a must-win game tomorrow. We'll try our best... in accuracy and tactically, everything hopefully will be there."

Sri Lanka, who lost to heavily to Afghanistan in last year's Asia Cup, have won only one of their 10 one-day international matches this year — against minnows Scotland. "I feel we have talent but not much experience of these conditions," said Malinga.

The bowler backed skipper Dimuth Karunaratne to anchor the innings, as he did with his 52 not out against New Zealand. "We see that Dimuth has good temperament to play in these conditions," said Malinga of his skipper. "I feel we have also top seven batsmen who have to take more responsibility and patience."

Malinga said although Afghanistan were rank outsiders at the World Cup, they had enough experience to make an impact.

"I think they have good experienced players because most of them play in franchise cricket," he said. "They know how to accelerate and they have all the confidence, so I believe if we do our best, we can see a good finish."

SPOTLIGHT

Du Plessis seeks new plan for South Africa

Reuters
London

South Africa need a new strategy after an abysmal start to the World Cup because 'Plan A' has already been ruined by injuries to their pace attack, captain **Faf Du Plessis** has said.

Veteran quick Dale Steyn missed the first two matches with a shoulder injury and South Africa were duly thumped by hosts England in their tournament opener before losing to unfancied Bangladesh at the Oval on Sunday. They suffered another serious setback against Bangladesh when pace bowler Lungi Ngidi went off with a hamstring injury early on and Du Plessis said South Africa would only cope if they changed tactics in their remaining games.

"I'm extremely disappointed," the 34-year-old told reporters. "Our plan in both the England game and (the Bangladesh) game was to try and make sure we target them with aggressive bowling. Plan A is gone because Plan A was those main bowlers playing together and they haven't played a game together on this tour. So now we have to really look at what we can do to try to be effective — is it playing all-rounders



together, do we play two spinners? Now it's reshuffling all our cards to see how best we can deal with it."

Steyn is expected to be fit for tomorrow's game against India and Du Plessis said every member of the squad needed to start living up to their potential. "I have to believe that we can still win the World Cup," he added.

SCHEDULE

India announce packed home programme

AFP
New Delhi

India will open their World Test Championship campaign against South Africa in October at the start of a packed schedule that will see them host series against five opponents in five months.

The Indian board yesterday announced five Tests, nine one-day internationals and 12 Twenty20 games between against five nations also including Bangladesh, Zimbabwe, West Indies and Australia.

India will play South Africa in three T20 games in September followed by three all-important Tests in October to mark their debut in the new world championship that

runs through to 2021. They are to play 18 games in all against all Test nations except Pakistan and Sri Lanka. Bangladesh will then visit for three T20s and two Tests in November. West Indies will tour India in December, followed by Zimbabwe and Australia in January for T20 and ODI series. South Africa will return in March for ODIs.

INDIA'S SCHEDULE AT HOME

IN 2019: India v South Africa: Sept 15 — 1st T20, Dharamsala; Sept 18 — 2nd T20, Mohali; Sept 22 — 3rd T20 Bangalore; Oct 2-6 — 1st Test, Vizag; Oct 10-14 2nd Test, Ranchi; Oct 19-23 3rd Test, Pune

India v Bangladesh: Nov 3 — 1st T20, Delhi; Nov 7 — 2nd T20, Rajkot; Nov 10 — 3rd T20,

Nagpur; Nov 14-18 — 1st Test, Indore; November 22-26 — 2nd Test, Kolkata

India v West Indies: Dec 6 — 1st T20, Mumbai; Dec 8 — 2nd T20, Thiruvananthapuram; Dec 11 — 3rd T20, Hyderabad; Dec 15 — 1st ODI, Chennai; Dec 18, 2nd ODI, Vizag; Dec 22 — 3rd ODI, Cuttack

2020: India v Zimbabwe: Jan 5 — 1st T20, Guwahati; Jan 7 — 2nd T20, Indore; Jan 10 — 3rd T20, Pune

India v Australia: Jan 14 — 1st ODI, Mumbai; Jan 17 — 2nd ODI, Rajkot; Jan 19 — 3rd ODI, Bangalore

India v South Africa: March 12 — 1st ODI, Dharamsala; March 15, 2nd ODI, Lucknow; March 18, 3rd ODI Kolkata

SPOTLIGHT

Australian threat resurfaces with fast start in opener

Finch with the bat and Starc with the ball set the tone for Aussies against Afghanistan – and perhaps the rest of the tournament

By Geoff Lemon in Bristol
The Guardian

If you glance at Australia's team sheet and think of the 2015 World Cup, not much has changed. Aaron Finch and David Warner still open the batting. Steve Smith takes one of the driving seats in the middle order. Glenn Maxwell comes after that to set up the late surge. And with the ball, Mitchell Starc and Patrick Cummins partner up for pace and more pace.

All of the major pieces are still in places. But coming into the 2019 World Cup, the current setup was lacking a couple of important starting pieces. One was the way that Starc conducts himself at the start of a bowling innings. Another was Finch's equivalent for batting. Australia's first match against Afghanistan on Saturday suggested that both these problems have a chance of being solved.

Finch is known for fast starts. He has a mostly simple game made up of booming straight drives that can expand to midwicket lathers, and using this expedient his boundaries pile up faster than Tory leadership candidates. In the 20-over format he's the guy who set a world record score of 156 and then beat it with a leg in the air.

In Sri Lanka in 2016, facing a series of rough and worn spinning pitches, Finch adopted the maxim of getting your opponents before they got you. Reasoning that the new ball was the best chance to score, he played innings like his 55 off 19 balls at Dambulla just to do the team thing and get Australia off to a decent start. Banking the rewards while they were there to take.

But last October his limited-overs game fell in a trough, repeatedly getting out for single figures across a couple of dozen matches.

"Finchy felt like India had a homing beacon on his front knee," said his confidante Maxwell on The Final Word podcast. Captaincy of a rebuilding team seemed to weigh heavily. Spooked by the prospect of leading a team into a World Cup while in a personal rut, he retreated to a cautious approach and was able to grind out a string of huge scores in India and the Arab Emirates.

But all of that has left Finch stranded between selves: not playing like the batsman who first won his spot and then the captaincy, nor truly being the new version of himself that he'd adopted.

Mujeeb Ur Rahman is 18 years old. A tall spinner who bowls every variety of right-arm tweak, he has more wickets during the first period of ODI fielding restrictions than any spinner since the last World Cup. And he only debuted at the end of 2017; when Finch and company lifted the previous trophy, Mujeeb would have been doing the 2010s Afghan equivalent of staring moodily at his Shannon Doherty posters while listening to his Walkman.

His first two overs while opening the bowling have never gone for more than 13 runs. Until last weekend, when Finch clouted him for 22. The Australian, conversely, had never got off to as fast a start.

Flip to the bowling innings and Starc



David Warner (left) and Steve Smith's return has strengthened to Australian team. (AFP)

was equally about the fast start. In 2015 his modus operandi was to swing the new ball at tremendous pace, throw one in fast and full, and demolish the stumps as it swerved in the air. New Zealand captain Brendon McCullum got the most famous version in that World Cup final, but Starc had been doing it for a while.

He arrived at that year's World Cup as a monster, even though much of the world didn't appreciate it yet. While preparing with half a dozen domestic 50-over matches, he bowled 17 batsmen among his 26 wickets.

He'd blazed through international line-ups too. When Starc took six for 28 to nearly win the impossible World Cup group match against New Zealand in Auckland, it was the fifth time he'd taken

a five-wicket haul in ODIs. That was one fewer than the great left-armer Wasim Akram. Starc had played 35 matches. Wasim played 356.

But that was then. In Starc's 41 matches since, he hasn't taken another five-for. His record is still exceptional, but his early strikes haven't been as frequent. In the last year and a half he's missed a lot of games with injury, worn out at the end of Test series or with the endless list of fast-bowling ailments. The most noticeable thing about the team's recent work is how little he's been a feature.

Yet come the start of the big contest and there he was. Afghanistan have two openers who redefine aggression, in Hazratullah Zazai and Mohammad Shahzad. But Shahzad wasn't trying anything

audacious against Starc. Just to work the ball off his pads from a leg stump line. Except it surged fuller than it looked, and it swung late, far too late. Past the shot, into the ankle, onto the stumps. There was been talk of the Kookaburra ball not moving this season, but this one did. A proper blast from the past.

Of course one performance isn't enough to draw meaningful conclusions. And one is tempered by the fact that Afghanistan are still a team with limitations. But these are glimpses suggesting that two of Australia's keys may be finding their way back to what made them dangerous.

