

## Sports

# Federer beats Kudla to book 12th career final at Halle

## Roger to face Croatian Borna Coric

**HALLE WESTFALEN:** Roger Federer booked his 12th career final at the ATP Halle grass tournament yesterday, beating qualifier Denis Kudla 7-6 (7/1), 7-5. The Swiss needs to win the title on Sunday - it would be his tenth at the event - to remain world number one heading into Wimbledon.

He will face Croatian Borna Coric, who advanced 2-3 when Spanish fourth seed Roberto Bautista Agut had to retire after slipping on the grass and injuring himself. Federer's win over Kudla was his 20th in a row on grass, dating to June, 2017. He sat out the clay court season and began on grass last week with a title at Stuttgart.

"I'm very happy. I've never played back-to-back finals on grass in the Wimbledon run-up," Federer said. "This is a first for me." Federer is back in a familiar spot in Halle, which models its Centre Court after its namesake at the All England club, as he works to fine-tune with a Wimbledon title defence starting a week from Monday. "I was happy to win Stuttgart and happy to make another final here. My comeback (after skipping the clay) has been rather successful." "I hope I can find my best game. I've said you usually start playing your best towards the end of a tournament, so hopefully I'm gonna have a good final."

Federer needed just under 90 minutes to get the job done and hold off the 109th-ranked Kudla, who had not lost a set going into the semi-final. Taming Kudla was

no easy task, with Federer losing a break after taking an early 2-0 lead.

The first set went into a tiebreaker where the 20-time Grand Slam winner was able to step his game up a gear, racing to 6-0 in the decider and taking it two points later with his seventh ace.

The top-seeded Swiss kept the pressure on Kudla in the second, but expressed a moment of frustration as he drove a ball over the stadium walls after losing a point in the third game of the second set. "I hit out of the stadium every other day in practise," he said. "But it doesn't happen much on live TV. "But I find it very funny and comical, it makes me smile inside. This is a tough court with a lot of bad bounces.

### 'WINNING MENTALITY'

"But I told myself in the set to shake it off, don't let things bother me, don't get too bad as it happens to both. "I want to do well and win, I have a winning mentality and sometimes I can get unhappy or frustrated."

Federer gained the crucial service break for a 6-5 lead as Kudla returned long, and the Swiss closed out the victory a game later on the first of two match points. The 36-year-old has reached the final four in each of his last 14 Halle appearances.

Coric, the world number 34 will be playing his first grass final and stands 1-3 in ATP finals on all surfaces. His lone win came in 2017 in Casablanca. He has got



HALLE: Roger Federer of Switzerland returns a ball to Denis Kudla from the US during their match at the ATP tennis tournament in Halle, western Germany, yesterday. — AFP

twice to Federer, most recently in the Indian Wells semi-finals last March. "My chances are not big for sure, obviously," he said. "But I'm going to go out there and enjoy it."

"I didn't expect this at the beginning of the week. Today I was a little bit lucky. I'm sorry for Roberto. "But I can rest a little bit now which is good. I'm going to try to win. That's for sure." — AFP

## Ireland edge Wallabies in thriller to win series

**SYDNEY:** Ireland clung on in a titanic battle to down the Wallabies 20-16 and win their first Test series in Australia in 39 years in Sydney yesterday. Star fly-half Johnny Sexton kicked a pressure penalty a minute from full-time to clinch victory after Australia had fought back from eight points down in the second half.

Ireland held on to win a three-match series for the first time in the southern hemisphere, to add to their Grand Slam Six Nations victory earlier this year. Ireland, who trail only world champions New Zealand in the international standings, hadn't won a series in Australia since they swept a two-Test tour in 1979.

But Joe Schmidt's team fought back from losing the opening game 18-9 in Brisbane to win the final two Tests in Melbourne and Sydney and end their 39-year away win drought against Australia. In a gripping second half, the Wallabies clawed back from 17-9 down to close to within one point before Sexton landed his fifth penalty of the night to seal the win.

It was a game dripping with controversy as both teams had a player sent to the sin bin and also lost their skippers, Australia's Michael Hooper and Ireland's Peter O'Mahony, to injury in the first half.

The Irish came close to beating another southern hemisphere power, South Africa, in a three-Test series two years ago only to go down 2-1, making this a prized scalp in a brilliant year. But it was a chastening result for Australia, who have lost a home series for the second time in two years after going down 3-0 to England in 2016.

