

Muguruza enters Cincinnati final



Garbine Muguruza of Spain returns a shot

Cincinnati
Reigning Wimbledon
 champion Garbine Muguruza trounced top-ranked defending champion Karolina Pliskova 6-3, 6-2 yesterday to reach the final of the WTA and ATP Cincinnati Masters.

The sixth-ranked Spaniard reached her first US event final by flipping the script in a rematch of their 2016 Cincinnati semi-final.

"I'm just happy to be in the final," said Muguruza. "I was hoping to get it and my concentration was really good. Very happy with this win."

Muguruza advanced to Sunday's final against the winner of a later match between Romania's second-ranked Simona Halep and 151st-ranked US wildcard Sloane Stephens.

Halep would overtake Pliskova and claim the world number one ranking for the first time in her career by winning the Cincinnati crown. Pliskova had won six matches in a row over Muguruza since losing their first meeting in the first round of the 2013 French Open.

"I lost to her so many times, I figured out something was

going wrong," Muguruza said. "I worked hard on beating these kinds of opponents. I returned well. My shots were there. It was a gorgeous day."

Last month, Muguruza won her second Grand Slam after the 2016 French Open and her fourth career title on the All-England grass. Pliskova, last year's US Open runner-up, sought her fourth title of the year after Brisbane, Doha and Eastbourne. Serena Williams from 2014 and 2015 remains the only back-to-back Cincinnati women's winner. Muguruza, her left thigh

bandaged, blasted a backhand winner on her fourth break point to take the opening game of the match and broke again on another backhand winner to take the first set after 36 minutes.

Pliskova was denied on three break points in the second set's opening game, the only ones she faced in the match, and Muguruza broke to 4-2 with another backhand winner.

In the final game, Pliskova saved four match before sending a forehand wide to surrender the break and the match after 79 minutes. (AFP)

Football Results

English Championship

Aston Villa	4	Norwich	2
Bolton	1	Derby	2
Bristol City	0	Millwall	0
Fulham	0	Sheffield Wednesday	1
Ipswich	2	Brentford	0
Nottingham Forest	2	Middlesbrough	1
Preston	1	Reading	0
QPR	2	Hull	1
Sheffield United	1	Barnsley	0
Wolves	1	Cardiff	2
Sunderland	0	Leeds	2

English Premier League

Bournemouth	0	Watford	2
Burnley	0	West Brom	1
Leicester	2	Brighton	0
Liverpool	1	Crystal Palace	0
Southampton	3	West Ham	2
Stoke	1	Arsenal	0

German league:

Hoffenheim	1	Werder Bremen	0
Hertha Berlin	2	Stuttgart	0
Hamburg	1	Augsburg	0
Mainz	0	Hanover 96	1
Wolfsburg	0	Borussia Dortmund	3
Schalke 04	2	RB Leipzig	0

Scottish Premiership:

Aberdeen	2	Dundee	1
Hibernian	1	Hamilton	3
Kilmarnock	0	Celtic	2
Motherwell	2	Ross County	0
Rangers	0	Hearts	0
St Johnstone	1	Partick	0

Farah bids to give memorable farewell



London

British athletics great Mo Farah will hope his final track race on home turf on Sunday will have a happier ending than last Saturday's world 5,000 metres final.

The 34-year-old, who will compete in the 3,000 metres at the Diamond League meeting in Birmingham, produced a courageous performance just falling short of overhauling Ethiopian Muktar Edris.

That defeat, his first since the 10,000m in the 2011 world championships, ended a remarkable run of global titles in which he upset the Kenyan/Ethiopian hegemony in distance races and included achieving the 5,000/10,000 double in successive Olympics.

Farah, who came to England aged eight with his mother and two of his brothers after a long trek from war-torn Somalia, is assured of a warm reception from the spectators if not from the press at whom he fired a blast after his 5,000m defeat.

His relations with large parts of the British media have deteriorated over the years because of his association with controversial coach Alberto Salazar. (AFP)

BMC win opening stage of Vuelta

Nîmes

BMC Racing emerged victors from yesterday's team time trial as the Vuelta a Espana got underway under heightened security measures following two terrorist attacks in northeastern Spanish region of Catalonia.

For just the third time the Vuelta started outside Spain in the southern French city of Nîmes as American team BMC beat out Quick-Step Floors and Team Sunweb by six seconds in a time of 15mins 58secs for the 13.7km route with Australian Rohan Dennis taking the leader's red jersey.

Pre-race favourite Chris Froome's Sky team finished fourth a further three seconds back, but that was still enough for Froome to gain some early ground on his rivals in the general classification.

The threat of terror overshadowed the start of cycling's third Grand Tour of the season after 13 people were killed when a van ploughed into packed crowds on Barcelona's famous Las Ramblas on Thursday.

Attackers struck again in the early hours of Friday morning in Cambrils, 120 kilometres south of



BMC Racing Team competes during the first stage

Barcelona, where a car rammed into pedestrians, killing one person.

After two more stages in France and the tiny Principality of Andorra, the race enters Spain on Tuesday in Tarragona, just 20 kilometres along the Mediterranean coast from Cambrils.

However, the race got off to a gentle start in picturesque surroundings with the short

course still enough for Froome to take an early advantage.

The four-time Tour de France winner is aiming to become just the third rider after Frenchmen Jacques Anquetil (1963) and Bernard Hinault (1978) to win both the Tour and Vuelta in the same year. Orica-Scott led by British twins Adam and Simon Yates were nine seconds back on Sky in fifth. (AFP)

Results

Vuelta a Espana stage 1

1. BMC Racing Team (USA) 15mins 58 secs
2. Quick-Step Floors (BEL) at 0:06 secs
3. Team Sunweb (GER) s.t.
4. Team Sky 0:09.
5. ORICA-Scott (AUS) 0:17
6. BORA-hansgrohe (GER) 0:21
7. Lotto Soudal (BEL) 0:24
8. Movistar (ESP) s.t.
9. Bahrain Merida (BAH) 0:31
10. Katusha-Alpecin (SUI) 0:33