Over the coming weeks, Australia could find more in common with 2015 than just the names on the sheet.

OPINION

Waugh warns Australia to beware 'behemoth' West Indies line-up

AFP
London

Steve Waugh has warned Australia that the West Indies' array of stroke-makers and aggressive bowlers will pose the first serious threat to the World Cup holders. Former Australia captain Waugh was impressed with the no-nonsense way his country defeated minnows Afghanistan by seven wickets in their opening match on Saturday.

But the 54-year-old believes the West Indies will provide a much sterner test when they meet at Trent Bridge on Thursday. Led by flamboyant opener Chris Gayle, who thumped 50 runs off 34 balls, the West Indies wasted little time polishing off Pakistan by seven wickets after bowling them out for 105 in their first match.

It was an impressive show of strength from the two-time champions and Waugh is intrigued to see how Australia fare against one of the tournament's most talented but unpredictable teams. "The West Indies will provide a more realistic gauge on how the team are tracking, for they possess a squad full of matchwinners that can dominate if they gain any sense of ascendancy in a match," Waugh wrote in a column on the International Cricket Council's media page.

"They are the most watchable team in the tournament with a batting line-up that can kidnap any bowling attack with brute



force. No ground is big enough when this behemoth of a batting order clicks into overdrive but they also have a vulnerability against high-quality bowling as they tend to play one dimensional at times."

As well as their powerful batsmen, two-time World Cup winner Waugh was also impressed by the West Indies' pace attack, which bludgeoned Pakistan into submission with a bouncer barrage. Fast bowlers Andre Russell, Sheldon Cottrell, Oshane Thomas and Jason Holder proved too hot for Pakistan to handle and Waugh said: "For the first time in a long while they have fast-bowling depth. Every side in this tournament will be wary of playing the Windies and I wouldn't want to face them in a knockout match. They are the sort of team that, if they get on a roll and build some momentum, then they could win it all."

FOCUS

Shakib, Mushfiqu the key for in-form Bangladesh



Bangladesh's Shakib Al Hasan (left) and Mushfiqu Rahim put on 142 for the third wicket against South Africa. (AFP)

Shakib Al Hasan revelled in his formidable double act with Mushfiqu Rahim after Bangladesh secured a 21-run victory in their World Cup opener against South Africa on Sunday.

Put into bat against a usually daunting Proteas attack, Shakib and Mushfiqu led the charge for the Tigers, putting on 142 for the third wicket as part a record ODI total of 330 for a Bangladesh side.

The pair, who have also shone in tandem at Test level, first forged their special bond playing in age-group sides together as youngsters. And with all-rounded Shakib now batting higher up the order at No. 3, that shared experience is now paying dividends for the long-time colleagues.

"Me and Mushfiq have had some very good partnerships. Even in Tests we have the highest partnership for Bangladesh," Shakib said. "Because we've been playing together since under-15, we know each other well and complement each other. That's the key. I've only had 10-12 innings at No. 3 but I'm enjoying this position. It's good that I'm giving the innings that are needed for the team."

A key contributor with bat and

ball, Shakib became the fastest player to reach 250 ODI wickets and 5,000 runs when he snared Aiden Markram early on in the South Africa response. Joining an exclusive club also featuring Jacques Kallis is a dream for any player, but the talented all-rounder insisted records come secondary to helping the team achieve success.

"I'm very happy the way I contributed," he added. "If I do that for my time, the stats will take care of themselves. I don't normally look at it, but if people are talking about it, I obviously feel happy."

Ranked seventh heading into the competition, attention for the Tigers now turns to highly-rated New Zealand tomorrow. Trent Boult and co present fierce opposition, but with the wind in their sails, Shakib believes Bangladesh will be a match for any side in the competition.

He said: "Building up to this World Cup, we knew what challenges we might face. We prepared well, so that gave us a lot of confidence and belief. We came to this World Cup wanting to do well. We are up for the challenge but at the same time we are relaxed. We knew we had the skill to beat big teams." (ICC)

BOTTOMLINE

Pakistan's Hafeez hails 'team effort' against England

AFP
Nottingham, United Kingdom

Mohamed Hafeez saluted Pakistan's "total team effort" after they stunned hosts England with a 14-run victory over the tournament favourites at Trent Bridge yesterday. Hafeez earned the man-of-the-match award for his influential innings of 84 from 62 balls as he punished England for dropping him when he was on 14. The 38-year-old also took the key wicket of England captain Eoin Morgan, slowing the run chase before Pakistan held on despite centuries for Joe Root and Jos Buttler. It was a remarkable result for Pakistan, who made 348-8, just days after they were thrashed by the West Indies in their first match of the tournament at the same venue.

On that occasion, Pakistan were bowled out for just 105, but they proved a much tougher against England and Hafeez put that down to the whole squad sticking together and producing their best at key moments.



Pakistan skipper Sarfaraz Ahmed (Second left) and Mohamed Hafeez are deep in discussion after the victory over England in the World Cup yesterday. (Reuters)

"Everyone was believing we could do this. We were playing good cricket but not winning crucial stages of the game," he told *Sky Sports*.

"Everyone chimed in today and gave everything which was required to win the game. We needed one winning performance and then everyone contributed accordingly. It was a total team effort. It is a very happy dressing room."

Pakistan captain Sarfaraz Ahmed echoed Hafeez's assessment of his unpredictable team's against-the-odds triumph and singled out leg-spinner Shadab Khan. "It was a great team effort. Bowlers bowled really well. We tried a couple of different things. We started with Shadab because we know their openers are not good against spin," he said. "Fielding is a very im-

portant part. In the last ODI series it was different. Today we feel better and we bowl better."

It was a bitter blow for England after they made a flying start by crushing South Africa in their opening game. That 104-run win was hailed as proof that England, the ICC's top ranked one-day international side, could win the World Cup for the first time.

Root admitted England had only themselves to blame for an unusually sloppy display featuring dropped catches and careless dismissals. "Very disappointed if I'm being honest. One thing we have to make sure we don't do is panic and go away from what's been so successful for us," Root said.

"Credit to Pakistan, they played some really good stuff, I thought it was a great game of cricket. We probably just left a little too much to do at the end. That's probably my fault." Insisting England will emerge stronger from their surprise defeat, Root added: "We've been nowhere near our best cricket throughout these two games, so with that still to come we feel like we're in a good place."

SPOTLIGHT

Premier League has Europe in its grip

Six English teams are ranked among the top 10 European clubs that generate the highest revenue

AFP
Paris

Liverpool's victory in the Champions League could usher in a new era of English dominance of European competition – but titans Real Madrid will not take the challenge lying down. The 2-0 win for Jurgen Klopp's side over Tottenham Hotspur in Madrid on Saturday was the culmination of a week of all-English European finals, after Chelsea had thrashed Arsenal 4-1 in Baku to lift the Europa League trophy.

The Premier League's European rivals have taken note of the English dominance this season, with many seeing it as evidence of the Premier League's overwhelming financial power created by TV contract receipts that put other leagues in the shade.

A report from accountants KPMG last month underlined that financial muscle, with six English teams ranked among the top 10 European clubs that generate the greatest revenue. Manchester United were runners-up to top-placed Real Madrid. Abu Dhabi-backed Manchester City, the newly crowned Premier League champions, were in fifth place, ahead of Russian-owned Chelsea, US-backed Liverpool, and Arsenal, with Tottenham in ninth spot.

The looming prospect of Brexit does not yet seem to have had a detrimental effect on the growing incomes of the top English clubs. For Tottenham, who reached the Champions League final after miraculous escapes in the group stage, quarter-finals and semi-finals, the question is whether their achievement shows mounting momentum or is merely a lucky high water-mark.

The London club opened a glittering, £1bn (\$1.26bn) 62,000-capacity stadium to rave reviews in April.

It holds 26,000 more than the old White Hart Lane and the club has landed a 10-year deal to host NFL games.

How much of that increase in revenue will be available to strengthen the squad is not clear. The club reportedly took out more than £600mn in loans to pay for the stadium. Tottenham's dynamic Argentinian coach Mauricio Pochettino has been linked with jobs at Bayern Munich and Juventus.

An emotional man, he sent con-



Fans line the streets to see the Liverpool team take part in an open-top bus parade around Liverpool on Sunday, after winning Champions League title. (AFP)

flicting messages in the run-up to the Champions League final. While Spurs face immediate challenges to make the leap to Premier League contenders, Liverpool and their coach Jurgen Klopp appear to stand a good chance of dethroning City and winning their first Premier League title for 29 years next season. Liverpool lost out to City by a single point in a thrilling race this season.

