BERTENS RARING TO GO

Dutch fifth seed has not played competitively since October courtesy an injury, will face Ostapenko today

By Yash Mudgal

World No. 11 Kiki Bertens hasn't competed since last year's French Open, due to an Achilles injury that required surgery. The Dutch No. 1, who has since spent her time recuperating in the Netherlands, will make a return in Qatar Total Open, and was indeed glad on the practice court.

"I had a good hitting session yesterday, working on good forehand, backhand and serves. I am ready and hungry to play some matches to believe, said Bertens in a virtual press conference yesterday, hoping to build the rhythm and get back at her previous best for the season.

For the first time in ten years, Bertens is deft to land in October courtesy an injury and also her Qatar Total Open debut in a rain-track in a wheelchair after her victory in the quarter-finals, she fell to eventual champion Elise Mertens. Last year, she was stopped in the round of 16 by Chinese Zheng Saisai.

This year's tournament is Bertens' fourth appearance in Doha. She made her Qatar Total Open debut in a nail-biting 2013 opening round, when she upset French Open-champion Caroline Wozniacki.

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Winning in Doha would be special, says Jabeur

The Tunisian is the highest ranked Arab player in the history of women’s tennis

Ons Jabeur of Tunisia becomes the first Arab woman to reach the quarter-finals of a Grand Slam when she made it to the last eight in the 2020 Australian Open.

Jabeur, who is currently ranked 48th in the world, is yet to win a single tournament title on the WTA Tour, and is currently quarantining in Doha in preparation for the first Grand Slam of the year after winning the Qatar Total Open. She is currently at 48th in the WTA Rankings, having broken into the top-100 to become the 75th-ranked woman when she broke into the top-100 earlier this year.

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While there is still speculation over the kind of wicket that will be debuted between India and England at the Gabba, several cricketers are speculating on the kind of pitch that will be suited for the upcoming Test on Thursday.

“I don’t think the (4th) Test will be too good. I know what we are going to get. I guess they are making their conditions and trying to make the pitch as good as possible. We need to try to spin quite considerably from ball one. So it is almost about trying to find a way to play games in these conditions,” veteran batsman Rohit Sharma told the media yesterday.

“Generally when a ball spins, it is fun to keep. The biggest thing is that India is that when a ball spins, it is very consistent. You know that the ball is going to turn,” said Sharma. He added that the pink ball made things even more difficult during the third Test which England lost in Brisbane. “One can spin square past the bat, or it can skid quite quickly. (These have been) couple of tough periods which have kept us,” said Sharma.

“The last two games were the hardest that I have kept. It was not turning the ball on the track like that. They were like day two or three, the ball was really off the seam but there was not really a spin which we could pot out. It was a really tight one,” said Sharma.

He said that the batsmen were not deceived by the spinners and would have to grind hard and make sure that the bowlers do not get their wickets.

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They're very capable of going low. That's why I've got to be ready from hole one.

Morikawa leads WGC by two over Kopeka, Horschel

Collin Morikawa plays a shot on the 15th hole during the third round of the World Golf Championships-Mexico Championship at the Chapultepec Golf Club in Mexico City.

Morikawa, who ranked fourth in the world, shot a three-under-par 67 and holds a two-shot lead heading into today's final round.

The 2020 PGA Championship winner, seeking his second victory in the world's top-50 event, birdied six of his first nine holes and preserved his lead by making pars on the final two.

Morikawa said he's been watching footage of his previous wins, saying: “I've been looking at the highlights of the last two majors that I've won and it's going to be a challenge to go out and shoot a 63 or 64, I don't know, but I'm just trying to keep the momentum going and keep the positive energy.

“I'm really happy with the way I'm hitting the ball and I'm just trying to keep that going for the next few rounds.

“Morikawa, who won his first major title at the PGA Championship two years ago, shot a bogey-free 68 on Saturday to join three other players on 204.

Billy Horschel (67-67-69), Abraham Ancer (67-68-69) and Max Homa (70-67-67) also finished at 203.

At 202, Patrick Reed (69-68-69) and Tony Finau (68-67-72) were two shots back, followed by Louis Oosthuizen (69-66-68), Hideki Matsuyama (66-70-67), Branden Grace (66-69-68), Seamus Power (69-69-67), Cameron Smith (68-68-67), Andrew Putnam (67-70-66), Brandt Snedeker (68-69-67), Ted Potter Jr. (69-69-67), Jhonattan Vegas (69-70-68), and Sepp Straka (69-70-69).

A total of 74 players made the cut and will play Sunday’s final round.

Morikawa's 20-under-par effort is the lowest third-round score in the event since 2004.

LEADING THIRD-ROUND SCORES

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Morikawa, who leads the World Golf Rankings, has posted top-10 finishes in 10 of his 12 career starts.

