**Thiem stuns Nadal in ‘epic’ to set up semi with Zverev**

At 26, the 26-year-old Spaniard, a former world number one, dropped a set for the first time at the Slams this year. Nadal was making his 14th major final. Thiem stayed in the match, which he thought lasted about an hour, but it’s going to be a tough match, the Austrian said.

The second set was similar, with no breaks until the opening game of set four, the momentum swung back to the Austrian. He saved a set point and it went to another tie-break which Thiem won.

The third set was similar — tight, with no breaks until Nadal saved a set point and it went to another tie-break which Thiem won. He then broke Nadal at 4-4 to level the set.

Thiem prevailed at the crunch moment, with his serve in the second set and Nadal unable to convert. He lost his nerve serving for the title, worked a break point but couldn’t convert.

He was feeling strong, and Muguruza, the 2016 French Open champion, worked a break point but couldn’t convert. She added: “All the match was on a very high level, I think we are both very solid players and you don’t get better than that.”

Muguruza sealed a one-sided first set in 29 minutes on first set point. She added: “I felt great today on court. I sealed a set and I think it’s going to be a tough match, she asked.

But Nadal then broke back with a dropping drop volley. It extends a rotten run of games for Thiem, when he raced Nadal to seal a one-set lead. First set for 4-4.

Thiem added that he was entitled to being a great champion and that he thought it was an epic battle.

The fifth seed, beaten by Nadal in the semi-finals of another Grand Slam. But seeking inspiration, she saw top seed and home hope Muguruza, the 2016 Australian Open champion and Wimbledon champion, win the girls’ Australian Open title in 2017, served for the match at 5-4, sealing it with a drop volley. She added: “I felt great today on court. I was feeling strong, I felt strong on my legs, " said the red-hot Spaniard sealing the first set in 56 minutes.

**FAMOUS VICTORY**

Nadal dropped a set in a classic, before Nadal managed to open some doors on the Spanish extra in game eight and 7-6 (4). But Thiem came roaring back, breaking back with a ripping crosscourt return. He saved a set point and it went to another tie-break which Thiem won at 4-4.

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Roger is Roger’ – Djokovic not undergoing ageless genie

Federer and Djokovic have dominated the Australian Open for years with the all-conquering pair sharing 12 of the last 14 titles in Melbourne.

The pair enjoy one of world tennis’ most fierce rivalries and will both be seeking to add another title to their collection at the Grand Slam in Melbourne after winning the title at the 2018 Australian Open.

However, Djokovic is not taking the Serb lightly. "I've had success against Roger, many years in the top of the world rankings, so that's why I have lots of respect for him," Djokovic said.

Djokovic pointed to Federer's "unbreakable will" which "gives him the motivation to continue playing tennis even when he is not in his best form, even when he is not 100% healthy."

"Roger always finds a way to come through in the most important moments," Djokovic said.

"I know that he's always going to play on such a high level, regardless of the surface."

"He's still competing. He’s still playing. He’s still fighting."

"I think conditions suit us well here. Probably something to do with court speed, feeling comfortable on all these runs like I did for 10 years," said Federer.

"I’ve had success against him in all five showdowns in the Slams, beat him in all five showdowns at the Slams since losing in the All England Club semis eight years ago."

"Melbourne, with the tight courts and slower ball, is one of those places where he plays his best tennis in that style," said Federer.

Federer also acknowledged that his last Australian Open title was his seventh Grand Slam title and that it was "an amazing moment in my career that I will never forget." He went on to save seven match points in the final of the 2017 Australian Open to defeat Milos Raonic in five sets.

"I found it a bit tough. It's not like I'm known to have my moments of nervousness," Federer said.

"It was a battle, I'm very happy."
Ariab hope to return to winning against Umm Salal

By Sports Reporter

Ariab will be keen to resurrect their QNB Stars League campaign today when they face bottom-of-the-table Umm Salal at home. After a 1-0 victory over Al Ahli last week and 2-0 against Al Sailiya, Ariab are coming off back-to-back defeats to Al Arabi and Al Ittihad last week and are eager to get back to the winning ways in a game that they will be keen to take advantage of.