The *Daily Mail's* football editor Ian Ladyman said he expects Liverpool "will only get stronger from here", tweeting that the "only feasible threat is the big Spanish clubs coming for the front three, which will happen at some

stage I am sure".

He was referring to envious glances aimed at Egyptian forward Mohamed Salah, Senegalese striker Sadio Mane and Brazilian Roberto Firmino. Thirteen-time European champions Real, and Barcelona, who have won the Champions League five times, have had poor seasons by their high standards, and the response has been swift. The Madrid club are widely expected to announce the signing of Belgian midfielder Eden Hazard from Chelsea within weeks.

A host of star names are expected to follow. Barcelona have raided Ajax's precocious lineup, snapping up

22-year-old midfielder Frenkie de Jong. His Ajax teammate Matthijs de Ligt could join him in Catalonia, although Paris Saint-Germain and Manchester United are also reportedly interested.

France's World Cup-winning striker Antoine Griezmann is expected to move from Atletico Madrid to Barcelona too, to bolster the ageing attack of Lionel Messi and Luis Suarez. United's wealth has rarely been matched in recent years by the same success on the pitch as they enjoyed under former manager Alex Ferguson. The Old Trafford club are expected to spend big to attempt to regain the Champions League qualification

they missed out on in a calamitous season. Perennial German champions Bayern Munich have also splashed the cash to begin rebuilding their squad, investing in French defender Benjamin Pavard and Lucas Hernandez from Atletico Madrid.

The problem for the Premier League's rivals is that success is attracting ever more foreign investment. Evidence of that was provided this week when Qatari investors linked to Paris Saint-Germain were revealed to be in talks with the owners of one of England's sleeping giants, Newcastle United, about a possible takeover.

NATIONS LEAGUE

No hard feelings as Kane turns attention to England

AFP
London

England captain Harry Kane insists there will be no hangover from Tottenham's Champions League final defeat to Liverpool when players from both sides unite forces on international duty this week. Kane made his return from a two-month injury layoff to start Saturday's final in Madrid, but looked well short of match fitness in a disappointing Spurs display.

Dele Alli, Danny Rose and Eric Dier also featured for Mauricio Pochettino's men, while Liverpool trio Jordan Henderson, Trent Alexander-Arnold and Joe Gomez are included in Gareth Southgate's 23-man squad.

"Yes, I am dejected after losing the Champions League final with Spurs. But you don't have to talk to people about switching off from club football," said Kane.

"Everyone just naturally does it and I think the fact we've played with each other in club sides and younger England sides (means) we're all good friends. Whether you're at Spurs or (Manchester) City or Liverpool, we've known each other long enough that we've become mates. "When you come here, you just look forward to meeting up and being friends."

England have the chance to win a first tournament since 1966 at the inaugural Nations League, as they face a resurgent Netherlands in the second semi-final on Thursday.

Kane believes it is important for England to claim silverware as a building block towards next year's European Championship.

"It's a new tournament, but it's still a chance to win a trophy in an England shirt, and 1966 was a long time ago," Kane said.

"I think if we go on and win the Nations League, it will be another stepping stone to go on to achieve big things in the future. Winning trophies breeds that mentality to go on to do more and more, so it's a chance for us to start early and try to achieve that."

FOCUS

Qatar, Japan and China presented with AFC Coaching Convention Awards

Sheikh Salman bin Ebrahim al-Khalifah, the AFC President, recognised the progress of the coaching standards of the Qatar Football Association, Chinese Football Association and Japan Football Association at their meeting in Paris on Sunday.

The AFC Coaching Convention Pro Level Certificates were presented to Du Zhaoai, the Acting President of the Chinese FA, Kohzo Tashima, the President of the Japan FA and Saoud Aziz M A al-Mohannadi, the Vice President of the Qatar FA.

AFC Technical Director Andy Roxburgh said: "These awards show the progress of the three Member Associations in coaching and they are setting the standards across Asia. I am sure that others will now follow their lead. These are the first MAs who have been endorsed at the Pro Level – the highest level that can be attained and they have set the benchmark for the other 33 MAs who are already in the process.

"When an equivalent award was introduced in Europe some years ago, four of



AFC president Sheikh Salman bin Ebrahim al-Khalifah (second left) poses with vice president of the QFA Saoud Aziz M A al-Mohannadi (second right), acting president of the Chinese FA Du Zhaoai (left) and Kohzo Tashima, the President of the Japan FA.

the first six went on to win the FIFA World Cup and one was a runners-up. So, this shows the importance of the awards – they

are a vital ingredient in the development of coaching in the AFC Member Associations."

ROUND-UP

'I want to see Klopp at Bayern'

German football legend Franz Beckenbauer said yesterday that he wants to see Liverpool coach Jurgen Klopp in the Bayern Munich dugout. As Germany celebrated Klopp's success in last Saturday's Champions League final, Beckenbauer told *Bild* newspaper that he was desperate to see the former Dortmund coach join Bundesliga champions Bayern.

"I want nothing more than to see Klopp come to Bayern one day, it would be a good fit," said the 73-year-old, who won five German titles with Bayern as a player and a coach. Klopp's first Champions League title was met with widespread celebration in the German sports media.

Beckenbauer called Klopp "one of the best coaches in the world. "Jurgen brought a new type of football to Germany... what he began in Dortmund, he has refined in Liverpool."

Liverpool are reportedly look-



ing to extend Klopp's contract, which currently runs until 2022. Yet Beckenbauer questioned whether 51-year-old would stay on Merseyside in the long term. "I think that a job in England robs you of energy. As a manager in the Premier League, you have more responsibility than as a

coach in the Bundesliga," he told *Bild*. "With the two cup competitions and the slightly larger league, the amount of games is considerably higher than it is in Germany."

DIJON AVOID LIGUE 1 DROP AFTER PLAY-OFF WIN

Dijon retained their Ligue 1 status on Sunday after a 4-2 aggregate victory over second division Lens in the promotion/relegation play-off. Following a 1-1 draw in Thursday's first leg, Dijon grabbed the lead in the return through Tunisia international Naim Sliti on 29 minutes.

Jean-Kevin Duverne levelled for Lens before half-time, giving the visitors hope of returning to the top flight for the first time since the 2014-15 season. But Wesley Said put Dijon back in front after a goalkeeping howler before another defensive mix-up allowed Sliti to roll the ball into an empty net to seal a 3-1 win on the night.

BOTTOMLINE

Former Arsenal player Reyes laid to rest in Spain after car crash

AFP
Utrera, Spain

Hundreds of mourners attended the funeral in Spain yesterday of former Real Madrid and Arsenal forward Jose Antonio Reyes, who was killed in a weekend car crash. Reyes' coffin, draped in the flag of his boyhood club Sevilla, was carried through the streets of his hometown of Utrera before the funeral service at a local church.

The 35-year-old former Spanish international died Saturday in an accident on the main road from Sevilla to Utrera. The crash and resultant fireball also claimed the life of one of his cousins while another passenger was still in hospi-

tal yesterday, according to police. Images from the scene of the crash show the burnt-out car flipped on its roof.

Diario de Sevilla reported Reyes was driving over 200 kilometres (125 miles) per hour at the time of the accident while sports daily *Mundo Deportivo*, citing a police report, said he was going at 237 kilometres per hour. A spokesman for Spain's Guardia Civil police force which is investigating the accident declined to comment on the reports. On the day of the crash former Spanish international Santiago Canizares criticised Reyes, who reportedly owned a fleet of high-powered cars, for driving at high speed.

"Speeding is a reprehensible attitude. There were victims in the accident aside from the driver. Reyes does not deserve a tribute like a

hero. Nevertheless I regret what happened and that I pray for their souls," tweeted Canizares, who was part of Spain's national team at the same time as Reyes.

A minute's silence was held for Reyes before Saturday's Champions League final in Madrid between Liverpool and Tottenham. Reyes shot to fame at Sevilla and was snapped up by Arsenal, where he was part of the unbeaten 'Invincibles' who won the 2003-2004 Premier League title. Reyes later had spells at Real and Atletico Madrid. He won the Europa League five times, twice with Atletico Madrid and three times in his second spell at Sevilla. Reyes played 21 times for Spain between 2003 and 2006, scoring four goals. He also won domestic league titles with Real Madrid and Benfica.



