

# Relieved Dimitrov survives huge five-set scare

## Melbourne

**R**elieved world No.3 Grigor Dimitrov survived a massive scare to beat American qualifier MacKenzie McDonald in five sets and reach the third round of the Australian Open on Wednesday.

The Bulgarian needed to pull out all stops to see off the 186th-ranked McDonald, 4-6, 6-2, 6-4, 0-6, 8-6 in the 3hr 25min night match on Rod Laver Arena.

Dimitrov, who is ranked only below Rafael Nadal and Roger Federer, drew on all his experience to avoid his first defeat to a qualifier at a Grand Slam.

McDonald attacked the third seed's signature backhand, limiting

him to only five winners in the marathon match and restricted Dimitrov to just 28 percent of second service points with the Bulgarian committing nine double faults.

It was a mighty relieved Dimitrov who lived to fight another day, and line up a third round clash with young Russian Andrey Rublev.

"What can I say, it was a tough day," he said.

"I'm most happy with that. He was playing absolutely unbelievable, he deserves a lot of credit."

Dimitrov said the pair had practised together in California, where McDonald had a

successful college tennis career with UCLA.

"He has improved so much. I just had to fight and the experience in the end really helped me," Dimitrov said.

"I'm very happy with win, not because of the way I played, but because of the way I fought. It all came down to a few points here and there."

The stylish Bulgarian claimed the biggest title of his career when he beat Belgium's David Goffin in the ATP Finals in London among his four titles for the year.

But he has never been beyond the semi-finals of a Grand Slam,

reaching the last four at Wimbledon in 2014 and in Melbourne last year.

McDonald, 22, was making only his second appearance at a Grand Slam after his debut at 2016 US Open.

The American has a successful college tennis background, winning the 2016 NCAA singles and doubles titles before turning professional. (AFP)

Grigor Dimitrov of Bulgaria returns a shot during the men's singles second round match against Mackenzie McDonald of the United States



## Wozniacki battles back from the brink

### Melbourne

**S**econd seed Caroline Wozniacki saved two match points as she battled back from 5-1 down in the deciding set to beat Melbourne Park debutante Jana Fett 3-6 6-2 7-5 in the second round of the Australian Open on Wednesday.

Former world number one Wozniacki was simply outplayed by the Croatian for large parts of the

match but rallied when the 21-year-old blinked and knocked off six straight games on the trot avert the upset and claim her place in the third round.

"That was crazy, I don't know how I got back into the match," said a relieved Wozniacki.

"I'm very proud of the way I came back. It was definitely very difficult. Definitely wasn't my best match, especially in the beginning.

"All of a sudden seeing myself down, almost out of the tournament, I started playing better and started really playing the tennis that I wanted to play."

Fett, ranked 119th in the world, played some brilliant shots throughout the contest and rattled off eight straight points to win the opening set in 33 minutes.

Fired by the first of two rows with umpire Richard Haigh over delayed challenges, Wozniacki worked her way back into the contest to take the second stanza when Fett hit a return long.

The Croatian refused to fade away, though, and Wozniacki threw her racket to the ground in disgust after being broken for 3-1 with Fett driving home her advantage to stand on brink

of the third round at 5-1 40-15 up.

"I was thinking at that point she still has to win four more balls to win this match," said Wozniacki.

"I felt like I was one foot out of the tournament. She served a great serve down the T, as well. It was just slightly out. I was kind of lucky.

"Then I felt her tighten up just slightly. I thought to myself ... 'make her win it, don't give it to her'."

Fett twice served for the match but nerves got the better of her both times and Wozniacki took full advantage to set up a third-round meeting with Belgian Kiki Bertens. (Reuters)

## Kyrgios fined for colourful language

### Melbourne

**A**ustralia's volatile Nick Kyrgios has been fined for a colourful directive to the rowdy crowd during his opening round win at the Australian Open.

The 22-year-old was slapped with a \$3,000 penalty for unsportsmanlike conduct early in his 6-1, 6-2, 6-4 win over Brazilian Rogerio Dutra Silva in a night match on Hisense Arena on Monday.

The Australian was among six players fined a total \$15,000 for indiscretions in qualifying and the main draw's first phase at the year's opening Grand Slam.

Croatia's Borna Coric was hit with a

\$5,000 penalty for racket abuse during his defeat to Australia's John Millman.

Argentina's Diego Schwartzman and Romanian Marius Copil were fined \$2,000 each for the same offence.

Kazakhstan's Alexander Bublik was handed two \$1,000 fines and American Stefan Kozlov was penalised \$1,000, both for audible obscenities during qualifying. (AFP)

## Australian Open: Day three Highlights

### Melbourne

**W**orld number one Rafa Nadal eased to a second round victory at the Australian Open on Wednesday while third seed Grigor Dimitrov was made to work hard to reach the third round in a five-set thriller against American Mackenzie McDonald.

Caroline Wozniacki progressed to the last 32 of the women's draw and will be joined by Ukrainian Elina Svitolina and Jelena Ostapenko.

France's Alize Cornet handed 12th-seed Julia Goerges a surprise

defeat to snap the German's 15-game winning streak and set up a third round clash with Belgian Elise Mertens, who beat 23rd-seed Daria Gavrilova.

Seed slayers Belinda Bencic and Zhang Shuai, who ousted Venus Williams and Sloane Stephens in the opening round, were knocked out by Thai qualifier Luksika Kumkhum and Czech Republic's Denisa Allertova respectively.

Home favourite Nick Kyrgios, sixth-seeded Marin Cilic and Britain's Kyle Edmund also sealed progression to the third round of men's draw. (Reuters)

Caroline Wozniacki of Denmark

Nick Kyrgios