

TENNIS

AUSTRALIA LEADS US 2-0 IN DAVIS CUP QUARTERFINAL

BRISBANE: Nick Kyrgios finished off John Isner with his 20th ace to give Australia a 2-0 lead over the United States in their Davis Cup quarterfinal yesterday.

Kyrgios won 7-5, 7-6 (5), 7-6 (5) after Jordan Thompson upset Jack Sock 6-3, 3-6, 7-6 (4), 6-4 on a hard court at Pat Rafter Arena.

Australia can clinch the tie and advance to a semifinal in September against Italy or Belgium with a win today in doubles. Sam Groth and John Peers are scheduled to play the American pair of Sam Querrey and Steve Johnson. "Hopefully we can close it out tomorrow, it's been an unbelievable day," Kyrgios said.

"He's one of the best servers in the world, a proven player. I've been putting my head down and I returned really well." Isner said he ran into an in-form player. "I felt like I played well enough to beat anyone out there, but not Nick," Isner said. "He came up clutch."

Kyrgios came from a break down in the first set, broke Isner to love in the 11th game, and clinched the set on an ace. In the second, Isner saved two break points at 5-5 and Kyrgios won the last three points. In the third, Isner saved a match point serving at 5-6 and lost the last three points again.

The 79th-ranked Thompson won both of his singles in his Davis Cup debut against the Czech

Republic in February, but he was more impressive against No. 15 Sock, the highest-ranked player in the quarterfinal. Sock looked out of sorts at times and served two double faults to hand Thompson his first break at 5-3.

The American rallied to win the second set, then recovered from 4-1 down to level the third set before Thompson won it in a tiebreaker. Thompson clinched the match in the fourth set by breaking Sock's service twice.

"I just tried to wear him down, and I thought I was fit enough to do that," Thompson said. "I was not trying to go too big, that's not within my game." — AP

BASKETBALL

PAUL MILLSAP SCORES 26 TO LEAD HAWKS OVER CELTICS

ATLANTA: Paul Millsap scored 26 points, Tim Hardaway Jr. added 23 and the Atlanta Hawks beat the Boston Celtics 123-116 victory on Thursday. Isaiah Thomas scored 35 points, Jae Crowder had 24 and Marcus Smart 18 for the Celtics, who have dropped two games in a row after winning five of seven. Rookie Taurean Prince finished with a career-high 20 points, and Dennis Schroder added 18 for Atlanta. The Hawks had lost nine of 11. Boston fell 1 1/2 games behind Cleveland for the East lead, but is still two games ahead of third-place Toronto. Fifth-place Atlanta, which led by 20 in the third, moved one game ahead of Milwaukee. The regular season ends next week.

BULLS 102, 76ERS 90

Jimmy Butler had 19 points, 10 rebounds and 10 assists and helped give Chicago's playoff hopes a needed boost. The Bulls, Miami and Indiana entered the night with 38-40 records and in a three-way tie for seventh in the Eastern Conference playoff race. Butler had his fourth career triple-double. Rajon Rondo sat out with a sprained right wrist and Dwyane Wade missed another game with a fractured right elbow. Wade, who scrimmaged Wednesday for the first time since he was injured on March 15, could return as early as today at Brooklyn. Wade, who averaged 18.6 points in his first season with his hometown team, had been ruled out for the season. Rondo was hurt Tuesday night in a loss to New York. Timothe Luwawu-Cabarrot led the 76ers with 18 points.

WIZARDS 106, KNICKS 103

Bradley Beal scored 25 points and made the tiebreaking 3-pointer with 49 seconds left in Washington's victory over New York. John Wall added 24 points and eight assists for the Wizards, who blew a 12-point lead in the fourth quarter but recovered to improve to 48-31, tying Toronto for third place in the Eastern Conference. Washington is trying for its first 50-win season since 1978-79. Carmelo Anthony scored 23 points for the Knicks.

PACERS 104, BUCKS 89

Paul George had 23 points and 10 rebounds and Indiana beat Milwaukee to keep its playoff hopes alive. Jeff Teague added 15 points and seven assists for the Pacers. Giannis Antetokounmpo led Milwaukee with 25 points, seven rebounds and six assists.

MAGIC 115, NETS 107

Elfrid Payton had 22 points, 11 assists and five rebounds to lead Orlando. Aaron Gordon added 21 points, Jodie Meeks had 20, and Nikola Vucevic finished with 18 points and 12 rebounds. Jeremy Lin led Brooklyn with 32 points.

TRAIL BLAZERS 105, TIMBERWOLVES 98

Allen Crabbe had 25 points, including a career-high eight 3-pointers, and the Portland Trail Blazers snapped a two-game losing streak. Damian Lillard added 22 points, nine rebounds and eight assists for Portland, which held onto the eighth and final playoff spot in the Western Conference ahead of the Denver Nuggets with three games to go. Andrew Wiggins had 36 points for the Timberwolves, who have already been eliminated. — AP



ATLANTA: Boston Celtics guard Isaiah Thomas (4) passes as he is defended by Atlanta Hawks forward Thabo Sefolosha (25) in the first half of an NBA basketball game on Thursday, in Atlanta. — AP

RUGBY

NZ WIN HK SEVENS OPENER

HONG KONG: New Zealand overcame the disruption of losing captain Scott Curry for the entire Hong Kong Sevens to beat Wales 19-7 in their opening match yesterday.

Curry withdrew from the three-day event, the most prestigious in the sevens rugby world series, because of flu, forcing the team into a last-minute reshuffle.

Sam Dickson was promoted into the squad for the stricken Curry while DJ Forbes took over as captain, and marked his promotion by scoring one of his team's three tries in the Pool C match.

Fiji, which has beaten New Zealand in the last two Hong Kong finals, made an ominous start by thrashing Japan 36-0, spoiling a landmark day for Asian rugby after Japan's women pulled off a major upset by beating South Africa to win the women's final.

Fiji, the Olympic champion which has won a record 16 Hong Kong titles, opened the scoring after less than a minute when Jerry Tuwai scored the first of his two tries in another Pool C encounter.

England, winner of the last round of the series in Vancouver, was also impressive in crushing South Korea 52-0 in Pool A. Oliver Lindsay-Hague and Charlton Kerr bagged two tries apiece but they were outshone by Dan Norton, whose try lifted his career tally to 245, overtaking Kenya's Collins Injera as the all-time leading try-scorer in the world series.

Injera did not add to his tally of 244 as Kenya surprisingly lost to Canada in Pool B. Kenya looked to have earned a late draw when Nelson Oyoo scored under the crossbar with less than a minute to go to tie the score at 14-14, but ill-discipline let them down as Canada stole the win 17-14 with a penalty from Nathan Hirayama after the siren.

World series leader South Africa defeated France 17-10 in Pool B, Australia edged Samoa 22-19 in Pool A, Argentina beat Scotland 22-14 in Pool D, and the United States beat Russia 14-7 in Pool D with speedster Perry Baker notching his 25th try of the season. The remaining pool matches are on Saturday, with the knockout games tomorrow. — AP