The coffin with the remains of Spanish footballer Jose Antonio Reyes, covered with the flags of the village of Utrera and Sevilla team, is carried out of the Santa Maria de Mesa church in Utrera, Spain yesterday. (AFP)

NBA

Warriors finish strong against Raptors to even series

AFP
Toronto

Defending champion Golden State needed Andre Iguodala's clutch 3-pointer with seven seconds remaining Sunday to hold off Toronto 109-104 and lift the Warriors level in the NBA Finals.

Seeking a third consecutive title and fourth in five seasons, the Warriors knotted the best-of-seven series at 1-1 ahead of games three and four on Wednesday and Friday in California. With former US President Barack Obama in the crowd, Golden State trailed by 12 points in the second quarter, made the first 18 points of the third and led by as much as 72-59.

Toronto rallied, holding the Warriors scoreless for more than 5:30 only to fall short on the last of 2015 NBA Finals Most Valuable Player Iguodala's eight points.

"His play in the second half was really inspiring at both ends. He did a fantastic job," Warriors coach Steve Kerr said. "He has hit a lot of big shots in the finals before, so he was unfazed.

"I think he sensed that we needed his production in that second half and he came alive."

Klay Thompson led the Warriors with 25 points while Stephen Curry added 23 and Draymond Green contributed 17 points, 10 rebounds and nine assists.Kawhi Leonard scored a game-high 34 points for Toronto and added 14 rebounds while Raptors reserve Fred VanVleet netted 17 points.

Golden State suffered injuries to Thompson and Kevon Looney, Curry battled dehydration and Iguodala's heroics came despite a leg injury. "We've been through a lot. We've battled through injuries," Iguodala said. "It's a mindset. You go play. Not saying it's smart, but you only have about a week left to gut it out and see if you can help the team."

It left reserves to play key roles in the triumph.

"It was a great win," Kerr said. "We got to go home and protect our home floor and we'll see about all the injuries. But I'm very proud of our team. It was a hell of an effort from the bench."

The Warriors were again without top scorer Kevin Durant, but the forward is expected back soon after missing seven games with a right calf strain. Victory was vital for Golden State. Of 34 teams that fell behind 0-2 in the NBA Finals, only four rallied to win the crown.

The Warriors have now won at least once on the road in 23 consecutive playoff series.

'FIGHTING AND BATTLING'

Kyle Lowry and Danny Green made 3-pointers to pull the Raptors, in the first finals of their 24-season history, from a 13-point deficit to within 92-88 early in the fourth quarter.

Reserve Quinn Cook answered with back-to-back 3-pointers to ignite a 14-6 Golden State run that stretched the Warriors' lead to 106-94 with 5:39 to play. Three Leonard free throws pulled the Raptors within 106-101 with 68 seconds remaining and Danny Green sank a 3-pointer to lift the Raptors within two with 26 seconds remaining. "I'm really proud of our guys for fighting and battling," Raptors coach Nick Nurse said. "They were obviously a little more aggressive. We were just a little bit impatient and didn't hold enough composure.

"They did a really good job of getting out of there with speed and a lot of those were just probably mistakes by us or just a half step too slow."

Toronto seized a 47-35 lead but Curry, who missed his first six shots, scored 15 of the Warriors' last 17 second-quarter points and Golden State trimmed the half-time deficit to 59-54. "Just staying in the game at the end of the second quarter was very important," Kerr said. "The place was going nuts, we couldn't score, and Steph and Klay both got loose. We could kind of breathe at halftime.

"Our guys felt renewed life at that point and came out and just had a great run to take control of the game and we were able to finish it out from there."

Golden State opened the second half on an 18-0 run to seize a 72-59 lead, aided by the Raptors missing their first nine shots of the third quarter and committing seven turnovers in the pivotal span.



Andre Iguodala of the Golden State Warriors goes to the basket against the Toronto Raptors during game two of the 2019 NBA Finals at Scotiabank Arena in Toronto. (Getty Images/AFP)

FOCUS

Mariners trade outfielder Bruce to Phillies

AFP
Washington

The Seattle Mariners dealt outfielder Jay Bruce to the Philadelphia Phillies on Sunday in exchange for minor league third baseman Jake Scheiner and cash considerations.

"I look forward to going over there and helping the Phillies hopefully win a championship," Bruce said. "That's my goal. I just want to win."

Financial terms were not disclosed, but USA Today reported that the Phillies will assume most of the \$21.5 million remaining on Bruce's contract.

Scheiner, 23, is hitting .256 with two homers and 20 RBI at Clearwater in the Florida State League. He will report to Class A Modesto in the California League.

The Mariners started off 13-2 but have gone 12-34 since. Now in last place in the American League West, the Mariners have signaled their willingness to part with most of their veteran pieces. The Phillies entered play Sunday at 33-25, two games ahead of the Atlanta Braves in the National League East.

"I figured this would be the situation," Bruce told MLB.com's Greg Johns as he packed his locker Sunday. "You never really know when it's going to happen. It's bittersweet. I really like the group of guys here. I got to know some of them and had great relationships. It's part of the business, though. I get to go somewhere I have a chance to win, and at this point in my career, that's pretty paramount for me. So it is what it is."

Bruce, 32, joined the Mariners this offseason as part of the trade that sent second baseman Robinson Cano and right-handed closer Edwin Diaz to the New York Mets. A 12-year veteran, Bruce also has played with Cincinnati and Cleveland.

In 47 games this season, he has 11 doubles, 14 home runs and 28 RBI with a .212 batting average. On Friday night against the Los Angeles Angels, he hit his 300th career home run.

Former Jazz coach Layden wins lifetime achievement award

Frank Layden, a long-time NBA coach and one of the league's most colourful characters of the 1980s, received the Lifetime Achievement Award on Sunday from the National Basketball Coaches Association.

The jovial 87-year-old Brooklyn-born basketball devotee coached the Utah Jazz from 1981-1988 after a three-season stint as an Atlanta assistant and eight seasons at Niagara University.

In 1984, Layden won an unmatched sweep of the NBA Coach of the Year, NBA Executive of the Year and NBA Citizenship Awards.

"Frank Layden represents the very best in coaching," said Dallas Mavericks coach and association president Rick Carlisle.

"He built a perennial winner in Utah with the Jazz."

The Jazz went 277-294 in Layden's tenure as coach, which ended when he retired in 1989 to serve as president and general manager, but he set the groundwork that led Utah to the NBA Finals in the 1990s under the replacement coach he hired, Jerry Sloan.

"I am overwhelmed," Layden said. "My colleagues were wonderful and the best part of my coaching experience. They were great coaches and even better men. I am honored to accept this award from their ranks."

MLB

Scherzer fans 15 as Nationals beat Reds 4-1

Reuters
Washington

Nationals ace Max Scherzer allowed just one run and three hits with a season-high 15 strikeouts over eight masterful innings as Washington defeated the host Cincinnati Reds 4-1 on Sunday in the rubber match of their three-game series.

Anthony Rendon had three hits and an RBI, Brian Dozier had two hits and drove in two, and Kurt Suzuki had two hits and an RBI as the Nationals, who had nine hits overall, won for the seventh time in their last nine games.

The Nationals also won four out of five on their road trip, which began with two victories in Atlanta.

Scherzer (3-5) amassed his strikeouts in bunches, getting five in a row early in the game and three in a row on two other occasions. He walked only one batter.

Scherzer's 86th game of at least 10 strikeouts raised his career total to 2,566, lifting him into 29th place on the all-time MLB list. He surpassed longtime Mets and Twins pitcher Jerry Koosman (2,556) and late 1800s pitcher Tim Keefe (2,564) on Sunday.

Washington won for just the third time in Scherzer's 13 starts this season, although he began the day with a 3.26 ERA and lowered that to 3.06. He made a season-high 120 pitches, 84 for strikes.

The Reds, who lost for the third time in four games, got their first two hits off Scherzer in the fourth, back-to-back doubles from Joey Votto and Derek Dietrich to begin the inning to cut their deficit to 2-1.

Tucker Barnhart, who broke up a no-hit bid by Scherzer in the eighth inning of a game in Washington in 2015, also doubled to lead off the bottom of the eighth, but Scherzer stranded him at second.

