

Ageless Nadal outlasts teenager

Australia's Daria Gavrilova celebrates after victory against Switzerland's Timea Bacsinszky

Croatia's Mirjana Lucic-Baroni celebrates her victory against Poland's Agnieszka Radwanska

Britain's Johanna Konta celebrates beating Denmark's Caroline Wozniacki

Czech Republic's Karolina Pliskova celebrates her victory against Latvia's Jelena Ostapenko

Serena Williams of the US reacts after a point against Nicole Gibbs

Melbourne

Rafael Nadal's ageing legs outlasted German teenager Alexander Zverev in

an epic five sets as Serena Williams sailed into the last 16 at the Australian Open yesterday.

Nadal needed all his trademark grit against Zverev, 19, dubbed "the future of tennis", and his superior fitness told as he ground out a thrilling 4-6, 6-3, 6-7 (5/7), 6-3, 6-2 win.

Germany's Zverev looked in discomfort as he won a punishing 37-shot rally nearly four hours into their contest as Nadal, still full of running, pressed his advantage in the final set.

It means Nadal, 30, follows fellow veteran Roger Federer into the last 16 of a contest now missing defending champion Novak Djokovic after stunning defeat to Denis Istomin.

"Everybody knows how good Alexander is," said Nadal, who will play France's Gael Monfils in the fourth round. "He's the future of our sport, and the present."

Williams, by contrast, had no such trouble as she brushed off fellow American Nicole

Gibbs 6-1, 6-3 to maintain her charge towards a 23rd Grand Slam title.

Williams, back after an injury break at the end of 2016, has been in brilliant form and she will take some stopping as she zeroes in on Steffi Graf's Open-era record.

The next player to take on Williams will be Barbora Strycova, who ousted France's Caroline Garcia to earn a shot at the world number two.

"Obviously I'm here for one reason," said Williams, who again lifted her index finger in celebration at her victory, symbolising the number one.

"But at the end of the day, this is all bonus for me and I look forward to playing (Strycova). I'm ready for her."

Elsewhere 117th-ranked Istomin built on his win over Djokovic by beating Pablo Carreno Busta 6-4, 4-6, 6-4, 4-6, 6-2 to reach the last 16 for the first time.

David Goffin halted towering Croatian Ivo Karlovic, who won a tournament-record 84-game match in the first round, to set up a clash against Austrian eighth seed Dominic Thiem.

Results

Men's singles -3rd rd

Dominic Thiem (AUT x8) bt Benoit Paire (FRA) 6-1, 4-6, 6-4, 6-4
David Goffin (BEL x11) bt Ivo Karlovic (CRO x20) 6-3, 6-2, 6-4
Roberto Bautista (ESP x13) bt David Ferrer (ESP x21) 7-5, 6-7 (6/8), 7-6 (7/3), 6-4
Denis Istomin (UZB) bt Pablo Carreno-Busta (ESP x30) 6-4, 4-6, 6-4, 4-6, 6-2
Rafael Nadal (ESP x9) bt Alexander Zverev (GER x24) 4-6, 6-3, 6-7 (5/7), 6-3, 6-2
Gael Monfils (FRA x6) bt Philipp Kohlschreiber (GER x32) 6-3, 7-6 (7/1), 6-4
Milos Raonic (CAN) bt Gilles Simon (FRA) 6-2, 7-6 (7/5), 3-6, 6-3

Women's singles -3rd rd

Jennifer Brady (USA) bt Elena Vesnina (RUS x14) 7-6 (7/4), 6-2
Mirjana Lucic-Baroni (CRO) bt Maria Sakkari (GRE) 3-6, 6-2, 6-3
Ekaterina Makarova (RUS x30) bt Dominika Cibulkova (SVK x6) 6-2, 6-7 (3/7), 6-3
Barbora Strycova (CZE x16) bt Caroline Garcia (FRA x21) 6-2, 7-5
Serena Williams (USA x2) bt Nicole Gibbs (USA) 6-1, 6-3
Johanna Konta (GBR x9) bt Caroline Wozniacki (DEN x17) 6-3, 6-1
Karolina Pliskova (CZE x5) bt Jelena Ostapenko (LAT) 4-6, 6-0, 10-8
Daria Gavrilova (AUS x22) bt Timea Bacsinszky (SUI x12) 6-3, 5-7, 6-4

Spain's Rafael Nadal serves against Germany's Alexander Zverev

Canada's Milos Raonic reacts while playing against France's Gilles Simon

Austria's Dominic Thiem celebrates his victory against Australia's Jordan Thompson

Spain's Roberto Bautista Agut hits a return against Spain's David Ferrer

"I was ready to fight until midnight if I had to," grinned the Belgian.

Roberto Bautista Agut ousted fellow Spaniard David Ferrer 7-5, 6-7 (6/8), 7-6 (7/3), 6-4 and will next play third seed Milos Raonic, who beat Gilles Simon 6-2, 7-6 (7/5), 3-6, 6-3.

In the women's draw, Britain's Johanna Konta maintained her sizzling form with a dominant 6-3, 6-1 victory over former world number one Caroline Wozniacki.

"Against someone like Caroline, she's not going to give it to you. You really do have to earn it and win it till the very last point. I'm just very happy I was able to keep that pressure on," said the ninth seed.

Konta's prize is a round-of-16 rematch with Russia's Ekaterina Makarova, whom she edged at the same stage last year, going 8-6 in the final set.

Makarova, seeded 30, beat sixth seed Dominika Cibulkova in a three set marathon.

Mirjana Lucic-Baroni, who hadn't won an Australian Open match since 1998 before this year, extended her fairytale run by beating Greece's Maria Sakkari 3-6, 6-2, 6-3. Next up for the 34-year-old Croatian, who put her career on hold to flee her abusive father, is American qualifier Jennifer Brady, who upset 14th seed Elena Vesnina. (AFP)

Uzbekistan's Denis Istomin reacts after a point against Spain's Pablo Carreno Busta