

25 Milestones beckons for Malinga in World Cup swansong

26 Na claims third US PGA Tour title at Colonial

27 Atlanta qualify for Champions League as Milan miss out



BRATISLAVA: Finland's players celebrate with the trophy after the IIHF Men's Ice Hockey World Championships final between Canada and Finland in Bratislava. — AFP

Finland stun Canada to win world title

Russia win bronze with a penalty shootout win over Czech Republic

BRATISLAVA: Finland completed a fairytale world championship after they came from behind to beat favourites Canada 3-1 and clinch their third gold medal in an absorbing final on Sunday.

The Finns, who beat the Canadians by the same score in their opening group-stage match, were underdogs in all three knockout stage games but they defied the odds to shock 2018 champions Sweden, Russia and Canada en route to the title.

It was a case of history repeating itself for the battling Finns, who won their previous title at the same venue in 2011.

"It's awesome," said Finland forward Toni Rajala. "It's something that you know might only happen once

in your life, but even before the game it felt great. I wasn't too nervous about it, I was enjoying it."

Canada, who were aiming for a record 27th title, dominated the opening period as Shea Theodor fired them ahead midway through with a brilliant solo effort.

The Vegas Golden Knights defenceman weaved his way through three Finnish players and found the top corner with a superb wrist-shot after Oliwer Kaski had missed a penalty for Finland.

Canada hit the crossbar twice and those misses, coupled with lapses in concentration early in the second and third periods, cost them dearly.

Finland captain Marko Anttila, who scored the win-

ner in the 1-0 semi-final win over Russia, was instrumental again as he levelled two minutes and 35 seconds into the second period when he beat goaltender Matt Murray with a fizzing low shot.

At exactly the same point in the third period, the towering Anttila punished the Canadians again as he popped up in front of goal and swept a fine Veli-Matti Savinainen assist into the roof of the net.

Harri Pesonen sealed Finland's memorable win in the closing stages and the Canadians failed to create much up front in the dying minutes although they threw men forward in the Ondrej Nepela Arena.

Canada defenceman Damon Severson had mixed emotions.

"It was a long tournament, a lot of fun, a lot of good guys," he said.

"It's unfortunate we got the wrong medal. Finland played a good game, the only team to beat us in this tournament was them, twice, and they played some good hockey."

"It's unfortunate we're not going home with gold."

Earlier on Sunday, Russia won the bronze medal with a penalty shootout win over the Czech Republic as the match finished 2-2 after regulation and overtime. Nikita Gusev and Ilya Kovalchuk netted Russia's goals in the shootout as the Czechs, who had led 2-1 in regular time after falling behind early on, missed all of their four attempts. —Reuters

'Frustrated' Wozniacki says opponent got 'lucky' in Roland Garros win

PARIS: Former world number one Caroline Wozniacki was left "frustrated" after collapsing to a 0-6, 6-3, 6-3 loss to Russian world number 68 Veronika Kudermetova in the French Open first round yesterday and told her opponent she "got lucky".

The Danish 13th seed had retired injured from her two previous matches in the lead-up to Roland Garros, but looked to have found form in a one-sided opening set. Last year's Australian Open champion lost her way in the second set, though, making 10

unforced errors, but said her opponent was fortunate to turn the match around.

"I think she got very lucky at the start of the second set and took advantage of the opportunities she got," said Wozniacki. "I ran out of steam in the end and made some unforced errors that I don't usually do, so that was very frustrating."

"She had a few net chords and good shots on some of the important points at the start of the second set. "It's definitely frustrating. You want to win, you work hard and you want to see results. "It hasn't been a great year for me so far, so I'm going to work hard and try and turn it around."

The 22-year-old Kudermetova cruised to victory in the decider on a sparsely-populated Court Philippe Chatrier to claim the biggest win of her career. She will face either Kazakhstan's Zarina Diyas or French wildcard Audrey Albie in the second round, having only made her main-draw debut at a Grand Slam event with a first-round Australian Open loss in January.

Two-time Wimbledon champion Petra Kvitova said

she expects to be fit for the grass-court season despite pulling out of the French Open with a left arm injury yesterday. The Czech, who was seeded sixth at Roland Garros, will be out for "two to three weeks".

"It means no tennis, of course, as it's my left forearm," said the big-hitting left-hander. "Maybe I can play rightie. Two to three weeks, so I'll do some fitness and everything that I can do to prepare my body for the tennis on the grass."

Kvitova had been due to play Romania's Sorana Cirstea in her opening Roland Garros match on Court Suzanne Lenglen later in the day. "I am so disappointed to have to announce my withdrawal from Roland Garros," Kvitova wrote on Twitter.

"I have had pain in my left forearm for a few weeks and last night an MRI confirmed a Grade Two tear which unfortunately could get worse if I play today." The 29-year-old made her return from a horrific hand injury, sustained in a knife attack by an intruder at her home, at Roland Garros in 2017.

"Two years ago I made my comeback here at Roland Garros, so I'm truly sorry not to be able to

play this year," she added. Kvitova has been replaced in the draw by 18-year-old Slovenian lucky loser Kaja Juvan.

Novak Djokovic begins his bid for a fourth consecutive Grand Slam title against Poland's Hubert Hurkacz at Roland Garros, while Serena Williams and Rafael Nadal also open their campaigns.

Nadal starts his tilt at a record-extending 12th Roland Garros title against German qualifier Yannick Hanfmann in the second match on Chatrier. The 17-time Grand Slam champion comes into the tournament as the second seed, and having beaten old foe Djokovic in the Italian Open final. Nadal holds an incredible 86-2 win-loss record in the French Open, having only lost to Robin Soderling and Djokovic since making his tournament debut in 2005.

World number 184 Hanfmann has come through three rounds of qualifying to set up the once-in-a-lifetime clash in Paris, but thinks being partially deaf could be a slight advantage. "A centre court full of spectators doesn't affect me," he told German daily Bild in an interview. — AFP