The Nationals scored their first run just three batters into the game when Trea Turner

RESULTS		
Nats	4-1	Reds
Astros	6-4	Athletics
Dodgers	8-0	Phillies
Rockies	5-1	Blue Jays
White Sox	2-0	Indians
Giants	8-1	Orioles
Braves	7-4	Tigers
Cardinals	2-1	Cubs
D'backs	7-1	Mets
Angels	13-3	Mariners
Rangers	5-1	Royals
Brewers	4-2	Pirates
Red Sox	8-5	Yankees
Marlins	9-3	Padres
Twins	9-7	Rays

hit a leadoff double and scored on Rendon's single to left field.

The Nationals extended their lead to 2-0 with a run in the top of the fourth when Suzuki smacked an 0-2 pitch from Reds right-hander Sonny Gray (2-5) for a two-out double to left-center to score Juan Soto.

In five innings, Gray allowed two runs on five hits and a walk. He struck out four.

Dozier singled home two runs off Reds closer Raisel Iglesias in the eighth inning to pad Washington's lead.

Sean Doolittle pitched a perfect ninth inning for his 12th save in 14 opportunities.

ASTROS OUTLAST ATHLETICS IN 12 INNINGS TO COMPLETE SWEEP

Michael Brantley and Yuli Gurriel stroked RBI singles in the 12th inning Sunday afternoon, allowing the Houston Astros to complete a three-game sweep of the host Oakland Athletics with a 6-4 victory.

The win was the Astros' seventh in eight

meetings with the A's this season. Houston had a three-game home sweep earlier this season. Myles Straw led off the 12th with a single off Lou Trivino (2-3), Oakland's fifth pitcher, and stole second.

With one out, Alex Bregman walked and Brantley gave the Astros the lead with his run-scoring single.Curriel then followed with his hit, making it a two-run game.

Josh James (3-0) got the win with two innings of shutout relief, striking out three.

The A's trailed 4-2 before Ramon Laureano made it a one-run game with a solo homer, his seventh of the season, off reliever Will Harris in the seventh inning.

Matt Chapman then got the A's even when he hit Ryan Presley's third pitch of the eighth inning for his team-leading 16th home run, making it a 4-4 game.

Both starters pitched well enough to win, but neither got a decision.

Astros right-hander Gerrit Cole, unbeaten in his career in Oakland, left after six innings with a 4-2 lead. He gave up four hits, including solo home runs by Robbie Grossman and Jurickson Profar in the second inning.

Cole walked two and struck out four.

Oakland's Chris Bassitt allowed Houston's first three runs, although two came home on an infield single by Bregman in the fifth inning on which A's shortstop Marcus Semien threw the ball errantly, allowing both Tony Kemp and Straw to score.

The Astros' other run off Bassitt was the product of doubles by Derek Fisher and Gurriel in the first inning.

Houston extended their lead to 4-2 in the seventh inning against A's left-hander Ryan Buchter when Straw walked, stole second and scored on a single by Fisher.

Straw had three hits, three steals and scored three times for the Astros, who won for the seventh time in their last nine games.

Gurriel also finished with three hits, while Fisher and Bregman had two apiece in an 11-hit attack.



Washington Nationals starting pitcher Max Scherzer bunts against the Cincinnati Reds during the seventh inning at Great American Ball Park. PICTURE: USA TODAY Sports

BOXING

Ruiz rematch will be make-or-break for beaten Joshua

‘I think he’s finished. It’s not just the defeat, anybody can get defeated, but the nature of it’



England’s Anthony Joshua kneels after being knocked down by USA’s Andy Ruiz (right) in the 7th round to win by TKO during their 12-round IBF, WBA, WBO & IBO World Heavyweight Championship fight at Madison Square Garden in New York. (AFP)

Reuters
London

Anthony Joshua described his stunning defeat to underdog Andy Ruiz Jr. as “a minor setback” but some in the fight game are wondering where Britain’s damaged heavyweight hope goes from here.

Joshua’s promoter Eddie Hearn has already said there will be a rematch, possibly in England or Wales later this year, and that is a must-win for the 2012 Olympic super-heavyweight champion.

The alternative hardly bears thinking about and in the mean-

time the possibility of much-talked about bouts against WBC world champion Deontay Wilder and former champion Tyson Fury are on hold.

Former IBF cruiserweight world champion-turned-commentator Glenn McCrory told TalkSPORT radio on Monday that Joshua might never recover from one of the biggest upsets in heavyweight history.

“He’s bottom of the pile. He got beaten up by Andy Ruiz,” he said of the weekend fight in New York.

“I think he’s finished. It’s not just the defeat, anybody can get defeated, but the nature of it.

“Andy Ruiz is not an elite athlete, he is not a heavyweight

great. He will not go down in icons of legends at all, but he is a tough kid and he seized his opportunity.”

Everybody has plans until they get hit in the face, as Mike Tyson famously observed, and that certainly applies to Joshua now that he has lost his aura of invincibility as well as his belts.

The 29-year-old had hoped to conquer America on his debut at Madison Square Garden and instead comes away having handed his four titles (IBF, WBA, WBO and IBO) to a chubby Mexican-American drafted in as a late replacement.

If the IBF decides to enforce a mandatory challenger before a rematch, then the heavyweight

division could be further fragmented and the prospect of an undisputed champion further away than ever.

Floored four times by Ruiz before the seventh round stoppage, Joshua can take some hope from history, however.

Heavyweight champions Tyson, Lennox Lewis and Wladimir Klitschko all suffered major title upsets in their careers before coming back strong, even if their images were changed forever.

Tyson’s 1990 defeat to James ‘Buster’ Douglas in Tokyo still ranks as the biggest of them all, while Lewis lost to Oliver McCall in 1994 before a rematch win.

Ukrainian Klitschko, beaten by Joshua at London’s Wembley

Stadium in 2017, lost to Corrie Sanders in 2003 and Lamon Brewster in 2004 before returning to the top.

“This is all part of the story and the journey,” Joshua said on Sunday. “This is all part of the legacy. It’s about how strong I come back.”

The result, and winning back the belts, will be the primary objective, but Joshua must also convince his critics that he has the boxing skills and stamina to challenge the likes of Wilder and Fury. “Great fighters come back and improve. Some fighters never come back the same. The future will show how Anthony Joshua responds,” Hearn told British media.

SPOTLIGHT

O’Sullivan wins QGL Ramadan golf

By Sports Reporter
Doha

Kieran O’Sullivan emerged victorious in the Ramadan golf tournament organised by Qatar Golf Lovers at the Doha Golf Course over the weekend.

Forty golfers participated in the tournament which was played on a Strokeplay format. Rukkaiya Pachisa was declared runner-up.

John Durnin won the ‘longest putt’ award, Cherehzade Boocha won the ‘longest drive’ award while Akshay Randeva won the ‘closest to pin’ and JB Roy won the ‘closest to rope’ awards.

QGL hosted a prize distribution dinner for all golfers and gave away prizes to all the winners.

Meanwhile, QGL bid farewell to active members Cory Carson and Andreas Bork who are leaving Qatar shortly. On behalf of all members, QGL Captain presented them a memento and wished them happy golfing at their next tour of duty.



Winner of the Ramadan golf tournament Kieran O’Sullivan poses with QGL captain PK Mathew and other participants.

RUGBY

Wallabies veteran Ashley-Cooper not the retiring type

Reuters
Melbourne

The New South Wales Waratahs will farewell a number of Wallabies players at the end of the Super Rugby season but 35-year-old veteran Adam Ashley-Cooper has no plans to join the rush for the exits.

The 117-cap utility back, eyeing a fourth World Cup appearance in Japan this year, still hopes to be given a run at the Waratahs next year or another Super Rugby club in Australia if his current team won’t have him.

“I probably won’t ever retire. I’ll turn up with my boots and see if I can grab a run,” Ashley-Cooper told local broadcaster Fox Sports.

“(Retirement) is not on the cards any time soon.”

With the Waratahs’ hopes of reaching the playoffs on a knife-edge, Saturday’s match against the ACT Brumbies could be the last in front of home fans for Wallabies prop Sekope Kepu, scrumhalf Nick Phipps and three-test winger Curtis Rona.

The trio are all set to join English club London Irish after the World Cup.

Ashley-Cooper, nicknamed “Mr Fix-it” for his adaptability across the backline, underlined his enduring value by scoring a try and setting up another in the Waratahs’ 20-15 away win against the Melbourne Rebels on Friday.

The result has set up a blockbuster home clash with the Brumbies, who lead the Australian conference on 39 points with two games remaining, five ahead of the Rebels.

A win over the Brumbies and another loss for the Rebels, who face Super Rugby’s most daunting assignment in playing the champion Canterbury Crusaders away, would deliver a huge boost to the Waratahs’ play-offs ambitions.

