



CALIFORNIA: Andy Murray, of Great Britain, attempts to return a shot from Federico Delbonis, of Argentina, during their match at the BNP Paribas Open tennis tournament on Monday, March 14, 2016 in Indian Wells. —AP

WAWRINKA ADVANCES; MURRAY CRASHES OUT OF INDIAN WELLS

INDIAN WELLS: French Open champ Stan Wawrinka reached the Indian Wells fourth round while world No 2 Andy Murray suffered a shock third-round exit at the hands of clay-court specialist Federico Delbonis on Monday. Wawrinka toppled Andrey Kuznetsov 6-4, 7-6 (7/5) in the third round of the ATP and WTA hardcourt tournament and two-time Grand Slam winner Murray lost 6-4, 4-6, 7-6 (7/3) to 53rd ranked Argentinian Delbonis. Wawrinka, who turns 31 later this month, has won two titles this year in Chennai and Dubai but has never made it past the quarter-finals in Indian Wells, one of the biggest events on the tennis calendar outside of the four Grand Slams.

Wawrinka next faces 15th seeded David Goffin of Belgium, who beat Guido Pella 4-6, 6-3, 6-2. Murray's exit left things wide open in the bottom half of the men's draw, where Wawrinka, Richard Gasquet, Marin Cilic, Milos Raonic and Tomas Berdych all advanced. Wawrinka is on a nine-match win streak in finals after beating Marcos Baghdatis in Dubai. He captured his third consecutive Chennai crown in January. Last year he won four titles, including his stunning 4-6, 6-4, 6-3, 6-4 upset win over world No. 1 Novak Djokovic to claim his first French Open crown.

Murray, 28, was playing in his first ATP Tour tournament since losing to Djokovic in the final of the Australian Open in January. "It was a tough one to lose," Murray said of the loss to Delbonis. "I fought hard to get into a winning position. I couldn't go for my shots and when I did I made mistakes." Murray, who became a father on February 7 with the birth of his daughter Sophia Oliva, looked rusty after his

layoff. Murray's forehand on match point sailed well wide and long, ending the two hour, 46 minute contest on Stadium Court. "He came up with some good passing shots. I could have done a bit more with the volleys and my serve," Murray said. "He moved better than what I expected."

French eighth seed Gasquet continued his mastery over Alexandr Dogoplov by rallying for a 2-6, 6-2, 6-1 win to improve to 3-0 lifetime against the 29th ranked Ukrainian. With his victory in Montpellier earlier this year, Gasquet moved to second place among Frenchmen in the Open Era with 13 career titles. Canada's Raonic barely had to break a sweat against Australian Bernard Tomic, who retired in the second set with a wrist injury. Raonic is trying to improve on his previous best performance in Indian Wells, a semi-final loss to Roger Federer last year. The 25-year-old Canadian, winner in Brisbane this year, was up 3-0 in the second set in the third round tie, after cruising through the first at 6-2, when Tomic called it quits.

Azarenka advances

In women's action, Indian Wells 2012 champion Victoria Azarenka, seeded 13th, defeated China's Zhang Shuai 6-4, 6-3. But the event lost another top seed as Swiss seventh seed Belinda Bencic fell to Slovakia's Magdalena Rybarikova 6-4, 3-6, 6-3. Johanna Konta rolled to a 6-4, 6-1 win over Denisa Allertova, who sent women's second seed Angelique Kerber crashing out on Saturday. Just three of the top seven women's seeds are left in the draw, including world number one Serena Williams.—APF



Sheikh Duaij, Sheikh Salman and Sheikhha Naema pose for a group photo.

KUWAIT INTERNATIONAL TABLE TENNIS TOURNAMENT KICKS OFF

By Abdellatif Sharaa

KUWAIT: Under the patronage of HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, the 12th International Table Tennis Tournament (Salwa Cup), kicks off today and will continue until March 20th. 100 men and 85 women will represent 34 countries during the tournament being held at the Salwa Sports Club in Qurain area. Vice Chairperson of the Higher Organizing Committee Sheikhha Naema Al-Ahmad said the tournament's continuation indicates its success as it carries the name of Sheikhha Salwa Sabah Al-Ahmad.

