

# Sports

100-year-old runner from India inspires at US Masters Games



Rooney to end career after 2018 World Cup



WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 31 2016

NO REGRETS FOR LEGEND KEANE AS HE PREPARES FINAL BOW Page 18



NEW YORK: Novak Djokovic of Serbia returns against Jerzy Janowicz of Poland during their 2016 US Open 2016 Men's Singles match at the USTA Billie Jean King National Tennis Center on Monday in New York. — AFP

## DJOKOVIC BEATS SCARE, NADAL EASES

NEW YORK: Defending champion Novak Djokovic overcame an arm injury scare and long-time rival Rafael Nadal shone in 33-degree heat as the US Open showcased its \$650 million upgrade on Monday.

World number one Djokovic, also the 2011 winner in New York and chasing his third major of the year, defeated Jerzy Janowicz of Poland 6-3, 5-7, 6-2, 6-1. Nadal, the 2010 and 2013 champion and seeded to face Djokovic in the semi-finals, eased to a 6-1, 6-4, 6-2 win over Denis Istomin of Uzbekistan.

In the women's event, second seeded Angelique Kerber, the Australian Open champion, needed just 33 minutes to progress but Roland Garros winner Garbine Muguruza required three sets and a visit from the doctor before she survived. Djokovic had admitted that he was "not 100 percent" after suffering a wrist injury on the eve of the Olympics where he was a first-round loser. But it was the upper right arm that bothered the Serb on Monday night as he played his first Grand Slam match since his shock third round exit at Wimbledon.

The 29-year-old needed treatment after just five

games of the first set but eventually pulled through against Janowicz who had played just two matches all year due to a knee injury. "It was hard to follow Phil Collins," joked Djokovic in reference to the lengthy opening ceremony which featured the veteran English rocker under the new \$150 million roof on Arthur Ashe Stadium.

On his arm injury, Djokovic added: "It's never easy to play at this level throughout the year. There are periods where you aren't 100 percent." Djokovic next faces Jiri Vesely, the Czech who knocked him out of Monte Carlo this year. Nadal's reward for a fifth win in five meetings with Istomin is a match-up with Italian veteran Andreas Seppi. A wrist injury forced the Spaniard into an early retirement at the French Open and sidelined him from Wimbledon before a gold medal run in the doubles at the Olympics helped ease his misery.

"The most important thing is that I am here in New York. Injuries are part of the career. I had a hard time this year," said the fourth seed.

Canadian fifth seed Milos Raonic, the runner-up to Andy Murray at Wimbledon, overcame German danger-

man Dustin Brown 7-5, 6-4, 6-4. Kerber needed just over 30 minutes to get her pursuit of a first US Open title off to a winning start.

The German was leading Polona Hercog 6-0, 1-0 when the Slovenian called it quits having won just nine points. Kerber, a semi-finalist in 2011, next faces Mirjana Lucic-Baroni of Croatia. Muguruza carved out a gritty 2-6, 6-0, 6-3 win over Belgian qualifier Elise Mertens, ranked at 137. But the French Open champion needed court-side treatment from a doctor after dropping the first set.

### DOCTOR'S ORDERS

The consultation certainly worked as she reeled off the next seven games to lay the foundation for her win. Muguruza plays Anastasiya Sevastova of Latvia for a place in the last 32.

French 13th seed Richard Gasquet, a semi-finalist three years ago, was the day's biggest casualty. He went down to 6-2, 6-2, 6-3 to British world number 84 Kyle Edmund. Also exiting was Olympic champion Monica

Puig with the Puerto Rican losing 6-4, 6-2 to China's Zheng Saisai. Kayla Day, just 16 and ranked at a lowly 374 in the world, was 6-2, 4-2 up on Madison Brengle when her fellow American quit with an injury.

Day next faces American eighth seed Madison Keys who beat compatriot Alison Riske 4-6, 7-6 (7/5), 6-2 in a tie which ended at 1.48am, the latest finish to a women's match in tournament history.

Croatian seventh seed Marin Cilic, the 2014 champion and winner in Cincinnati last week, eased past Brazil's Rogerio Dutra Silva 6-4, 7-5, 6-1.

Flamboyant French 10th seed Gael Monfils took his summer hardcourt record to 15-2 with a 6-4, 6-2, 7-6 win over Gilles Muller of Luxemburg. Monfils almost suffered a freak accident when a giant court-side clock fell towards him as he collided with the back wall, chasing down a Muller shot. The Flushing Meadows complex has been radically and expensively remodelled for this year. However, the old Grandstand court, due to be demolished after the tournament, was pressed into action after the new Court 10 was deemed unplayable. — AFP



NEW YORK: Denisa Allertova of the Czech Republic hits the ball against Ana Ivanovic of Serbia during their 2016 US Open Women's Single Match at the USTA Billie Jean King National Tennis Center in New York yesterday. — AFP

## OLYMPIC GOLD MEDALIST MONICA PUIG OUT OF US OPEN

NEW YORK: Sure, Monica Puig would have loved another week between the Olympics and the US Open to "come down from the high" of becoming Puerto Rico's first gold medalist.

Then again, that's not how the tennis calendar works. Puig realizes that if she wants to climb back to those heights, she'll need to figure out this sort of turnaround. For now, she's a 22-year-old who was seeded 32nd at the US Open and lost her first-round match in straight sets. Zheng Saisai, ranked 61st, upset Puig 6-4, 6-2 on Monday.

"These are new waters for me, new territory," Puig said. "I'm going to have to start getting used to it." She noted that Angelique Kerber, the player she beat in the gold-medal match, was able to come right back from a draining run in Rio de Janeiro to reach the final at Cincinnati. Kerber, in contrast, is 28 and an Australian Open champ and Wimbledon runner-up this year.

"She's been there," Puig said. "She knows what it's like. She knows she's No. 2 in the world. She's tested the waters out a little bit. "I'm brand new to this."

And back when Kerber was brand new to being a major champion just a few months ago, she lost in the first round of her next Grand Slam. Garbine Muguruza, also 22, struggled as well following her French Open title.

"A lot of people go through this," Puig

said. "It's not just me."

She upset Kerber, Muguruza and a third major champ, Petra Kvitova, on her stunning run to gold. Less than a week ago, Puig was in Puerto Rico, riding in a parade with other Olympians through streets packed with admirers - her victory a joyous respite from the island's economic crisis.

Then it was back to the grind of tennis. When she took the court Monday, with plenty of Puerto Rican fans cheering her on, she knew she wouldn't be viewed as the player who has never made it past the fourth round at a major or the second round at the US Open.

"A lot of pressure, a lot of expectation," Puig said. "Once it starts becoming a little bit more of a habit," she added, "then I'll feel comfortable."

Zheng, another 22-year-old, upset Agnieszka Radwanska at the Olympics. She'll be seeking to reach the third round at a Grand Slam for the first time when she faces 59th-ranked Katerina Bondarenko.

And Puig will get back to working on how to start making some magical runs at the majors. "I need to keep racking up as much experience as I can," Puig said. "You know what? This isn't going to be the last of me. I know I'm going to keep working hard. The Olympics was something that happened because of all my hard work." — AP