However, the Sydney-based side have an additional challenge in needing to give a number of their international players a mandatory rest in the World Cup year, as agreed with Wallabies coach Michael Cheika.

Waratahs boss Daryl Gibson said over the weekend he had no plans to rest them for the Brumbies, meaning he will have holes to fill against the Otago Highlanders in the final round.

Ashley-Cooper said his side had done well to cover for sacked fullback Israel Folau and the injured centre Karmichael Hunt in recent weeks, and the available players would be ready to step up when required.

“We’ve shown enough resolve this year with a lot of external stuff that’s been happening, so that’s just another area that we won’t allow to distract our game or our preparation,” he said.



Australia’s Adam Ashley-Cooper (L) during a training session. (Reuters)

Goodell restates support for new Buffalo stadium

NFL commissioner Roger Goodell restated his support for a new stadium in Buffalo yesterday. “I want to make sure this franchise remains competitive and stable,” Goodell said, per The Athletic.

Goodell made the comment while attending the Jim Kelly Celebrity Classic golf tournament in Batavia, NY.

He expressed a similar sentiment three years ago at the same charity event hosted by the Hall of Fame quarterback. “Stadiums are important, just to making sure the team here can continue to compete not only throughout the NFL but also to compete in this environment because we’ve got great facilities here now,”

Goodell said in 2016. “The Bills have to stay up with that.”

The Bills play at New Era Field (capacity 71,608), formerly known as Rich Stadium and Ralph Wilson Stadium, which opened in 1973 in Orchard Park, N.Y., and underwent renovations in 1998 and 2013.

Erie County officials have expressed their support for further upgrades to the current facility over building a new home for the Bills.

“You have to make the determination of do you build a new stadium or do you renovate the existing stadium and get the best bang for the buck,” Erie County executive Mark Poloncarz told the Buffalo News in April.”

FOCUS

Fiji win in Paris to clinch World Rugby Sevens title

AFP
Paris

Olympic champions Fiji captured their third World Rugby Sevens Series title in five years on Sunday as they won the season-ending tournament in Paris.

Fiji defeated series runners-up the United States 33-14 in the semi-finals to ensure they would finish as champions. They celebrated their triumph in style by beating New Zealand 35-24 in the final.

It was a fifth victory this season for the Fijians in the 10-leg competition, and gave them a fourth overall title, adding to wins in 2006, 2015 and 2016.

Fiji captain Josua Vakurunabili said he told his teammates to “make people back home and your family proud”.

“In the huddle I said to the boys, ‘If you want to be a history maker don’t let this moment pass you,’” he said.

Fiji had finished second a year ago after slipping up in the final round at the Stade Jean-Bouin in Paris, allowing South Africa to pip them to the title.

They ensured there was no repeat in the sweltering conditions in the French capital, sweeping the hosts aside 24-5 in the quarter-finals to underline their intent at the start of the final day.

The top four teams in the series standings – Fiji, USA, New Zealand and South Africa – qualify automatically for next year’s Olympic Games in Tokyo.

Japan were relegated from the circuit after finishing 15th overall, as Wales held on to the final place among the elite top 14 nations.

GOLF

American Cantlay claims Memorial win by two strokes

‘That’s why you’re there and I definitely felt like that today. I felt at ease’



Winner of the Memorial tournament Patrick Cantlay receives the trophy from golf legend Jack Nicklaus at Muirfield Village Golf Club on Sunday. **PICTURE:** USA TODAY Sports

AFP
Washington

Patrick Cantlay powered to an eight-under par 64 on Sunday to claim his second US PGA Tour title at the Memorial by two strokes from Australian Adam Scott.

Cantlay, 27, went into the final round four strokes behind overnight leader Martin Kaymer whose bid to end a near five-year victory drought faded with a final round 72 that left him in third place. Cantlay's bogey-free effort was the best final round by a winner in the history of the Jack Nicklaus-hosted tournament at Muirfield Village in Dublin, Ohio.

The former US collegiate star, whose career was nearly derailed by a back injury, was coming off a tie for third at the PGA Championship, one of seven top-10 finishes this season.

He indicated on Saturday that 18-time major champion Nicklaus had given him some advice on how to close out tour-

naments. "He said just to relax and have fun, and look around and see all the people having fun and try and smile and just have a good time with it," Cantlay said. "That's why you're there and I definitely felt like that today. I felt at ease."

Cantlay's previous tour title came in Las Vegas in November of 2017, when he won the Shriners Hospitals for Children Open that was part of the 2017-18 season. He sealed his second win with a an up-and-down par from a greenside bunker on 18.

"It just definitely validates my confidence that I can play with the best players in the world and beating a field like this on a big golf course like this, this is very similar to a major championship setup with the rough and the big slopy fast greens, it does a lot for my confidence," he said.

"Especially holing a putt like that on the last hole, knowing that I needed it. That's good to put in the memory bank"

Scott, like Kaymer a former world number one seeking to end an extended winless run,

continued his recent resurgence with a final round 68 that left him on 17-under 271.

It was his second runner-up finish of the year after his second place at Torrey Pines, to go with top-10 finishes at Riviera and the PGA Championship.

Scott, who hasn't won since the 2016 WGC Mexico Championship, had six birdies, including three in a row from the 14th through the 16th. He said he was "kind of" satisfied with his play, but admitted he was disappointed not to return to the winner's circle. "I'm not winning. I'm playing good a lot, and that's the positive thing, but I want to win," he said.

TIGER MAKES A MOVE

Kaymer, who started the day with a two-stroke lead in search of his first win since his 2014 US Open victory, finished a further two strokes back on 15-under 273. With four birdies and a bogey through 11 holes the German was still holding on to a share of the lead before bogeys at 12 and 13.

"There was no room for mis-

takes, and I made a couple mistakes," Kaymer said, adding that "overall" he was happy with his game with the US Open coming up in two weeks.

Tiger Woods, who admitted Saturday that he was too far back for a serious run at a sixth Memorial title, was looking for a springboard into the US Open at Pebble Beach, and he got it with a sparkling five-under par 67. Woods was charging with seven birdies in his first 12 holes, backing up just a bit with bogeys at 14 and 18.

"I played really well today," he said with a grin. "It was fun. I hit the ball so crisp and so solid and made some nice putts on the front nine and had things rolling for a little bit.

"I wanted to have something positive going into the Open, and kind of snuck up there into a nice little top 10 possibly here, so it was good," added Woods, who finished tied for ninth, 10 shots behind Cantlay.

FINAL-ROUND SCORES
(USA unless noted)
269-Patrick Cantlay 68-69-68-64

271-Adam Scott (AUS) 71-66-66-68
273-Martin Kaymer (GER) 67-68-66-72
275-Kevin Streelman 72-68-69-66
276-Marc Leishman (AUS) 67-71-69-69
277-Hideki Matsuyama (JPN) 71-70-64-72
278-Jason Dufner 72-69-68-69, Jordan Spieth 66-70-69-73
279-Tiger Woods 70-72-70-67, Billy Horschel 71-70-70-68, Emiliano Grillo (ARG) 69-68-71-71, Bud Cauley 67-70-70-72
280-Justin Rose (ENG) 75-63-71-71
281-Michael Thompson 71-71-68, Xander Schauffele 69-70-72-70, Rickie Fowler 69-68-72-72
282-An Byeong Hun (KOR) 72-72-70-68, Peter Malnati 72-72-69-69, Kiradech Aphibarnrat (THA) 70-71-71-70, Andrew Putnam 68-70-74-70, Troy Merritt 69-66-74-73
283-Bryson DeChambeau 74-70-73-66, Ryan Armour 71-71-71-70, Steve Stricker 69-76-67-71, Nick Watney 74-68-69-72, Aaron Baddeley (AUS) 72-70-68-73

SPOTLIGHT

Court temporarily suspends IAAF testosterone rules

AFP
Geneva

Switzerland's top court said yesterday it had temporarily suspended IAAF rules that oblige athletes including double Olympic champion Caster Semenya to lower her testosterone levels in order to compete in certain events.

Swiss Federal Tribunal spokesman Peter Josi told AFP that the court had issued a "super-provisional order," barring the application of the rules introduced by the International Association of Athletics Federations until a further hearing can take place.

The IAAF measures were previously approved by the Lausanne-based Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS).

