

25 Scherzer strikes out 15 as Nationals beat Cincinnati Reds



26 Lee Jeong-eun wins first major title at 2019 US Women's Open



27 African 'twin sisters' tackle Chinese football together



PARIS: Serbia's Novak Djokovic eyes the ball as he returns it to Germany's Jan-Lennard Struff during their men's singles fourth round match on day nine of The Roland Garros 2019 French Open tennis tournament in Paris yesterday. — AFP

Record-setting Djokovic into last-eight

Nishikori battles past Paire to set-up Nadal clash in Paris

PARIS: Novak Djokovic yesterday became the first man to reach the French Open quarter-finals for 10 successive seasons while Kei Nishikori set-up the toughest challenge on a clay court-facing Rafael Nadal. 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 either ninth-seeded Italian Fabio Fognini or 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 contin-

ues 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.

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 Roland Garros quarter-final clash against Nadal. 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 yesterday, 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.

In the women's event, 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

Katerina 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.

"I love clay courts and Paris and I am happy to play another match." Barty beat Sofia Kenin, who stunned Williams in the third round, 6-3, 3-6, 6-0, on Court Philippe Chatrier. "It's my first time this week playing on this beautiful court and I just wanted to come out here and enjoy it," said the 23-year-old former cricketer. "It (playing cricket) was incredible, it made me more hungry to come back and have success in tennis." — AFP

Iguodala lifts Warriors over Raptors to level NBA Finals

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.

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.

"We held them to 37 percent and forced 15 turnovers," Kerr said. "It was championship defense and that's what it's going to take." Thompson scored seven consecutive points and Iguodala added five in the crucial run. "We got stops," Draymond Green said. "That's our best offense when we're getting stops and we're pushing the ball in transition. It was big." — AFP