

Sports

Roger Federer into 17th Basel quarter-final

BASEL: Roger Federer crushed Radu Albot 6-0, 6-3 on Wednesday to win his 22nd match in a row at the Swiss Indoors and earn a quarter-final place at his home event for the 17th time.

The nine-time champion was ruthless in a 22-minute opening set, finishing the entire job in 63 minutes in front of 9,000 fans.

He will on Friday face the winner from Stan Wawrinka and Frances Tiafoe, who both earned straight-set wins earlier in the day.

"It's a super feeling to know exactly where the ball is going, what the other guy is doing," said top seed Federer. "I was hitting a lot of winners, those kind of moments are really rare."

Federer's Swiss compatriot Wawrinka fired 10 aces and 30 winners to overwhelm fellow veteran Pablo Cuevas 6-3, 6-4 to make it into the second round, keeping alive his outside chances of making the ATP Finals.

Federer, who is playing in Basel for the 19th time, won his first set to love at the tournament since 2006. His loss of just three games on Wednesday was his most powerful showing on the ATP since beating Andreas Seppi at the Paris Masters 6-1, 6-1 four years ago.

"I'm very happy, it was important to start the second set with a break," said 38-year-old Federer. "Even though I was playing well, I was not over-confident, I was always worried that he might make a comeback."

If Wawrinka beats America's Tiafoe in their second-round match, the Swiss pair will clash on Friday in the quarters.

"I hope Stan goes through, I always enjoy

playing him," added Federer, who holds a 23-3 edge in the series against his close friend.

"I'm glad that he is back (from double 2017 knee surgeries)." Federer dominated 49th-ranked Albot, sweeping the first eight games before the Moldovan got on the scoreboard.

The top seed finished on a first match point after five aces and five service breaks.

Wawrinka, who was a runner-up to Andy Murray in Antwerp last weekend, currently stands at 15th in the race for the season-ending showpiece in London with 1,500 rankings points available between Basel and next week's Paris Masters, the final event of the regular campaign.

Six of the eight spots for the ATP Finals have already been secured. Wawrinka, 34, ended each set against Uruguay's 45th-ranked Cuevas with aces, breaking once per set to go through to the second round in 67 minutes.

"It was great for a first match," said Wawrinka, who lost just nine points in 10 service games. "I moved and served well, I was really focussed. I'm really happy to get through in two sets." The seventh seed is playing Basel for the 14th time and improved his record at the event to 12-13. Three-time major winner Wawrinka said his three-set final loss to Murray in Antwerp on Sunday proved useful in Basel. "Antwerp really helped me today, I've got confidence in my game, the game is there."

But he refused to speculate on any London chances: "I'm super-far away, so it's not at all in my mind." Sixth seed David Goffin also stayed in the race to London with a 6-4, 6-4 defeat of



BASEL: Swiss Roger Federer returns a ball to German Peter Gojowczyk during the 1,500th match of his career at the opening day of the Swiss Indoors tennis tournament in Basel. — AFP

2014 US Open champion Marin Cilic. Goffin entered this week at provisional 10th in the race and is duelling with Italy's Matteo Berrettini, who currently stands eighth, and ninth-placed Roberto Bautista Agut. Ricardas Berankis of Lithuania lined up a second-round match with third seed Stefanos Tsitsipas after defeating

Pablo Andujar 6-1, 6-1. Filip Krajinovic will next take on fifth seed Fabio Fognini after going past Serb compatriot Laslo Djere, 6-1, 6-4. Australian Alex De Minaur defeated Taylor Fritz of the US 6-3, 6-3 and Switzerland's Henri Laaksonen was put out by Germany's Jan-Lennard Struff 6-3, 6-4. — AFP

India rest Kohli for Bangladesh T20s

MUMBAI: India have left out captain Virat Kohli from the squad named for three Twenty20 internationals against Bangladesh starting next month, but he will return for two Tests between the South Asian neighbours.

Senior batsman Rohit Sharma will captain the Twenty20 team in the limited-overs series due to begin on November 3 in Delhi. Uncapped allrounder Shivam Dube has been drafted into the squad in place of injured Hardik Pandya, while Sanju Samson and leg-spinner Yuzvendra Chahal have been recalled.

Bangladesh had threatened to call off the tour over a domestic pay dispute, but the national board and players resolved their differences late Wednesday. The second T20 is on November 7 in Rajkot and the third on November 9 in Nagpur. Kohli, described as the "most important man" in Indian cricket by new board president Sourav Ganguly on Wednesday, will captain the side in the Test series starting November 14 in Indore. The Test squad is essentially the same that swept South Africa 3-0 in a series that ended this week. That gave India a world record 11th straight home Test series triumph.

T20 squad: Rohit Sharma (capt), Shikhar Dhawan, KL Rahul, Sanju Samson, Shreyas Iyer, Manish Pandey, Rishabh Pant, Washington Sundar, Krunal Pandya, Yuzvendra Chahal, Rahul Chahar, Deepak Chahar, Khaleel Ahmed, Shivam Dube, Shardul Thakur Test squad: Virat Kohli (capt), Rohit Sharma, Mayank Agarwal, Cheteshwar Pujara, Ajinkya Rahane, Hanuma Vihari, Wriddhiman Saha (wk), Ravindra Jadeja, Ravichandran Ashwin, Kuldeep Yadav, Mohammed Shami, Umesh Yadav, Ishant Sharma, Shubman Gill, Rishabh Pant. — AFP

S Korean women tops at bowling championship

By Abdellatif Sharaa

KUWAIT: Director General of Public Authority for Sports (PAS) Dr Humoud Fulaiteh asked all local sports federations who plan to host regional or international championships, to start from where the Bowling Club ended, and make sure that they benefit the name of Kuwait bearing in mind the support the state gives through PAS to the sport and athletes.

Fulaiteh hoped that the federations be like the Bowling Club in making greatly organized events.

He lauded the efforts as the higher committee succeeded in proving Kuwait's ability to host major events and dazzle the world with the beauty and magnificence of the organization such on the case with the opening ceremony.

Today and tomorrow will have the three events for men and women, as the South Korean women dominated the doubles and snatched the first two gold medals for their country, which was also in control during the 2016 championship



in Hong Kong.

While the Malaysian doubles team of Sin Li Jane and Esther Cheah failed to keep the title and ended in third place behind Korea's Kim Moon jeong and Lee Yeonji who won silver while their compatriots Lee Mayoung and Baek Sungja bagged the gold. Today, will see the qualifiers of the threes for both genders in two groups, while the finals will be played on Sunday.

Malaysia tops the medals tally with two gold and two bronze, followed by South Korea by one Gold, one Silver, while Indonesia and India have one silver each and Japan has a bronze medal.

Malaysian players expressed their pleasure for their country being on top of the table, which gives them optimism to have Malaysia return to the top from which they were absent since the nineties of last century.