Sheikhha Naema said the tournament now tops the international professional tourna-

ments, and has taken top spot. She wished all delegates a pleasant stay in Kuwait. She also thanked the Information Minister, State Minister for Youth Affairs Sheikh Salman Sabah Al-Saleem Al-Humoud Al-Sabah, as well as Director General of Public Sports Authority Sheikh Ahmad Al-Mansour for their supports.

Meanwhile, the tournament director Sanad Al-Ajmi said that the tournament carries a dear name and hoped players compete strongly for the titles in all six categories. HOC member Abdelwahab Al-Kandari said all players are convinced that the tournament is the best in ranking and prize money. The men and women singles matches will start today by 10:00 am. All top 40 ranked players will participate.



WARRIORS MARK CURRY'S BIRTHDAY WITH 60TH WIN

HOOD, JAZZ SHOOT DOWN CAVALIERS

OAKLAND: Stephen Curry had 27 points, five rebounds and five assists on his 28th birthday as the Golden State Warriors beat the New Orleans Pelicans 125-107 on Monday for their record 49th straight regular-season home victory. Draymond Green added 14 points and 12 rebounds for the Warriors (60-6), who are 31-0 at Oracle Arena this season. With 16 games to go, they remain one game ahead of the 1995-96 Chicago Bulls' pace in their record 72-win season. Birthday songs, MVP chants and a serenade and piece of cake from his toddler daughter, Riley, made it a great night for Curry - all after his fifth Western Conference Player of the Week award this season and second in two weeks. He shot 4 for 9 from 3-point range and 10 of 16 overall. Anthony Davis had 22 points and 11 rebounds for the Pelicans.

THUNDER 128, TRAIL BLAZERS 94

Russell Westbrook had 17 points, 16 assists and 10 rebounds in his 12th triple-double of the season as Oklahoma City beat Portland. Westbrook had the 31st triple-double of his career and matched Sacramento's Rajon Rondo for the most assists without a turnover in a game this season. Enes Kanter scored a season-high 26 points, Kevin Durant added 20 and Serge Ibaka had 15 for the Thunder, whose 45th win matched their victory total from last season. Oklahoma City shot a season-high 59 percent from the field. Damian Lillard scored 21 points and C.J. McCollum added 15 for the Trail Blazers, who have lost five of seven. Portland shot a season-low 34.1 percent from the field.

JAZZ 94, CAVALIERS 85

Rodney Hood scored 28 points as Utah, playing without leading scorer Gordon Hayward, beat Cleveland. The Jazz remained two games behind the Houston Rockets and Dallas Mavericks for the last Western Conference play-off spot, while the Cavaliers stayed 2 1/2 games ahead of Toronto in the East. The Jazz led most of the game but went into the fourth quarter tied at 66. Utah went on a 16-2 run midway through the period, led by 10 points from Trey Lyles, to take an 86-73 lead. The Cavs never recovered. Hayward missed his first game of the season with plantar fasciitis in his right foot but Hood picked up the slack. LeBron James had 23 points and 12 rebounds for the Cavaliers and Kyrie Irving chipped in 15 points.

MAVERICKS 107, HORNETS 96

Chandler Parsons had 24 points and nine rebounds as Dallas ended Charlotte's season-high, seven-game winning streak. Dirk Nowitzki added 23 points and 11 rebounds for the Mavericks, who moved back above .500 after losing five straight games. Deron Williams chipped in with 15 points. Kemba Walker had 25 points and nine assists, Nicolas Batum scored 20 points and Marvin Williams added 19 for the Hornets. Dallas, which was just 3 of 20 from 3-point range in the first three quarters, hit 6 of 10 3s in the fourth quarter. After averaging more than 36 points in the first quarter in its previous three games, Charlotte made just 27 percent of its shots from the field and 43 percent from the foul line in the first half to fall behind 52-33.

