

Kerber clinches Sydney title

Sydney

Angelique Kerber won her first title since the 2016 US Open and extended her winning streak to nine matches with a 6-4, 6-4 win over Ashleigh Barty in the Sydney International final yesterday.

The 2016 Australian Open champion and former No. 1-ranked Kerber won four singles matches at the Hopman Cup in Perth, Western Australia, last week, helping Germany reach the final against Switzerland, and followed up with five wins in Sydney.

In a momentum-boosting buildup to the Australian Open, which starts Monday, Kerber had wins over Lucie Safarova, No. 2-seeded Venus Williams, former Australian Open finalist Dominika Cibulkova and Camila Giorgi before beating Barty to claim her 11th career title.

"I am playing amazing tennis again and feeling just great," Kerber said. "It feels very good to win my first title in my first tournament this year."

Kerber had a breakout season in 2016, beating Serena Williams in the final to claim her first major title at the Australian Open and going on to reach the Wimbledon final and win the US Open. She reached the No. 1 ranking in September that year and was seeded No. 1 for last year's Australian Open, but was upset in the first round and her year-end ranking dropped to 21.

After failing to win a title in 2017, the German left-hander is now feeling confident again ahead of the first Grand Slam tournament of the year.

"I have had a great week and the final was not easy against Ash but I was able to play my game in important moments. I feel like I am getting closer to my 2016 level."

In the men's final, Russian qualifier Daniil Medvedev beat 18-year-old Australian Alex de Minaur 1-6, 6-4, 7-5.

De Minaur has a wild-card entry to the Australian Open, where he'll open against 19th-seeded Tomas Berdych, the 2010 Wimbledon finalist and a two-time semifinalist at Melbourne Park. (AP)



Angelique Kerber kisses her trophy