The Wallabies suffered an early blow when skipper Hooper injured his left leg in a clean-out and limped from the field, to be replaced by Pete Samu. Ireland were reduced to 14 men when winger Jacob Stockdale received a yellow card for leading with his elbow to the throat of Wallabies scrum-half Nick Phipps midway through the half.

Bernard Foley kicked the penalty to put Australia in front 6-3. There was controversy in the 31st minute when Israel Folau went for a high ball with O'Mahony, who crashed heavily to the ground. After intervention from the television match official, Folau was given a yellow card and O'Mahony was taken from the field on a medicab. Conor Murray had a try disallowed by the TMO but in the same incident Adam Coleman was penalised for offside, giving Sexton the easy task of putting Ireland 9-6 ahead near half-time.

Foley and Sexton exchanged penalties, both for offside, as the Irish turned 12-9 ahead. Ireland once again dominated territory, possession and the run metres in the opening half and at one stage ran through 17 phases in the opposition quarter before the Australians got the ball clear.

The Wallabies again paid for ill-discipline, conceding eight penalties in the controlled Irish attacks. Ireland went on the attack straight after the resumption and after a pinpoint kick from Sexton were deep in Australia's territory.

The forwards piled in for a pushover try to CJ Stander off a lineout win to open up an eight-point lead after 44 minutes. But the Wallabies hit back after Foley's stab kick behind the Irish defence was seized by winger Marika Koroibete, who beat Rob Kearney and took Sexton over the line to score.

Foley converted for the Wallabies to close to within one point, 17-16, after 54 minutes. But Sexton had the final word with a pressure kick from wide out after replacement hooker Tolu Latu was penalised in a maul. —AFP

## Braves come up short in extras against Orioles

**ATLANTA:** Baltimore's Manny Machado broke a 14-game homerless streak with a two-run shot in the 15th inning to give the Orioles a 10-7 win over the host Atlanta Braves on Friday. Craig Gentry was hit by a pitch to open the inning and was sacrificed to second. Machado connected on an 0-2 pitch from reliever Peter Moylan (0-1) and placed it in the visitors' bullpen in left field for his 19th homer. It was Machado's first long ball since June 2, ending his longest homerless streak of the season. Atlanta forced extras by scoring four times in the bottom of the ninth against Baltimore closer Zach Britton. He loaded the bases and allowed an RBI single to Ozzie Albies, a two-run single to Freddie Freeman and an RBI double to Nick Markakis, whose liner got over the head of right fielder Jace Peterson. Freeman tried to score but was thrown out at the plate. Baltimore had taken a four-run lead by scoring six times in the top of the ninth against Atlanta relievers Dan Winkler and Sam Freeman. The Orioles got an RBI single from Danny Valencia, an RBI double from Jonathan Schoop and a Chris Davis sacrifice fly. Caleb Joseph added a run-scoring double, Steve Wilkerson knocked in a run with a single, and Craig Gentry drove in a run with a base hit to complete the rally.

### RED SOX 14, MARINERS 10

J.D. Martinez went 4-for-5 with a home run and five RBIs, including a tiebreaking two-run single with the bases loaded in the seventh inning, as Boston rallied to defeat visiting Seattle. The Mariners blew a five-run lead for the second time in three games to lose their season-high fifth straight. They also wasted a big night from designated hitter Nelson Cruz, who went 4-for-5 with two homers and seven RBIs. Cruz, who now has 20 home runs this season, hit three-run blasts in the first and fourth innings. Ryon Healy added a solo shot, his 14th, for Seattle.

### BREWERS 2, CARDINALS 1

Jesus Aguilar's second homer of the game with one out in the bottom of the ninth inning lifted host Milwaukee past St. Louis. Aguilar blasted his 16th homer off Bud Norris (3-2), lining an 0-2 fastball on the outer half of the plate over the wall in right-center. The long ball gave Milwaukee its third straight win. Aguilar's homer in the bottom of the seventh not only evened the score, but it also ended rookie Jack Flaherty's bid at history. Aguilar golfed a low slider into the Milwaukee bullpen in left with one out for the Brewers' first hit. Flaherty struck out 13, matching a career high, in seven innings while walking two. He gave up just the one run and one hit.