BULLS 109, RAPTORS 107

Reserve Doug McDermott scored 29 points to lead Chicago to its ninth straight victory over Toronto. E'Twaun Moore and Nikola Mirotic added 17 points apiece as Chicago swept Toronto in the series for the second straight season, handing the Raptors just their second loss in their last 16 games at home. Toronto's last win against Chicago was on Dec 31, 2013. Jimmy Butler scored 13 points on 5-of-18 shooting after missing three games because of knee soreness. Kyle Lowry had 33 points and 11 rebounds for Toronto, which also got 27 points from DeMar DeRozan. McDermott nearly matched the season-best 30 points he scored against the Raptors in a 116-106 win last month in Chicago. The second-year forward hasn't scored more than 20 points in any other game this season.

ROCKETS 130, GRIZZLIES 81

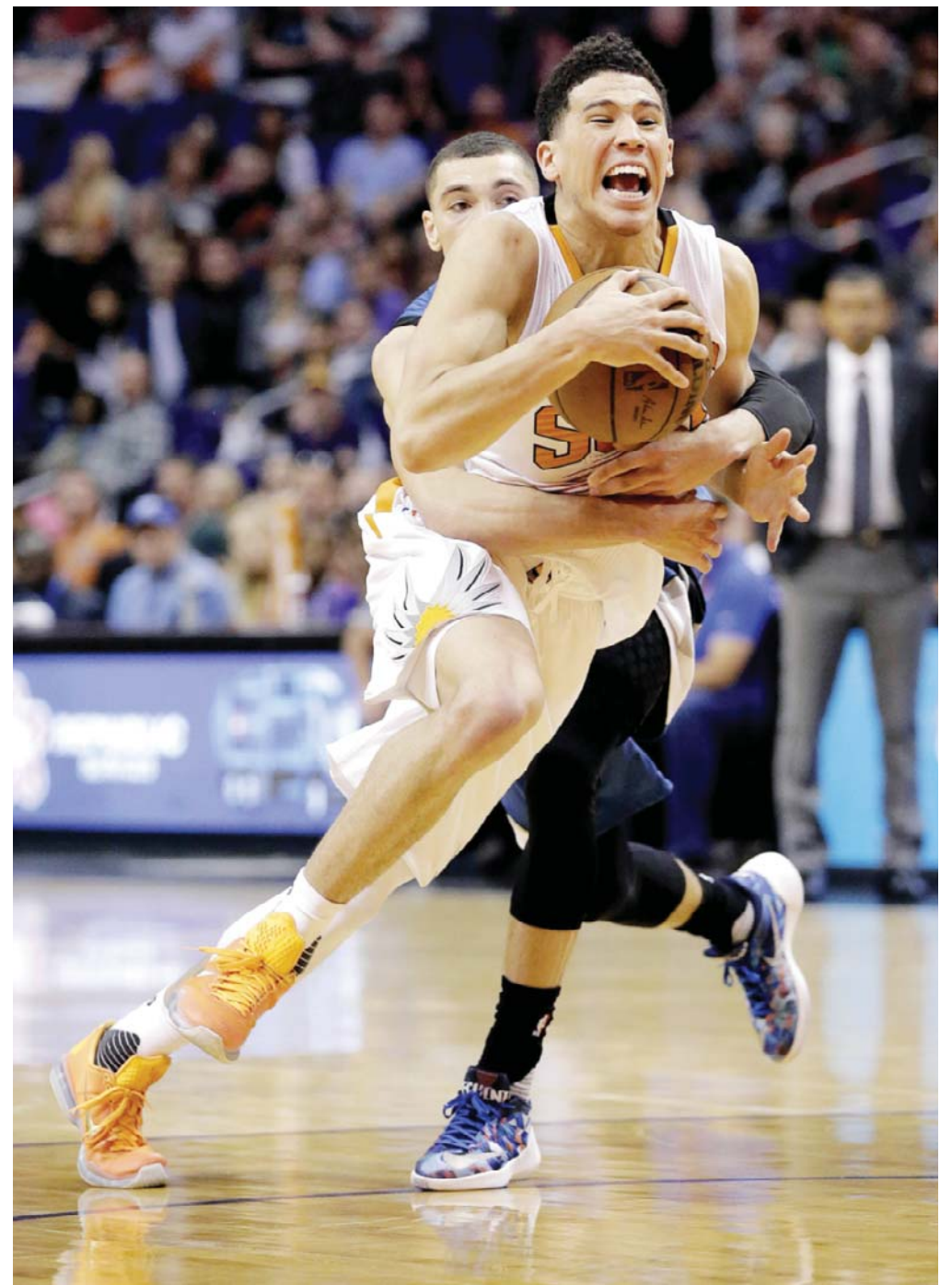
Donatas Motiejunas scored 18 points and Trevor Ariza 16 as Houston coasted to its most lopsided win of the season. The Rockets, who never trailed, were up by 24 at halftime and used a 32-point third quarter to extend the lead to 97-54. Houston cleared the bench to start the fourth quarter with the game well in hand. The largest margin of victory in franchise history is 52 points and the Rockets almost tied it on Monday but JaMychal Green made a 3-pointer with 5.2 seconds left to cut the lead to 49. Lance Stephenson missed the game with a sprained right wrist, joining a bevy of other players sitting out with injuries including Mike Conley, Zach Randolph, Marc Gasol, Chris Andersen, Brandon Wright and Vince Carter.