While Morikawa is looking to win his third career WGC title, Kopeka is seeking his first major victory.

Kopeka, who finished fourth in the 2021 FedEx Cup Playoffs, shot an even-par 72 on Saturday to move into a tie for second place with Reed and Horschel.

Kopeka, who won the 2021 US Open, is looking to become the first player to win his first WGC title.

Kopeka said he's looking forward to playing in the final group with Morikawa and Horschel.

“I've been looking at the leaderboard and seeing how they're playing, and I think they’re going to have a good day tomorrow,” Kopeka said.

“I’m feeling good and I think I can make a run at it.”

Kopeka is looking to become the first player to win a WGC event in his first appearance.

“I'm just going to keep plugging away, keep working and see what happens,” Kopeka said.

Kopeka is No. 16 in the world rankings and has posted top-10 finishes in six of his last seven starts.

“Morikawa and Horschel are both very good players and I'm excited to play with them,” Kopeka said.

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**NHL**

**Alvarez beats Yildirim to retain super middleweight crown**

S eptember 26, 2021

**AP**

**SPORT**

*Gulf Times*

**Monday, March 1, 2021**

**Alvarez beats Yildirim to retain super middleweight crown**

“His work done,” Alvarez roared. "Ready to make history. No one has done it at 168.”

Mexican fighter Canelo Alvarez stepped off suggestions that he wants to be remembered as the greatest boxer the world has ever seen. “I respect everyone but I want to make my own history,” Alvarez said.

Alvarez’s bout will go down in history as the first to inflate boxing purses. It was supposed to be a fight for the ages, but once again, the light welterweight could not even be seen through the smoke. The fight was scheduled for the last round of the first of the four, and eventually gave Alvarez the fourth to win the super middleweight crown.

**NBA**

**Dončić’s Mavericks halve streaking Nets**

**‘I THOUGHT WE HAD ONE QUARTER WITH ENERGY, THE THIRD QUARTER’**

Luka Doncic scored 27 points to lead the Dallas Mavericks to a 112-109 NBA victory in Brooklyn on Monday, snapping the short- handed Nets’ eight-game winning streak. James Harden scored 34 points for the Nets, who had their winning streak snapped in the absence of Kevin Durant and Kyrie Irving.

Doncic missed his seventh game with a strained left hamstring while living out on rest his surgically repaired right shoulder. Harden had four points in this second half, sitting out most of the fourth quarter in which Dallas led by 14.

The Nets went two-for-two against the Mavericks, who scored 17 points in the first since missing three games with bad hand.

“They played like a team today,” said Doncic, who was able to celebrate the win with a smile.

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“A-Vasilevskiy gets 2nd straight shutout, Lightning roll”

Vasilevskiy gets 2nd straight shutout, Lightning roll

**Tampa Bay Lightning left wing Anthony Cirelli scored 2nd straight goal to lead the Lightning to a 4-0 victory over the New York Islanders on Monday night. The Lightning, who have been shut out in three of their last four games, scored three goals in the first period for the fourth to hand Alvarez the super middleweight crown.**

The Lightning’s victory gave them 17 points in 14 games, and the Islanders are now 4-11-0 in their last 15 games with a 2-0 stoppage time in overtime. It was the team’s first regulation loss since Nov. 8 at the Nassau Coliseum.

Cirelli’s goal at 1:40 of the first period gave the Lightning a 2-0 lead, and the Islanders couldn't recover as Vasilevskiy made 33 saves. The Lightning's victory gave them 17 points in 14 games, and the Islanders are now 4-11-0 in their last 15 games with a 2-0 stoppage time in overtime. It was the team’s first regulation loss since Nov. 8 at the Nassau Coliseum.
Kruse helps Inter pull seven points clear

'It’s been a good feeling, ' said Lukaku as Inter moved clear of champions Juventus, who were top of the Serie A table yesterday. In- ter are now two points clear of second-placed Juventus. Ruslan Malinovskiy placed Sardinians their first win since back from their 2-0 loss to Monaco at the weekend. Brest. Lille are now two points ahead of second-placed Paris Saint-Germain, although last season we lost in these matches, this is a revolution in the league. The breakthrough came when Luis Araujo scored with four minutes left against Real and was ruled out along with Luis Araujo, with another. Josuha Guilavogui sitting out a three-match ban. Inter start the second half of the season with two points clear of the top of the table, but there is a lot at stake against Real. In the relegation battle, Cavani managed their 14-match window in a game. It was a good start to the season with the first goal in charge. Lille’s first match with the first goal in charge. It was a good start to the season, to the first goal. Nice to be able to help my team against Real and was ruled out along with Luis Araujo. Against Real and was ruled out along with Luis Araujo.
Arsenal deliver a hammer blow to Leicester's faint hopes of winning the title

**PREMIER LEAGUE**

United frustrated by penalty row, Balestars for Spurs

M anchester United were left frustrated by a VAR penalty controversy on Saturday after Jonjo Shelvey’s tumble against Chelsea was awarded a penalty despite the midfielder’s suitably disjointed roundhouse kick.

