

Sports

Aussie upsets Pegula as Halep, Hurkacz fall at Washington

Badosa, Jabeur reach San Jose WTA quarter-finals

WASHINGTON: Australia's Daria Saville upset top-seeded defending champion Jessica Pegula 7-5, 6-4 on Wednesday at the ATP and WTA Washington Open, where Hubert Hurkacz and Simona Halep also exited. World number 88 Saville ripped the seventh-ranked American in hot and humid conditions while Romanian third seed Halep retired with illness down 7-5, 2-0 to Anna Kalinskaya.

"I stayed really composed," Saville said. "I managed the energy really well. It was very hot. But I thought it's hot for everyone so get on with it." Polish second seed Hurkacz crashed out in his second-round match at the US Open hard-court tuneup, falling to Finland's Emil Ruusuvuori 6-4, 7-6 (7/3).

Wimbledon runner-up Nick Kyrgios of Australia defeated US 14th seed Tommy Paul 6-3, 6-4 to book a third-round date with US fourth seed Reilly Opelka. World number 63 Kyrgios, whose most recent title came at Washington in 2019, broke to open and close the first set. Paul's fourth double fault gave the Aussie a match point and his forehand shot beyond the baseline gave Kyrgios the victory in 85 minutes.

Saville booked a quarter-final match against Canadian qualifier Rebecca Marino, who beat Germany's Andrea Petkovic 6-3, 3-6, 6-1. The 28-year-old Russian-born Aussie won her only WTA title at the 2017 Connecticut Open but dispatched Pegula in 98 minutes for her second top-10 win of the year after

downing Ons Jabeur at Indian Wells in March.

"Everyone's attitude is I'm here to win the tournament and I'm no different," Saville said. "I'm playing really good tennis right now. I'm excited for more." Saville fell to 627th in the world rankings after Achilles tendon surgery that sidelined her for most of last year. Now she's into her third quarter-final of the year after Miami and Guadalajara. "I'm happy," Saville said. "It creates good reputation. Players are going to say, 'She's playing well. She has some good wins this year.'"

Ruusuvuori, set to rise one shy of his career-high to 43rd in the world rankings, denied Hurkacz on all four break-point chances to advance after one hour and 44 minutes. "I just tried to hang in there and stay as tough as can," Ruusuvuori said. "Long rallies, they really drain you and you start to feel dizzy during the points. Very tough." His third-round foe will be Sweden's Mikael Ymer, who ousted 15th seed Aslan Karatsev 6-4, 3-6, 6-4 after eliminating three-time Grand Slam champion Andy Murray in round one.

Japan's Yoshihito Nishioka ousted Aussie 11th seed Alex De Minaur 3-6, 7-6 (8/6), 6-2. The world number 96 will next face seventh seed Karen Khachanov. US third seed Taylor Fritz beat Australia's Alexei Popyrin 6-4, 6-3 to book a third-round match against British 16th seed Daniel Evans. World number 13 Fritz comes off a five-set Wimbledon quarter-final loss to Rafael

Nadal and two weeks in a boot with a stress fracture in his left foot. "It has felt great. No pain at all. It's a really good sign," Fritz said. "Gives me a lot of confidence moving forward."

WTA quarter-finals

In another development, second-seeded Paula Badosa survived a scare on the way to a 6-2, 5-7, 7-6 (7/5) victory over US qualifier Elizabeth Mandlik on Wednesday in the WTA hardcourt tournament in San Jose, California. After comfortably pocketing the first set with two breaks of serve, Spain's Badosa went down an early break in the second against her 240th-ranked opponent, who is the daughter of four-time Grand Slam champion Hana Mandlikova. She broke back, but was broken again in the 11th game to give Mandlik a chance to serve out the set and extend the match.

After breaking for a 4-3 lead in the third, Mandlik twice had a chance to serve for the set, but they traded service breaks in the final three games to send it to the tiebreaker, in which world number four Badosa won the last five points to seal the victory. Badosa will next face the winner of Thursday night's marquee clash between four-time Grand Slam champion Naomi Osaka and sixth-seeded American Coco Gauff.