Ariab are fifth in the standings with 42 points from 25 matches. Umm Salal are sitting bottom of the table with 19 points from 24 matches. Ariab are currently in seventh place and need to win against or at least not lose to their visitors in order to get into the top four.

The game is expected to kick-off at 7pm and will be held at the 40,000-capacity Al Gharafa Stadium. Ariab and Umm Salal have played each other 10 times in the QNB Stars League, with Ariab winning five matches, losing four and drawing the other. The last time the two sides met was in February 2020, when Ariab won 3-0.

Ariab coach Moussa Halldorson and his Umm Salal counterpart Aziz Ben Askar (below) address a press conference on the eve of their QNB Stars League match.

QNB STARS LEAGUE

Ariab are fifth in the standings with 18 points, five behind Al Gharafa

NEW SERIES ‘BEHIND THE SCENES’ TO FEATURE WENGER AND DE SALDYLL ON BEIN SPORTS

Dentsu, the global sports marketing group, announced today the launch of a new series ‘Behind The Scenes’ with football hyper-giants Arsenal and Manchester United.

Annex Wenger and Marcel Desailly interview at Hips on both Bein Sports HD during the season. The documentary series will feature behind-the-scenes footage of the famous football players and give insight into their preparation, gameplay, and personal lives.

Arsenal legend and former manager Wenger discussed how his influence on the development of players at the Emirates Stadium is discussed throughout the series.

Desailly also discussed his time in the football world, including his time at AC Milan and Chelsea and how he influenced the design of the Stade de France.

The series aims to provide fans with a unique perspective on the players and managers who have helped to shape the sport, and how they continue to shape it to this day.

ROUNDP

Man United agree deal to sign Bruno Fernandes

Manchester United have agreed a deal to sign Bruno Fernandes from Sporting Lisbon, with the Portuguese midfielder set to be unveiled at Old Trafford by the weekend, the club confirmed today.

Fernandes, who is currently on international duty with Portugal, will join United on a permanent basis from the Portuguese club after the February international break. The deal is reportedly worth around £47.5m, plus add-ons.

United have been on the lookout for a creative midfielder for some time and have been linked with a move for Fernandes, who has impressed in the Premier League this season.

The 25-year-old is seen as a key figure in the future of the club and is expected to add much-needed creativity to Ole Gunnar Solskjaer’s attack

FAI confirm plan to host women’s match in Dublin

The Irish Football Association (IFA) have announced that they will host the Women’s World Cup Qualifier against the USWNT at Aviva Stadium in Dublin on October 26th.

The match will be the first international fixture at the 52,000-capacity stadium since the men’s Olympic Qualifier in 2016, and is set to be a sell-out.

The IFA have been working on the project for several months and have received a strong response from fans and sponsors, with the stadium set to break records for attendance.

In a statement, IFA chief executive John Delaney said: “This is a landmark occasion for Irish football and we are delighted to welcome the USWNT to Dublin for this historic match. The support we have received from fans and sponsors has been incredible, and we are confident that this will be a memorable event for all who attend.”

Delaney added: “We are excited to bring this match to Dublin and hope that it will be the start of a new era for football in Ireland. We are working with our partners at Dublin City Council and the HSE to ensure that the necessary arrangements are in place for the match, and we are confident that we will deliver a world-class event.”

The match is part of the Women’s World Cup Qualifier campaign, which is set to begin in September. The IFA have invested heavily in women’s football in recent years and are determined to make this match a success.

In other news, the IFA announced that they will also host the Men’s European Qualifier against Luxembourg at the Aviva Stadium on October 9th.

The match is set to be a key fixture in the qualification campaign and is expected to be a tough test for the Irish side. The IFA have been working hard to prepare for the match and are confident that they will be able to provide a top-class experience for fans.

In a statement, IFA president Brian Dolan said: “This is a major milestone for Irish football and we are delighted to welcome the Men’s National Team to Dublin for this historic match. The support we have received from fans and sponsors has been incredible, and we are confident that this will be a memorable event for all who attend.”

Dolan added: “We are excited to bring this match to Dublin and hope that it will be the start of a new era for football in Ireland. We are working with our partners at Dublin City Council and the HSE to ensure that the necessary arrangements are in place for the match, and we are confident that we will deliver a world-class event.”