Shelvey was already on a yellow card but was shown a red after Ashley Foytzeck picked up his arm to keep the ball from going out of play. The incident appeared to happen outside the penalty area.

Highlighting the need for consistency, Chelsea were awarded a 90th-minute penalty at the other end when Arsenal goalkeeper, Bernd Leno made a howler.

**LOSS**

Former West Ham boss Roeder dies

F ormer West Ham and Newcastle manager Glenn Roeder has died at the age of 65 after a battle with cancer.

Roeder first took charge of the Hammers in 2006 after being appointed following a short spell with Huddersfield Town in the Football League Second Division.

He had surgery to remove a brain tumor in 2016 and was initially given a prognosis of three to six months. However, he continued to work and manage despite ongoing health issues.

Roeder was a former professional footballer and manager who had a successful career both as a coach and player.

**SPOTLIGHT**

Commercial Bank gives local golfers chance to play with pros at European tour event

C ommercial Bank offers local golfers a chance to play with pro golfers at the European Tour event this month.

The bank has announced that local golfers will have the opportunity to play with professional golfers at the Commercial Bank Qatar Masters, which is scheduled to take place this month.

The bank believes this will be a great opportunity for local golfers to gain experience playing with professionals.

**BETTESEUROPECUP WITH CADZY Victory**

Real Madrid came into their own in critical moments, says Zidane

R eal Madrid coach Zinedine Zidane believes that the team’s resilience and ability to step up in critical moments is what has helped them reach the top of La Liga.

“Real Madrid is a great team with great players. We are always looking for ways to improve and take our chances on the pitch,” Zidane said.

Zidane was full of praise for his players, particularly Luka Modric and Casemiro, who played key roles in the team’s victory.

**GOLF**

The golfers qualifying in the tournament produced impressive scores and featured 3 amateurs and 2 pros in total during the events.

**TOTTENHAM HOTSPUR**

Tottenham Hotspur’s Gareth Bale (left) scores past Barcelo’s goalkeeper Nick Pope during the Premier League match in London yesterday.

The game saw both teams produce impressive performances, with Tottenham winning 4-2 against Crystal Palace.

**MUNICH**

Manuel Neuer of Bayern Munich is seen in action during the Bundesliga match against VfB Stuttgart. He made 28 senior appearances in the season and scored 1 goal.

**FAIN**

Manchester United are unbeaten in the Premier League so far this season and are top of the league table. **`[Gulf Times]`**
TABLE TENNIS

WTT Contender qualifiers begin at Lusail Hall

A total of 298 players are taking part in the WTT Middle East Hub, representing 66 countries.

The Qatar Table Tennis Association president Khalid Al-Mohannadi and India Table Tennis Federation chief Mahesh Babu Garimella signed a co-operation agreement yesterday.

The QTTA president signed the agreement with his Indian counterpart in the sidelines of the WTT Middle East Hub.

“The Qatar Table Tennis Association (QTTA) has implemented strict precautionary measures in the tournament to limit the spread of the coronavirus. The fans are not allowed to watch the games since it’s an indoor tournament. Meanwhile, 15-year-old Indian Gods of Egypt stole the spotlight yesterday despite narrowly losing her match to Egypt’s Lin Leung 2-3. Hana is one of Egypt’s youngest stars, a fast-rising talent with many tippers hailing her as Haamid’s successor,” Gardashi wrote.

According to Gardashi, Dara, 17, has been one of Al-Mohannadi’s favorite players. However, the QTTA president is optimistic about Dara’s future in the sport.

It’s been an exciting show since the competition was launched. However, it’s still too early to predict the outcome of the WTT Middle East Hub. But it’s clear that the QTTA president wants to see his players bring home the gold medal. He’s confident they can do it, and he’s counting on their hard work and dedication to make it happen.

The Qatar Table Tennis Federation has been working hard to develop the sport in the country. They’ve invested a lot of time and resources into training and coaching their players. The QTTA president believes that the players are ready to compete at the highest levels.

In conclusion, the Qatar Table Tennis Federation is determined to bring home the gold medal at the WTT Middle East Hub. They’ve worked hard to prepare their players, and they’re confident they can do it. The QTTA president is counting on their hard work and dedication to make it happen. It’s been an exciting show since the competition was launched. However, it’s still too early to predict the outcome of the WTT Middle East Hub. But it’s clear that the QTTA president wants to see his players bring home the gold medal.