Japanese superstar Osaka is unseeded as she plays her first tournament since falling in the first round of the French Open, where she was battling a left Achilles tendon injury. Gauff, the



WASHINGTON: Daria Saville of Australia plays a shot to Jessica Pegula of the United States during Day 5 of the Citi Open at Rock Creek Tennis Center on August 03, 2022 in Washington, DC. —AFP

French Open runner-up, is seeded sixth. Third-seeded Tunisian star Ons Jabeur, playing her first match since her historic runner-up finish at Wimbledon, pulled away late to beat American Madison Keys 7-5, 6-1. Jabeur will face either Veronika Kudermetova or Claire Liu in Friday's quarter-finals. Jabeur got off to a strong start with an early break for a 2-0 lead before Keys surged to a 5-3 lead.

Jabeur responded by winning 10 of the next 11 games. "I'm grateful that I played at night because it's slower and it helps me a

little bit with the conditions," Jabeur said. "I knew it was going to be a tough match for me. I just tried to stay low and hit the ball as much as I can. Make her play another ball and in the end I was feeling much better." American Amanda Anisimova beat Czech Karolina Pliskova for the first time in five attempts to reach the quarter-finals. Anisimova trailed by a set and a break on the way to a 3-6, 7-5, 6-1 victory. Seventh-seeded Daria Kasatkina also advanced, beating American Taylor Townsend 6-4, 6-0. —AFP

Hendricks sets up South Africa win in Ireland T20 opener

BRISTOL: Reeza Hendricks hit his fourth successive Twenty20 fifty as South Africa defeated Ireland by 21 runs in their series opener at Bristol on Wednesday. Hendricks, who hit three half-centuries in the Proteas' recent 2-1 series win over England, top-scored with 74 in a total of 211-5 and shared a third-wicket partnership of 112 with Aiden Markram (56). "I think I've been working really hard," said Hendricks, now one of just five batsmen to have scored four consecutive half-centuries at this level, during the presentation ceremony. "Momentum is important. I've been enjoying English conditions."

Lorcan Tucker (78) and George Dockrell (43) kept Ireland in the hunt but when the pair were dismissed off successive balls their side's hopes of victory went with them. 'Death-bowling' specialist Wayne Parnell proved his worth for all he was hit for six off the last ball off the innings by tailender Barry McCarthy as Ireland finished on 190-9. Left-arm paceman Parnell returned figures of 2-36, stand-in Proteas captain Keshav Maharaj took 2-29 with his left-arm spin and leg-spinner Tabraiz Shamsi 2-37.

For Ireland, it was yet another case of close but not close enough as they suffered a seventh successive T20 defeat having been competitive against India, New Zealand and now South Africa this season. "We were in the game for a long time," said Ireland captain Andy Balbirnie. "The two wickets in two balls made the difference." Hendricks's latest



BRISTOL: South Africa's Reeza Hendricks hits the ball and scores a four during the first T20 international cricket match between Ireland and South Africa at the County Ground, in Bristol, on August 3, 2022. —AFP

fifty came off 32 balls, including seven fours and a six, while Markram got to the landmark in 25 balls including six boundaries.

The pair fell to consecutive deliveries, with leg-spinner Gareth Delany having Markram caught at deep square leg before Hendricks holed out to point. Ireland, however, did not help their cause by bowling 13 wides - more than two extra overs. South Africa's attack largely kept Ireland in check but a sixth-wicket stand of 86 between Tucker and Dockrell gave the Proteas something to think about. Tucker faced just 38 balls, including seven fours and five sixes. But he fell when skying Shamsi to wicketkeeper Quinton de

end to finish fourth and claim 13 points, but complained "I lost a victory."

Espargaro calculated that he was better off than if he had finished first and Quartararo second and gained just five points. Yet he lamented that he did not collect a second MotoGP win after his first, in his 200th race, in Argentina in April. "I have just one victory in my career, so I would prefer to gain five points and have the victory." Francesco Bagnaia, who chased Quartararo home in last season's championships is fourth in the standings-behind fellow Ducati rider Johann Zarco-after winning in Assen.

Last year his 14th place at Silverstone, after tyre problems, ultimately left the Italian with too much ground to make up in the title race. At the moment, he is 66 points off the lead. Quartararo said the five-week break had done him good, although he made clear he had not just been relaxing. "I'm happy to start riding again," he said. "I used the summer break to get some rest, but I also put in a lot of hours of training. My mind was always still on returning to action in the best shape possible." —AFP



Fabio Quartararo

NFL appeals six-game suspension of Watson

NEW YORK: The NFL has appealed the six-game suspension meted out to Cleveland Browns quarterback Deshaun Watson for violating the league's personal conduct policy. The NFL had argued for an indefinite suspension lasting at least one full season for Watson, who was accused of sexual assault and misconduct during massage sessions in civil lawsuits filed by 25 women. No criminal charges were brought against Watson, who has denied wrongdoing.