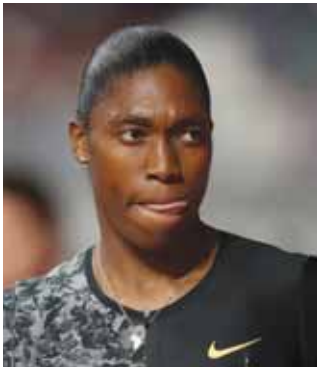
Judges at the sports court agreed that the rules were "discriminatory" but found, in a split decision, that they were "necessary" to ensure fairness in women's Athletics.

Semenya, the South African who won the women's 800 metres at the 2012 and 2016 Olympics, last week announced plans to appeal to Switzerland's highest court. "I am thankful to the Swiss judges for this decision," Semenya said in a statement issued by her legal team.

"I hope that following my appeal I will once again be able to run free," she added.

The new IAAF rules require women with higher than normal male hormone levels to artificially lower the amount of testosterone in their bodies if they are to compete in races over distances of 400m to the mile.

The reprieve granted by the court in Bern also applies to the two women who finished behind her in the 800m at the 2016



Double Olympic champion Caster Semenya.

Rio Olympics, Burundi's Francine Niyonsaba and Margaret Wambui of Kenya.

"It is fantastic news," Semenya lawyer Gregg Nott told the South African 702 radio station.

"She can run the races that she was told that she cannot run," he added, citing the 400m and 800m.

The IAAF said in a statement it had "received no information from the Swiss Federal Court so we can not comment at this stage."

The Swiss ruling is designed to have a short shelf-life.

The IAAF and Semenya's camp must now make further submissions to the court, which will decide on whether to order a longer suspension of the measures.

The court is due in the coming weeks to issue another decision on whether to extend the suspension.

Swiss justice moves slowly, meaning a final ruling on the admissibility of the IAAF measures could take years.

"This is an important case that will have fundamental implications for the human rights of female athletes," Semenya's Swiss lawyer, Dorothee Schramm, said in the statement.

Russia says doping cover-up report is part of 'information war'

Russia authorities said yesterday they were victims of an "information war" following reports in British newspapers that sparked the investigation of high-jump world champion runner up Danil Lysenko. Lysenko was provisionally suspended last August on the eve of the European Championships in Berlin, after failing to make himself available for out-of-competition drug testing.

According to the *Sunday Times*, Russian Athletics federation (RUSAF) officials fabricated documents to show the 2017 world silver medalist was too ill to provide his whereabouts.

The newspaper claimed these documents came from fake doctors working at a bogus clinic in Moscow.

"The address used is a real address where there is a demolished building," said a source with knowledge of the investigation in Russia.

Russian Athletics Federation spokeswoman Natalia Yuhareva told AFP. She denounced an "information war," which she

said was "not only related to Athletics."

"The *Sunday Times* article is indulging in wishful thinking," Yuhareva said. The AIU, a watchdog founded by Athletics' governing body to combat doping in the sport, confirmed on Sunday that it was looking into "a matter relating to the explanation provided by a Russian athlete in defence of a whereabouts violation in 2018".

Yuhareva said the Russian Federation would "fully cooperate" with the AIU.

"We are waiting for the results" of the investigation, she said, adding that until then, "making comments would be inappropriate and prohibited by the anti-doping regulations".

She also asked why the revelations came just before the IAAF Council meeting in Monaco on 8 and 9 June. In an e-mail sent Sunday to AFP, the IAAF said its taskforce "will prepare a report on all relevant matters and a recommendation for the IAAF Council, which will meet in Monaco on June 8 and 9."

FOCUS

South Korea's Lee6 wins US Women's Open

Reuters
Los Angeles

Lee Jeong-eun became the ninth South Korean to win the US Women's Open on Sunday, holding her nerve while her rivals faltered in South Carolina to claim the first \$1 million winner's prize in women's golf.

Lee, who has a '6' in her surname to differentiate herself from five other players with the same name on the Korean Tour, had two late bogeys but a one-under-par 70 was enough to clinch the title at the demanding Country Club of Charleston course. Her six-under 278 total was two shots better than compatriot and 2011 champion Ryu So-yeon (70) and Americans Angel Yin (68) and Lexi Thompson (73).

Overnight leaders Yu Liu of China and France's Celine Boutier faded with matching 75's to finish three strokes behind the winner. Tour rookie Lee was a class apart in a tense final round, her compact swing, deft short game and com-

posed demeanour keeping her out of trouble as her rivals floundered.

"I didn't expect to win the tournament this fast," she said via an interpreter, apologising first for not speaking English and promising to do so next time she won.

"I think this is very lucky that I won this major championship."

It marks the 10th time a South Korean has won the event in just over 20 years. Pak Se-ri started the run in 1998 and inspired a whole generation to follow in her footsteps. Olympic champion Park In-bee has won the event twice, in 2008 and 2013.

Lee, who started the day two strokes off the lead, was on a near-by practice putting green when her victory was confirmed and the 23-year-old burst into tears before being doused in champagne. "I was nervous starting 16, 17 and 18, and I knew that if I make all pars on those holes, I'm going to win," she said.

While she only made par on 17, sandwiched between two bogeys, it was enough to bring her the victory.

Lee's main danger down the stretch was joint overnight leader Boutier, who lipped out on a four-foot birdie at the 16th that would have tied it up. A birdie at the last would have forced a playoff but instead she finished with a double-bogey and slipped back into a tie for fifth on three-under. "I feel pretty bad right now," said Boutier, who clinched her first LPGA Tour victory at the Vic Open in Australia earlier this year.

While the experience of that victory had helped her in the early part of this tournament, she said nerves got the better of her on Sunday.

"It kind of helped me throughout the first three rounds but then today, I was pretty nervous all day, even in the morning when I wasn't even on the course," she said.

"I mean, obviously, majors is a different situation, but it's always good to be in this position, I guess, for the future."

LEADING FINAL-ROUND SCORES
278-Lee6 Jeong-eun (KOR) 70-69-69-70

280-Angel Yin 72-68-72-68, Ryu So-yeon (KOR) 71-68-71-70, Lexi Thompson 70-69-68-73
281-Gerina Pillier 70-70-73-68, Mamiko Higa (JPN) 65-71-71-74, Jaye Marie Green 71-68-68-74, Celine Boutier (FRA) 67-70-69-75, Liu Yu (CHN) 69-71-66-75
282-Ally McDonald 72-72-67-71, Jessica Korda 69-68-72-73
283-Maria Fassi (MEX) 72-73-68-70, a-Gina Kim 66-72-73-72, Park Sung-hyun (KOR) 71-69-71-72, Minjee Lee (AUS) 71-69-70-73
284-Park In-bee (KOR) 70-70-75-69, Pornanong Phatlum (THA) 73-71-70-70, Charley Hull (ENG) 72-70-70-72, Kim Sei-young (KOR) 68-71-72-73, Ko Jin-young (KOR) 72-70-69-73, Nanna Koerstz Madsen (DEN) 73-71-66-74
285-Minami Katsu (JPN) 72-70-72-71, Yan Jing (KOR) 73-72-69-71, Carlota Ciganda (ESP) 69-74-69-73, Ai Suzuki (JPN) 73-70-68-74
286-Lindy Duncan 72-73-72-69, Lizette Salas 71-71-73-71, Ariya Jutanugarn (THA) 72-73-69-72, Chella Choi (KOR) 72-72-69-73



South Korea's Jeongeun Lee6 holds the trophy after winning the US Women's Open at Country Club of Charleston. **PICTURE:** USA TODAY Sports

FRENCH OPEN

Djokovic storms into quarter-finals

‘I’M REALLY CONFIDENT WITH MY SERVE. I HOPE IT CONTINUES LIKE THAT’

AFP
Paris

Novak Djokovic yesterday became the first man to reach the French Open quarter-finals for 10 successive seasons while defending women's champion Simona Halep swept into the last eight in just 45 minutes.

Top seed and world number one Djokovic continued his bid to hold all four Grand Slam titles simultaneously for the second time by thrashing Germany's Jan-Lennard Struff 6-3, 6-2, 6-2.

The 32-year-old will now face fifth seed Alexander Zverev in what will be his 13th appearance overall in the quarter-finals in Paris.

"It was tricky with the rain, but that's Paris," said the 2016 champion after playing in drizzly conditions.

"I'm really confident with my serve. I hope it continues like that."

Only Australian great Rod Laver has held all four majors at the same time twice before, after his calendar Grand Slams in 1962 and 1969.