HEAT 124, NUGGETS 119

Justise Winslow scored 20 points and fellow rookie Josh Richardson added 17 as Miami held off Denver. Dwyane Wade scored 19 points and Joe Johnson added 18 for the Heat. Hassan Whiteside finished with another double-double off the bench, scoring 12 of his 18 points in the fourth quarter and adding 10 rebounds. Kenneth Faried matched the best single-game shooting effort in the NBA this season, going 11 for 11 and finishing with 24 points and 11 rebounds. Emmanuel Mudiay had 23 points and 10 assists for Denver, which had its four-game winning streak snapped. Gary Harris finished with 18 for Denver.

WIZARDS 124, PISTONS 81

John Wall had 15 points and 12 assists as Washington routed Detroit to end a five-game losing streak and gain ground in the playoff race. Nene scored a season-high 20 points off the bench to lead seven Wizards players in double figures during Washington's biggest win and Detroit's worst loss of the season. Bradley Beal added 12 points in his return after missing three games with a sprained pelvis, helping the 10th-



PHOENIX: Phoenix Suns' Devin Booker (front) is fouled by Minnesota Timberwolves' Zach LaVine during the second half of an NBA basketball game on Monday, March 14, 2016. The Suns won 107-104. — AP

place Wizards close within 2 1/2 games of a play-off spot. Kentavious Caldwell-Pope scored 18 points for the Pistons, who fell to 0-3 against the Wizards and have allowed 110 or more points in three straight games.

SUNS 107, TIMBERWOLVES 104

Mirza Teletovic made a 3-pointer with 1.2 seconds left to lift Phoenix over Minnesota. PJ Tucker scored a career-high 23 points and Teletovic had 21 for the Suns, who won at home

for the first time since Feb. 27 and just the second in almost two months. The Timberwolves (21-46) lost for the third time in the past four. Tucker added 12 rebounds and Teletovic had 11 points in the fourth quarter. Devin Booker finished with 16 points and Tyson Chandler had 14 points and 11 rebounds for the Suns. Zach LaVine led the Wolves with 28 points and Andrew Wiggins had 22. Karl-Anthony Towns finished with 17 points and 10 rebounds while Ricky Rubio had 13 points and 17 assists.—AP

NBA Results/Standings

Dallas 107, Charlotte 96; Miami 124, Denver 119; Chicago 109, Toronto 107; Houston 130, Memphis 81; Oklahoma City 128, Portland 94; Washington 124, Detroit 81; Phoenix 107, Minnesota 104; Golden State 125, New Orleans 107; Utah 94, Cleveland 85.