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FOOTBALL

Trezeguet sends Villa into League Cup final

Defeat ends Leicester boss Brendan Rodgers’ unbeaten run of 31 straight domestic cup matches

Trezeguet struck deep into stoppage-time to send Aston Villa into the League Cup final for the first time in their history.

Trezeguet, who came on as a substitute, scored a late penalty to beat Torino and send Villa to the final at Wembley on April 1.

Manager Rodgers was delighted with his team’s performance and said the match was a turning point in their season.

“We’ve been looking forward to this for a long time,” he said. “It’s a huge achievement and it’s a great way to end the season.”

Villa will now face Man City in the final, which will be played at Wembley on May 1.

Lee Johnson, Villa assistant manager, said: “It’s a fantastic result and a massive boost for the fans. We’re all thrilled for the players.”

Leicester fans were left disappointed as their side were knocked out of the competition by a late goal.

Leicester manager Brendan Rodgers said: “We had a lot of possession but we didn’t create enough chances.”

ROSE’S HISTORY MAKING VILLA DEFEAT LEICESTER

Leicester manager Brendan Rodgers was left dejected after his side were knocked out of the League Cup by Aston Villa.

Villa’s Italian striker Trezeguet scored the decisive penalty in extra-time to send Rodgers’ side out of the competition.

“I’m gutted for my players because we put so much into the game,” Rodgers said. “It’s a tough way to lose.”

Trezeguet had come on as a substitute and scored the winning goal in stoppage-time.

Trezeguet, who is known for his penalty-taking ability, said: “I was happy to score and help the team win.”

The victory means Villa are one win away from reaching the final of a major cup competition.

Southampton, who reached the League Cup final last year, were eliminated by Fulham in the semi-finals.

Leicester, who were looking to reach the final for the third time in four seasons, were held to a 1-1 draw by Villa in the semi-final first leg.

In the second leg, Trezeguet scored the winning goal.

“I’m happy for the team because we’ve worked hard all season,” he said. “Now we’re looking forward to the final.”

The final will take place at Wembley on March 1.

China women’s football team quarantined in Australia over virus

China’s women’s football team has been quarantined in Australia after players were tested positive for COVID-19.

The team, which was due to play a friendly against Australia on Thursday, was put into quarantine after three players tested positive.

The players wereSymptoms

The team was tested for COVID-19 on Wednesday and the results came back positive. The team was then put into quarantine in a hotel in Brisbane.

The team was due to play Australia on Thursday but the game has been postponed.

The team will now undergo a 14-day quarantine period before they can return to training.

The team will also undergo daily testing while in quarantine.

The team’s coach, Sun Shilong, said: “We are very unhappy with the situation. We will do our best to ensure the players’ safety.”

South Africa

South Africa’s women’s football team has been placed in quarantine after a player tested positive for COVID-19.

The team was due to play a friendly against Brazil on Friday but the game has been postponed until Saturday.

The team’s coach, Molefi Mothibedi, said: “We are very concerned about the situation. We will do our best to ensure the players’ safety.”

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Middleton scores 51 as Giannnis-less Bucks blast Wizards

Despite playing without Giannis, Milwaukee burst to a season-best 42 first-quarter points.

Khris Middleton scored a career-high 51 points and the Milwaukee Bucks built a season-high 32-point lead on way to a 118-104 victory over the Washington Wizards on Tuesday night. The victory ended a nine-game losing streak for Milwaukee. The Bucks (25-20) moved 8 1/2 games ahead of the Wizards (16-30) on the Eastern Conference standings.

The 51-point effort, which included nine 3-pointers, was Middleton’s third straight 40-point game. The Bucks were the second team in NBA history to score 50 or more points in three straight games. The Los Angeles Lakers did it 11 times in 1971-72. Middleton also had 10 rebounds and nine assists. Milwaukee’s lead stood at 118-90 after three quarters. It was 118-95 with 3:39 left.

Middleton’s 51 points marked Milwaukee’s previous most since Giannis Antetokounmpo scored 61 against the Atlanta Hawks on Dec. 21, 2018. Middleton had 18 points and eight assists. Milwaukee held off a second-half surge to beat the visiting Washington Wizards 118-104 on Tuesday.

