

Fognini leads seeds into Second Round



Intrum Stockholm Open

Stockholm

Three seeds — No. 6 Fabio Fognini, No. 7 Yuichi Sugita and No. 8 Fernando Verdasco — all got off to winning starts yesterday at the Intrum Stockholm Open.

Italian Fognini, who picked up the Gstaad crown in July, opened his bid for a sixth ATP World Tour title by beating Malek Jaziri of Tunisia 7-5, 6-1 in 73 minutes. He now faces Argentine Leonardo Mayer or wild card Elias Ymer of Sweden.

Japan's Sugita lived to fight another day, withstanding 15 aces in a dramatic 1-6, 6-3, 7-6(4)

victory over Denis Istomin of Uzbekistan over one hour and 56 minutes. Istomin won the first five games of the pair's third FedEx ATP Head2Head meeting, then recovered from 3-5 in the third set before squandering a 4/2 advantage in the tie-break. Sugita goes onto meet Slovakian Norbert Gombos or 2009 titlist Marcos Baghdatis of Cyprus.

Spaniard Verdasco, runner-up at the Dubai Duty Free Tennis Championships in February, lost just one of his first service points (27/28) to record his fourth straight win in eight meetings

(5-3) against Robin Haase 6-3, 6-1 in 47 minutes. He awaits the winner of Slovakian qualifier Lukas Lacko and lucky loser Jurgen Zopp of Estonia.

Elsewhere, France's Jeremy Chardy set up a second-round encounter against third-seeded American Jack Sock after he hit 12 aces — and lost six of his first service points (27/33) — to beat Alessandro Giannessi of Italy 6-0, 7-5 in 72 minutes.

He also beat Giannessi a few weeks ago at the Shenzhen Open 7-6(6), 6-4 in the first round. (*atpworldtour*)

Karlovic advances in Antwerp



Ivo Karlovic (file pic)

Antwerp

Ivo Karlovic saved three match points in a two-hour, 13-minute battle to eliminate Guido Pella, 3-6, 7-5, 7-6(10) in the first round of the European Open in Antwerp, Belgium.

The 38 year old saved two break points in the second set at 3-3 to avoid going down a set and a break against the Argentine, before holding off Pella's three match points in the third-set tie-break. Each opportunity was on Karlovic's serve, and the Croatian capitalised on his third opportunity to advance to the second round.

In other action, Sergiy Stakhovsky temporarily halted Jared Donaldson's efforts in the Emirates ATP Race To Milan with a 7-6(4), 6-4 victory over the American. The Ukrainian saved the only break point he faced, and broke the 21 year old at 4-4 in the second set to

give himself the advantage he needed to close out the match.

Donaldson sits in fifth place in the Race with 890 points, with his closest competitor, No. 6 Borna Coric, losing in the first round in Moscow Monday. The Top 7 players in the Race automatically qualify for the first Next Gen ATP Finals, with an Italian wild card event deciding the eighth player.

Four seeded singles players will begin their tournaments yesterday, with No. 7 Benoit Paire opening the day's play against Joao Sousa, sixth seed Pablo Cuevas taking on #NextGenATP Greek Stefanos Tsitsipas and No. 8 Alexandr Dolgoplov confronting Henri Laaksonen. Fifth seed David Ferrer will kick off the night session on Centre Court against qualifier Stefano Travaglia. (*atpworldtour*)

Eugenie Bouchard falls in first round

Eugenie Bouchard has lost another first-round match, this time at the Luxembourg Open.

The Westmount, Que., native started strong with a 6-2 first-set victory over Swede Johanna Larsson, but Larsson rebounded fast, taking the final two sets 6-2, 6-3.

Bouchard, ranked No. 80 in the world, fired in six aces but was shaky on her serve, converting on just 51 per

cent of her first serve opportunities, and only winning 38 per cent of her second-serve rallies.

Meanwhile, Larson, No. 79, broke Bouchard on over half her chances, including the final set of the match.

In their only other match at Roland Garros in 2014, Bouchard defeated Larsson.

Larsson is set to face Brazilian Beatriz Haddad Maia next. (*cbs.ca*)

Canadian player Marino announces return to game

London

Rebecca Marino, once Canada's top-ranked women's tennis player, announced she is returning to tennis after nearly five years away.

The Vancouver native will play in two ITF Women's Circuit events in Saguenay, Que., next week and in Toronto the following week.

Marino, now 26, left the women's tour in 2013 because of a depression diagnosis. She had reached a world ranking high of No. 38 in July 2011 and made a WTA final in Memphis in February 2011, where she lost to Magdalena Rybarikova. She won two matches at the



Rebecca Marino (file pic)

French Open that year and another at Wimbledon to earn her top-40 ranking.

"I'm excited to come back and play in Canada, especially in tournaments that I participated in a number of times in my career," she said in a statement released by Tennis Canada. (*nationalpost*)

Nadal withdraws from Swiss Indoors

London

Rafael Nadal has pulled out of next week's Swiss Indoors tournament in Basel to rest his right knee.

The world number one, who has a long history of knee problems, wore tape during his final defeat by Roger Federer in the Shanghai Masters last weekend.

Nadal has enjoyed great success on hard courts this summer but has made no secret of how gruelling he finds the surface on his body.

After winning the US Open last month and then winning the China Open title in Beijing immediately before his run to the final in Shanghai, Nadal has decided to take a week off.

The Spaniard wrote on Facebook: "I sadly announce that I have to pull out of the Swiss Indoors Basel."

"After seeing my doctor in Spain just after landing from Shanghai, I am suffering from an over-stressing of the knee and the problems were

already present at the tournament in Shanghai, which now forces me to take time off on advice of my doctor."

"After two great weeks in China, with the title in Beijing and the final in Shanghai, it is time for some rest."

"I want to send a special message to the many tennis fans in Switzerland, which have always showed great support and respect also on my matches with Roger. Hope to see you next year."

Nadal's withdrawal from the tournament in Federer's home town potentially opens the door to the Swiss for the year-end world number one spot.

Federer currently sits nearly 2,000 points behind Nadal but there are 3,000 up for grabs from Basel, the Paris Masters and the ATP Finals.

Nadal's next event is now scheduled to be the final Masters tournament of the season in Paris, starting on October 30. (*eurosport*)



Rafael Nadal (file pic)