### ROYALS 1, ASTROS 0

Rosell Herrera followed a marvelous defensive play in the bottom of the eighth inning with a run-scoring triple in the top of the ninth as visiting Kansas City snapped a nine-game losing skid in blanking Houston. Herrera scored Adalberto Mondesi with his drive to center field off Ken Giles (0-2), who surrendered a leadoff single to Mondesi to open the ninth. Herrera began the eighth by snatching a home run from Houston's Alex Bregman, timing his jump in right field to make the catch at the wall. Bregman went 0-for-4 as his streak of



ATLANTA: Freddie Freeman #5 of the Atlanta Braves is tagged out at home by Caleb Joseph #36 of the Baltimore Orioles during the ninth inning at SunTrust Park on Friday in Atlanta, Georgia. — AFP

reaching base safely was snapped at 31 games.

### RANGERS 8, TWINS 1

Shin-Soo Choo extended his on-base streak to 35 games with two hits, including a two-run homer, and Mike Minor gave up just one run over six innings as Texas cruised to its sixth straight win by beating Minnesota in Minneapolis. Choo finished with three RBIs. Nomar Mazara and Adrian Beltre each had two hits and drove in two runs, and Robinson Chirinos also had two hits for the Rangers, who had lost seven in a row before starting their win streak. Mazara has 11 hits and seven RBIs over his past five games. Minor (5-4) faced the minimum 15 batters over the first five innings, allowing just a first inning two-out single to Brian Dozier, who was easily gunned down by left fielder Joey Gallo trying to stretch it into a double. The Texas left-hander allowed three hits and walked two to go along with three strikeouts while picking up his first win in four starts.

### ROCKIES 11, MARLINS 3

Nolan Arenado homered for the fourth consecutive game. Jon Gray struck out 12 in seven innings, and Colorado routed Miami in Denver. Arenado finished with three hits. After going hitless in the first game of the current seven-game homestand, Arenado is 10-for-17 with four home runs and 11 RBIs over the past four games. Tom Murphy had three hits and two RBIs for Colorado, which has won a season-high four in a row at home. Derek Dietrich homered among his three hits, and J.T. Realmuto also had three hits for the Marlins, who have lost three in a row.

### ANGELS 2, BLUE JAYS 1

Andrew Heaney threw seven strong innings, and Los Angeles made two first-inning runs stand up in a victory over Toronto in Anaheim, Calif. Heaney (4-5) held the Blue Jays scoreless for six innings before giving up a run in the seventh,

but Cam Bedrosian (eighth inning) and Blake Parker (ninth inning, ninth save) finished it off. Mike Trout started as the Angels' designated hitter for the third consecutive game, still feeling the effects of a sprained right index finger. He went 0-for-3 with two strikeouts.

### PADRES 6, GIANTS 2

Clayton Kershaw pitched six strong innings to win his fourth consecutive start, helping San Diego snap a five-game losing streak with a win at San Francisco. Kershaw (7-6) combined with five relievers on a five-hitter, snapping the Giants' three-game winning streak in the process. Cory Spangenberg scored twice, and Eric Hosmer and Manuel Margot each drove in two runs for the Padres.

### AS 11, WHITE SOX 2 (GAME 1)

Franklin Barreto hit two home runs and racked up six RBIs, and Sean Manaea delivered a strong start as Oakland won the opener of a doubleheader in Chicago for its fifth straight victory. The White Sox lost their eighth in a row. Barreto hit a three-run homer off James Shields in the second inning to give Oakland a 4-0 lead. The As have now homered in 22 straight road games, a franchise record. Barreto tacked on another three-run blast in the eighth inning, his third of the season-all in his past two games. Khris Davis, Jed Lowrie and Jonathan Lucroy each had RBIs for Oakland, which took advantage of three White Sox errors.

### WHITE SOX 6, AS 4 (GAME 2)

Omar Narvaez went 3-for-4 with two RBIs, and Chicago snapped its season-worst skid with a victory over Oakland to earn a doubleheader split. Tim Anderson went 2-for-4 with a homer and three runs as Chicago beat the Athletics for the first time in five meetings this season. Adam Engel added a two-run single for the White Sox. Matt Olson homered and drove in two runs for the Athletics. Khris Davis contributed a two-run single. — Reuters

## World School Basketball Championship

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait Schools Basketball National team left for Serbia to take part in the World School Basketball Championship (3X3).

The team delegation is headed by the P.E. supervisor general, Waleed Ayeshe and the coach, Khalid Najem. Notably, this is Kuwait's first participation in the championship to mark Kuwait School Federation's first international participations.

