

Rossi ready for pain game

Madrid

Nine-time world champion Valentino Rossi said Thursday he fully expected to feel the pain as he returns to action at the Aragon Grand Prix, just 21 days after suffering a double leg fracture.

The 38-year-old Italian successfully completed a mandatory medical examination at the MotorLand Aragon circuit and was given the go-ahead to take part in free practice on Friday.

"I've worked a lot to have good power and less pain. I think it's important to come back on the bike as quickly as possible and not to spend another race at home," Yamaha rider Rossi told a news conference.

Rossi underwent surgery on September 1, a day after a crash in training, discharging himself from hospital the following day.

He completed 20 laps around the Misano circuit on Tuesday before heading to Aragon for further tests.

Rossi missed the San Marino Grand Prix because of the leg break, but remains fourth in the world championship standings, 42 points behind world champion Marc Marquez of Spain and Italy's Andrea Dovizioso with five rounds to go.

"I need to understand the feeling with the MotoGP bike because it's a bit different. In general I feel quite good, not too much pain and getting back there every day," he added.

Rossi won the Dutch MotoGP in Assen in June to reignite his dream of a 10th world title with the final race of the season finishing on November 12 in Valencia.



Movistar Yamaha MotoGP's Italian rider Valentino Rossi arrives for a press conference

McEnroe wants new Laver Cup to spark reform

Prague

John McEnroe said Thursday the new Laver Cup pitting Europe's top players against the rest of the world might finally inspire a reform to the format of the Davis Cup.

"I think we're all excited and hopeful that this is going to be successful and force some people to take a good hard look at the rest of the schedule too," the 58-year-old McEnroe told reporters in Prague.

"Davis Cup for example," added the five-time Davis Cup winner, who captains Team World in the three-day Laver Cup starting on Friday.

"(The Davis Cup) is such a big commitment that they need to make some changes," the seven-time Grand Slam champion said, backing up players claiming the team competition adds more pressure to their already tight calendars.

Betis shock Real on Ronaldo return

Madrid

Antonio Sanabria struck deep into stoppage time to hand Real Betis a shock 1-0 win away to Real Madrid on Wednesday as the European champions failed to score for the first time in 74 matches.

Defeat leaves Real already seven points adrift of leaders Barcelona just five games into their defence of La Liga having failed to win in all three home games so far this season.

Even the presence of Cristiano Ronaldo on his return from a five-match domestic ban couldn't break Betis' resistance as former Real goalkeeper Antonio Adan produced stunning saves from Isco, Toni Kroos and Gareth Bale.

And Betis snatched all three points in the 93rd minute when Sanabria powered home a header from Antonio Barragan's cross.

"Last year we won games we didn't deserve to and now it is the reverse," said Real coach Zinedine Zidane.

"The league is very long, in the end we'll see how it goes but we need to be calm and we know we will have better days."

It is the first time Betis have won at the Bernabeu since 1998.

"It is impossible to win here without suffering," said Betis boss Quique Setien.

"To win against a team like this, your goalie has to have a spectacular game and you have to have luck."

Ronaldo was recalled among three changes to the Madrid side from Sunday's 3-1 win at Real Sociedad as Zinedine Zidane named his strongest available side.

However, it was the visitors who made the stronger start and should have gone in front when Sanabria's goalbound effort was cleared off the line by Dani Carvajal.

Keylor Navas also produced a stunning save to tip Fabian Ruiz's rising drive over the bar.

At the other end, Adan made a smart stop to deny Isco just before half-time and Betis had to resist an onslaught after the break.

Ronaldo blazed wildly over from Bale's inch-perfect cross before Kroos forced Adan into another finger-tip stop.

The former Madrid goalkeeper's finest moment came in denying Bale in spectacular fashion 15 minutes from time, though, as the Welshman's backheeled volley was turned onto the post.

Betis were the side to finally have the ball in the net as the game entered five minutes of stoppage time, but Sanabria had strayed offside as he turned home Andres Guardado's shot.

However, they broke with purpose once more minutes later and this time Sanabria wasn't to be denied as he bulleted a header into the far corner from Antonio Barragan's cross. (AFP)



Real Madrid's forward from Portugal Cristiano Ronaldo (R) gestures during the Spanish league football match Real Madrid CF against Real Betis at the Santiago Bernabeu stadium