Despite playing without scoring giant Khris Middleton, the Bucks scored 49 first-quarter points, the most in franchise history, and held on for their ninth straight victory, 118-104.

Middleton’s previous game-high was 31 against the Portland Trail Blazers on Feb. 14. Washington fell for the ninth straight time, and Milwaukee improved to 8-1 in games decided by 15 points or more.

"I’m at a loss for words to describe how special that was," said Mike Budenholzer, who won his 11th game in 12 tries as a head coach.

Milwaukee’s 118 points were the most the franchise had scored all season, topping the previous high of 112 last March 13 against the Miami Heat. The Bucks (25-20) are 11-7 when Giannis Antetokounmpo is out due to injury.

"I’ve never been on a team where we’re 10-0 after 20 games. It’s unprecedented," said team captain Giannis Antetokounmpo, who sat out with a back injury.

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Milwaukee’s lead to 108-95 midway through the fourth quarter kept Washington in its sights.

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Franco urges improving Italy to close gap on England

**Amateur champion Sugrue ready to lock horns with stars**

Irish prospect given chance to shine in Oman before turning professional later this year

**Sugrue ready to lock horns with stars**

The Open at Royal Portrush. A 36-hole final last summer and play so you’ve just got to deal with this, “ he said.

“I’d probably prefer if it wasn’t me,” he said.

Rugby presents.

For me to travel to Muscat, it’s a great opportunity.

**Franco urges improving Italy to close gap on England**

Irish prospect given chance to shine in Oman before turning professional later this year

**Sugrue ready to lock horns with stars**

**GOLF/OMAN OPEN**

**Sugrue go-ahead given to bid for 2030 Winter Olympics**

The Japanese Olympic Committee (JOC) has moved to make its case for hosting the 2020 Winter Games. Sugrue, son of Imran and father of Scott who is looking forward to being named as a possible contender for the 2026 Winter Games. Sugrue is a 23-year-old professional golfer who won the 2019 Oman Open.

“Apart from last year’s Open, this year’s Open will be my first test of a proper European Tour event, so I’m looking forward to it.”

“Playing on the European Tour is a dream come true and it has been a huge honour to be named one of the top-up-and-coming players in Oman. It’s a great opportunity and I’m looking forward to it.”

The 20-year-old believes he is well equipped to take on the challenge. After finishing in the top three in the 2019 Oman Open, Sugrue is a confident amateur golfer who has been playing the game since he was a child.

Amanda, 25, is one of the most talented amateur players in the world. He has been very vocal about his desire to turn professional and we hope that young amateur talent will be given a chance to turn professional in Oman. The US$1,750,000 Oman Open will help us to prepare for the upcoming tournament at Al Mouj Golf.

The US$1,750,000 Oman Open gets underway at Al Mouj Golf in Salalah on March 27 and will finish on March 31.

**SUGRUE READY TO LOCK HORNS WITH STARS**

James Sugrue with the trophy for the third day of the final round of the 1999 Amateur Championship at Portmarnock Golf Club in Dublin. (European Tour)

**SPOTTLIGHT**

3 US world boxing champs defend crowns in Miami

**Spotlight**

World heavyweight champion Anthony Joshua will defend his IBF, WBA and IBO belts he had lost in New York against Ukraine’s Oleksandr Usyk, but the mandatory challenger inWladimir Klitschko, the German WBO champion. Joshua will fight in Miami on March 1.

Livesport will be the official broadcast partner for the fight and it will be the second time the two men will meet in the ring. They will go head-to-head in front of a record-breaking crowd.

There are major fights for Anthony Joshua and his team in Miami. They will be in action on March 1.

**Substitute**

As the San Francisco 49ers and the Cleveland Browns prepare to meet at the Super Bowl in Miami on February 1, the Irish FA has announced that they will not participate in the Super Bowl. The FA has been very vocal about it and we hope that young amateur talent will be given a chance to turn professional in Oman.

**RUGBY**

Franco urges improving Italy to close gap on England

The results can help, but we still have to work on our league and team structures. In the future, we can strengthen our league in which so many Azzurre players are delighted to offer James an opportunity to compete against the stars in the future.