German fifth seed Zverev reached his second successive Roland Garros quarter-final with a 3-6, 6-2, 6-2, 7-6 (7/5) win over Italy's Fabio Fognini.

Last year he achieved his best run at the Slams, making the quarter-finals where he was defeated by eventual runner-up Dominic Thiem.

"It's going to a great match and a tough battle against Novak, the world number one, it's going to be interesting," said Zverev who is 2-2 against Djokovic in his career.

However, he won their only meeting on clay in the Italian Open final in 2017 in straight sets and beat him in the ATP Finals later that year.

Japanese seventh seed Nishikori came back from 1-4 and 3-5 down in the final set to beat Benoit Paire of France and set-up a quarter-final clash on Tuesday against defending champion Rafael Nadal.



Romania's Simona Halep serves to Poland's Iga Swiatek during their fourth round match yesterday.



Serbia's Novak Djokovic returns the ball to Germany's Jan-Lennard Struff during their fourth round match at the French Open in Paris yesterday.

Nishikori won 6-2, 6-7 (8/10), 6-2, 6-7 (8/10), 7-5 in a shade under four hours to reach his third last-eight match at the French Open.

"He almost had it today," said Nishikori who had led two sets to one when the last-16 tie was suspended on Sunday.

"He served for the match at 5-3 but I just tried to fight and play one point at a time."

The 29-year-old Japanese could have wrapped it up in the fourth set when he had two match points but squandered both, the second on a double fault.

Paire, the world number 38 who was trying to make the quarter-final of a Slam for the

first time, was eventually undone by 15 double faults and 79 unforced errors.

Nishikori has only defeated 11-time French Open champion Nadal twice in 12 meetings with both of those wins coming on hard court.

The Spaniard, celebrating his 33rd birthday on Monday, has won all four of their meetings on clay.

"It's going to be a tough match, he's the greatest ever clay court player," said Nishikori. For Paire, it was an opportunity lost.

"I should have lost it in three or four sets but I should have won it in the fifth set," said the 30-year-old.

French interest in the singles ended for another year just a few hours later when 14th seed Gael Monfils was defeated 6-4, 6-4, 6-2 by Austrian fourth seed Thiem, the 2018 runner-up.

Thiem will be playing in his fourth successive quarter-final in Paris where he will face either 10th-seeded Russian Karen Khachanov or two-time semi-finalist Juan Martin del Potro.

The Austrian also pulled off a memorable 'tweener' shot between his legs.

"When it goes in, it's called a hot-shot," said the 25-year-old.

Halep reached her fourth French Open quarter-final with



Amanda Anisimova of the US reacts after winning her fourth round match against Spain's Aliona Bolsova.

a 45-minute thrashing of Polish teenager Iga Swiatek.

The Romanian third seed raced to a 6-1, 6-0 win as Swiatek failed to hold serve in the match.

Halep will face American 17-year-old Amanda Anisimova, who defeated Spain's Aliona Bolsova 6-3, 6-0, for a semi-final place.

"Kind of perfect," said Halep after her win.

World number 51 Anisimova, meanwhile, became the first player born in the 2000s — man or woman — to make a Grand Slam quarter-final.

The players who stunned top seed Naomi Osaka and 23-time major winner Serena Williams

got a taste of their own medicine.

American 14th seed Madison Keys reached the quarter-finals for the second successive year with a 6-2, 6-4 win over Kat-erina Siniakova, the conqueror of US and Australian Open winner Osaka.

Keys, who went on to reach the semi-finals in 2018, next faces Australian eighth seed Ashleigh Barty.

"I was really happy to close it out as playing three sets in these heavy conditions does not sound like much fun," said the 24-year-old Keys.

Barty beat Sofia Kenin, who stunned Williams in the third round, 6-3, 3-6, 6-0.

FOCUS

Djokovic favourite for title, says Laver



File picture of Novak Djokovic with Rod Laver during the Australian Open.

Reuters
Paris

Novak Djokovic is the favourite to win the French Open and become the second man ever to hold all four Grand Slam titles simultaneously on two separate occasions, according to Rod Laver, the man he is trying to match.

Laver achieved the feat in 1962 and 1969 with perfect calendar-year Grand Slams that no male player has achieved since, although Djokovic held all four, spanning consecutive years, when he claimed his first French Open title in 2016.

Serbian Djokovic reached the quarter-finals at Roland Garros yesterday with a straightforward win over Germany's Jan-Lennard Struff and will replicate his 2016 feat if he goes on to lift the title.

The world number one and top seed has yet to drop a set and is on course for a likely title-decider against holder and 11-time French winner Rafael Nadal.

"I'm probably favouring Novak at the moment and then Rafa," Australian great Laver, now 80, told reporters yesterday. "Then it goes down the line."

Laver thinks that should Djokovic win the French he could go on to match his own calendar-year Grand Slam.

"I marvel at someone like Novak with his ability and his con-

sistency," Laver said. "The way he plays the game, he doesn't go bang, bang, bang, ace, volleys. He wins every individual point from the baseline.

"He's won all four at one time...so he's already done that portion of it.

"He's just won the Australian, if he wins here he's on line to win the (calendar) Grand Slam. It's a long way to go, he's only got one so far. (The French) is probably, for him, the toughest because you've got so many players, whether it be Nadal or (Roger) Federer, you've got (Stan) Wawrinka that's just come through a huge match.

"But there are so many good players out there that are playing on clay. (The French) is probably the toughest one for a player to win if they're in line for winning a Grand Slam."

Federer, back at the French Open after a three-year absence, has breezed through to the quarter-finals without dropping a set but Laver doubts that the 37-year-old can win the title, as he did 10 years ago.

The Swiss is in line to face Nadal in the semi-finals.

"He's certainly in it and he's certainly playing well but I don't know if anyone has really pushed him yet," Laver said.

"You only have to win seven matches; that's all you have to do. You don't have to win 128 of them.

"I think someone like Rafa is going to be tough if Roger and those two meet."

SPOTLIGHT

‘That was weird’: Swiatek heads back to school



Poland's Iga Swiatek returns the ball to Romania's Simona Halep.

AFP
Paris

Poland's Iga Swiatek endured a 45-minute tennis education at the hands of French Open champion Simona Halep yesterday and then headed back to high school.

The world number 104, who only turned 18 on Friday, lost 6-1, 6-0 in a brutally one-sided fourth round clash where she failed to hold a single service game.

"It was a lack of experience and I couldn't get the ball in court but I will still remember the match," said Swiatek, one of three teenagers to make the last 16.

"I was surprised by her abil-

ity to play the ball in a direction I wasn't expecting but I am happy I got the chance to feel her game."

Swiatek knocked out Olympic champion Monica Puig on her way to the last 16 and admitted it was strange sharing the Court Philippe Chatrier with the defending champion.

"It's weird playing someone you have watched on TV all your childhood," she added.

"But I guess I wasn't there in my head. It was stress, I missed balls I never would miss in practice. I will learn from it."

Next up for Swiatek is the grasscourt season, but first a return to the classroom beckons.

"I have six tests to take before the grass season and then I will graduate next year."

BOTTOMLINE

Federer looks to avenge 2015 loss to Wawrinka

AFP
Paris

Four years after his defeat to Stan Wawrinka in the Roland Garros quarter-finals prompted him to call a temporary halt to his Paris aspirations, **Roger Federer** renews his rivalry with his oldest friend with a place in the semi-finals at stake today.

Federer, the 37-year-old 2009 champion in Paris, holds a 22-3 stranglehold over Wawrinka, 34.

But all three losses have come on clay, including in the last-eight at the 2015 French Open as Wawrinka went on to claim a second a second career Slam title.

"I have a bad memory of it. Stan beat me in three sets with his terrible shots," said Federer in reference to his compatriot's gaudy, checked shorts, compared by some to a tablecloth pattern.

Federer, a 20-time major winner, is the oldest man to make the quarter-finals of a Slam since Jimmy Connors at the 1991 US Open.

He has glided into his 12th Paris quar-



ter-final and 54th at the majors, spending just over seven hours on court.

Wawrinka, on the other hand, has needed 12.5 hours to get to his first Slam quarter-final since the 2017 French Open when he lost to Rafael Nadal in the final.

Just over five of his hours on court at Roland Garros were spent disposing of sixth seed Stefanos Tsitsipas in the last-16

in the fourth longest match ever played at the tournament.

Wawrinka's run to the quarter-finals would have looked unlikely this time last year when the legacy of two knee surgeries in 2017 saw him lose in the first round in Paris.

That saw him drop out of the top 250 in the world.