NFL disciplinary officer Sue L. Robinson, who was appointed by both the league and the NFL Players' Association, found after an investigation that the six-game penalty was appropriate. Robinson issued a 15-page finding on Monday after hearing arguments in June from the league, the union and Watson's lawyers on five specific cases presented by the NFL. The incidents took place between March 2020 and March 2021 while Watson was with the Houston Texans.

Robinson found that Watson's "pattern of behavior was egregious," but that the cases presented for her review involved "nonviolent sexual conduct" and didn't merit a harsher penalty than a six-game ban. In a statement on Wednesday, the league said it had notified the NFLPA that it would appeal and then filed its brief on Wednesday afternoon. NFL commissioner Roger Goodell will determine who will hear the appeal. "Under the 2020 NFL-NFLPA collective bargaining agreement (CBA), the factual findings of the Disciplinary Officer are binding and may not be appealed," the league noted in a statement. —AFP

Quartararo heads into Silverstone battling penalty and history

SILVERSTONE: MotoGP returns from its mid-summer break with championship leader Fabio Quartararo aiming to resume his own winning streak while ending the long run of different victors at Silverstone. The French world champion's three-race streak ended in spectacular fashion in Assen at the end of June and he will still be dealing with fallout from that race at Silverstone.

He crashed twice in the Netherlands. The second time he ended his race by flipping over the handlebars of his Yamaha after 15 laps. The first crash, when he slid on a corner and forced his nearest rival in the championship, Aleix Espargaro, into the gravel, could prove costly on Sunday. He was judged at fault and still has his long lap penalty for the crash to serve.

"I am really looking forward to Silverstone," Quartararo said on his team's web site. "I won there last year. This time will be tricky because we know that we have that long-lap penalty. But if I'm really honest, that only motivates me to do even better." While winning last year might give Quartararo confidence, it also highlights one of the statistical oddities of the British Grand Prix. No one has won the race twice in a row since Jorge Lorenzo in 2012 and 2013, a total of seven races because the 2018 (heavy rain) and 2020 (Covid-19) events were cancelled.

Quartararo dominated last year as he won on the way to the world title. This year he leads Spaniard Espargaro, who turned 33 at the end of July and is having a breakout season, by 21 points. After his brush with Quartararo pushed him down to 15th in Assen, Espargaro fought back on his Aprilia, completing a daring double overtake at the



LOS CABOS: Russia's Daniil Medvedev serves against Australia's Rinky Hijikata during their Mexico ATP Open 250 men's singles tennis match at the Cabo Sports Complex in Los Cabos, Mexico, on August 3, 2022. —AFP

Medvedev makes triumphant return

LOS CABOS: World number one Daniil Medvedev, playing his first match in six weeks, beat Australian qualifier Rinky Hijikata 6-4, 6-3 on Wednesday at the ATP hard court tournament in Los Cabos, Mexico. It was a milestone 250th match win of the reigning US Open champion's career. "Someone told me this a few days ago," Medvedev said after the match. "Otherwise I would not have known. That's nice, a milestone in a way. I want more victories, but that's nice to have 250. We'll try to get more."

Medvedev is playing his first tournament since bowing out of the quarter-finals at Mallorca on June 23. He missed Wimbledon because of its ban of

Russian and Belarussian players in the wake of Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Medvedev gained the first break of the match to claim the opening set. He saved the first break point he faced in the opening game of the second, and gained the break he needed for a 4-2 lead against Hijikata. The 21-year-old Australian world number 224 put up a fight, fending off a stream of break points before Medvedev closed it out after 90 minutes.

"It's definitely not that easy to play after you stop for a while, especially (playing my) first match on hard courts since a long, long time-since Miami," Medvedev said. "Sensations were not bad. I could have just broke a little bit more, but when you win everything is fine." Medvedev next faces Ricardas Berankis of Lithuania, who beat Argentina's Facundo Bagnis 7-6 (7/4), 6-3. Second-seeded Canadian Felix Auger-Aliassime also advanced, beating Mexico's Alex Hernandez 6-3, 7-5. —AFP