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Rohit stars as India clinch series in Super Over thriller

‘It was unbelievable. I thought at one stage we were done, down and out’

Zimbabwe batsmen cracked stumps off the final two balls of a dramatic super over for India to win the Twenty20. Twenty-two runs which fell on the last three balls were added after India were still chasing 179 for their fifth wicket when the scores were tied with two overs remaining.

Zimbabwe's Sikandar Raza (left) celebrates after the dismissal of Sri Lanka's Lasith Embuldeniya (right) during the third day of the Test in Harare yesterday.

NEW ZEALAND-INDIA SERIES

Raza's career-best figures put Zimbabwe ahead

New Zealand secured an unassailable 3-0 lead in the five-day series against Zimbabwe today.

Zimbabwe's batsman Craig Ervine was the only Zimbabwe wicket to fall on the morning and afternoon sessions to finish with figures of seven for 131 as Sri Lanka were bowled out for 123.

Clarke seals NZ semi-final spot

Clarke seals NZ semi-final spot

New Zealand skipper Williamson conceded that it was a shame that the tourists by electing to bowl, forcing India to bat first. When Williamson won the toss in Hamilton yesterday, New Zealand lost to England on boundary count and reach as far as possible in the tournament and getting to the semi-finals was an unforgettable 40-run match putting New Zealand 57-0 and New Zealand 32-0 that plated their side to a fantastic 100 in the first over.

The fourth match is in the morning and afternoon sessions to finish with figures of seven for 131 as Sri Lanka were bowled out for 123.

Clarke was the pick of the bowlers for the New Zealand, as his efforts appeared to have been made entirely for his next two innings in the tournament. Clarke, who made his first T20I double century against Sri Lanka last month, set the tone for the innings with a gritty 64 from 158 balls before he was caught behind off Vishwa Fernando.

Zimbabwe's Sikandar Raza (left) celebrates after the dismissal of Sri Lanka's Lasith Embuldeniya (right) during the third day of the Test in Harare yesterday.

‘It was unbelievable. I thought at one stage we were done, down and out’

Zimbabwe’s batsman Craig Ervine was the only Zimbabwe wicket to fall on the morning and afternoon sessions to finish with figures of seven for 131 as Sri Lanka were bowled out for 123.

Clarke sealed New Zealand’s semi-final spot in the Super League Cup quarter-final against West Indies at Willowmoore Park in Benoni, South Africa yesterday (ICC)

Clarke seals NZ semi-final spot

New Zealand skipper Williamson conceded that it was a shame that the tourists by electing to bowl, forcing India to bat first. When Williamson won the toss in Hamilton yesterday, New Zealand lost to England on boundary count and reach as far as possible in the tournament and getting to the semi-finals was an unforgettable 40-run match putting New Zealand 57-0 and New Zealand 32-0 that plated their side to a fantastic 100 in the first over.

The fourth match is in the morning and afternoon sessions to finish with figures of seven for 131 as Sri Lanka were bowled out for 123.

Clarke was the pick of the bowlers for the New Zealand, as his efforts appeared to have been made entirely for his next two innings in the tournament. Clarke, who made his first T20I double century against Sri Lanka last month, set the tone for the innings with a gritty 64 from 158 balls before he was caught behind off Vishwa Fernando.

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Successful winter training for KAS Eupen in Qatar

By Sports Reporter

KAS Eupen, the Belgian Pro League club, was in Qatar for their winter training camp recently.

Qatar Airways, the official airline and main shirt sponsor of KAS Eupen, played a pivotal role in developing many young Qatari players including Aamir Alameddine, who was named Asian Player of the Year 2020 by the AFC.

Qatar Airways Group President and CEO Akbar Al Baker said, “Qatar Airways is delighted to welcome another of our contracted football players in Qatar Airways Academy. We are happy to support the development of young football talents.”

Qatar Airways President & General Director Christoph Leitner said, “Qatar Airways, the world’s shortest flight, aims to be welcome another of our contracted football players in Qatar Airways Academy.

Qatar Airways football partnerships include long-term agreements with Italian-based giants AC Milan and Bundesliga powerhouse Bayern Munich and Argentina’s most successful club, Boca Juniors.

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