Eastern Conference				Western Conference			
Atlantic Division				Northwest Division			
Toronto	44	21	.677	Oklahoma City	45	22	.672
Boston	39	27	.591	Portland	35	33	.515
NY Knicks	28	40	.412	Utah	32	35	.478
Brooklyn	18	48	.273	Denver	28	39	.418
Philadelphia	9	57	.136	Minnesota	21	46	.313
Central Division				Pacific Division			
Cleveland	47	19	.712	Golden State	60	6	.909
Indiana	35	31	.530	LA Clippers	42	23	.646
Chicago	33	32	.508	Sacramento	25	40	.385
Detroit	34	33	.507	Phoenix	18	49	.269
Milwaukee	29	38	.433	LA Lakers	14	53	.209
Southeast Division				Southwest Division			
Miami	39	28	.582	San Antonio	56	10	.848
Atlanta	38	29	.567	Memphis	39	28	.582
Charlotte	37	29	.561	Houston	34	33	.507
Washington	31	35	.470	Dallas	34	33	.507
Orlando	28	37	.431	New Orleans	24	42	.364

NFL OFFICIAL ACKNOWLEDGES CTE-FOOTBALL TRAUMA LINK

WASHINGTON: An NFL official has acknowledged a link between football and the brain disease CTE for the first time. Jeff Miller, the NFL's senior vice president for health and safety, spoke about the connection during an appearance Monday at a congressional committee's roundtable discussion about concussions. Rep Jan Schakowsky (D-Illinois) asked Miller: "Do you think there is a link between football and degenerative brain disorders like CTE?"

Miller began by referencing the work of Boston University neuropathologist Dr. Ann McKee, who has found CTE in the brains of 90 former pro football players. "Well, certainly, Dr. McKee's research shows that a number of retired NFL players were diagnosed with CTE, so the answer to that question is certainly 'yes,' but there are also a number of questions that come with that," Miller said. Schakowsky repeated the question: "Is there a link?" "Yes. Sure," Miller responded.

The NFL had not previously linked playing football to chronic traumatic encephalopathy, a disease linked to repeated brain trauma and associated with symptoms such as memory loss, depression and progressive dementia. It can only be detected after death. Among the players found to have CTE in their brains were Hall of Famers Junior Seau and Ken Stabler. During Super Bowl week, Dr. Mitch Berger, a member of the NFL's head, neck and spine committee, would not draw a direct line from football to CTE. Miller appeared at a round-

table discussion of concussions before the House Committee on Energy & Commerce. ESPN first reported Miller's appearance before the committee.

Last month, Berger, chair of the department of neurological surgery at the University of California-San Francisco, repeatedly said that while the types of degenerative changes to the brain associated with CTE have been found in late football players, such signs have also been found "in all spectrums of life." Tao, a protein that indicates the presence of CTE, "is found in brains that have traumatic injuries," Berger said, "whether it's from football, whether it's from car accidents, whether it's from gunshot wounds, domestic violence - it remains to be seen." Miller said he was "not going to speak for Dr. Berger" when asked by Schakowsky about those comments.

Just before Miller spoke, McKee was asked the same question about the link between hits in football and CTE. She responded "unequivocally" there is, and went into details about her research findings. Miller told the committee that the issue's entire scope needs to be addressed. "You asked the question whether I thought there was a link," he said. "Certainly based on Dr McKee's research, there's a link, because she's found CTE in a number of retired football players. I think that the broader point, and the one that your question gets to, is what that necessarily means and where do we go from here with that information."—AP