



Cilic through after Nadal retires

Rafael Nadal struggled with a muscle strain in his upper right thigh from late in the fourth set before abandoning the match

Melbourne

Marin Cilic beat Rafael Nadal 3-6 6-3 6-7 6-2 2-0 at the Australian Open in Melbourne after the Spaniard retired hurt.

A wincing Nadal struggled with a muscle strain in his upper right thigh from late in the fourth set before abandoning the match at 3-6 6-3 6-7(5) 6-2 2-0, leaving a packed Rod Laver Arena crushed with disappointment.

It was only the second time the world number one has retired in over 250 grand slam matches, his last, coincidentally, during the 2010 quarter-finals against Andy Murray.

"It's not the first time here," an ashen-faced Nadal told reporters.

"I am a positive person ... but today is an opportunity lost to be in a semi-finals of a grand slam."

Of the seven grand slam quarter-final defeats of his career, five have now come on the blue hardcourts at Melbourne Park.

The 16-times grand slam champion said he felt the strain in the third set but was

not affected until the fourth when it twinged during a scramble for a drop-shot. He signed off his news conference on a sour note, complaining that too many players were getting injuries.

"Somebody who is running the tour should

think a little bit about what's going on," said the Spaniard. "I don't know if they have to think a little bit about the health of the players.

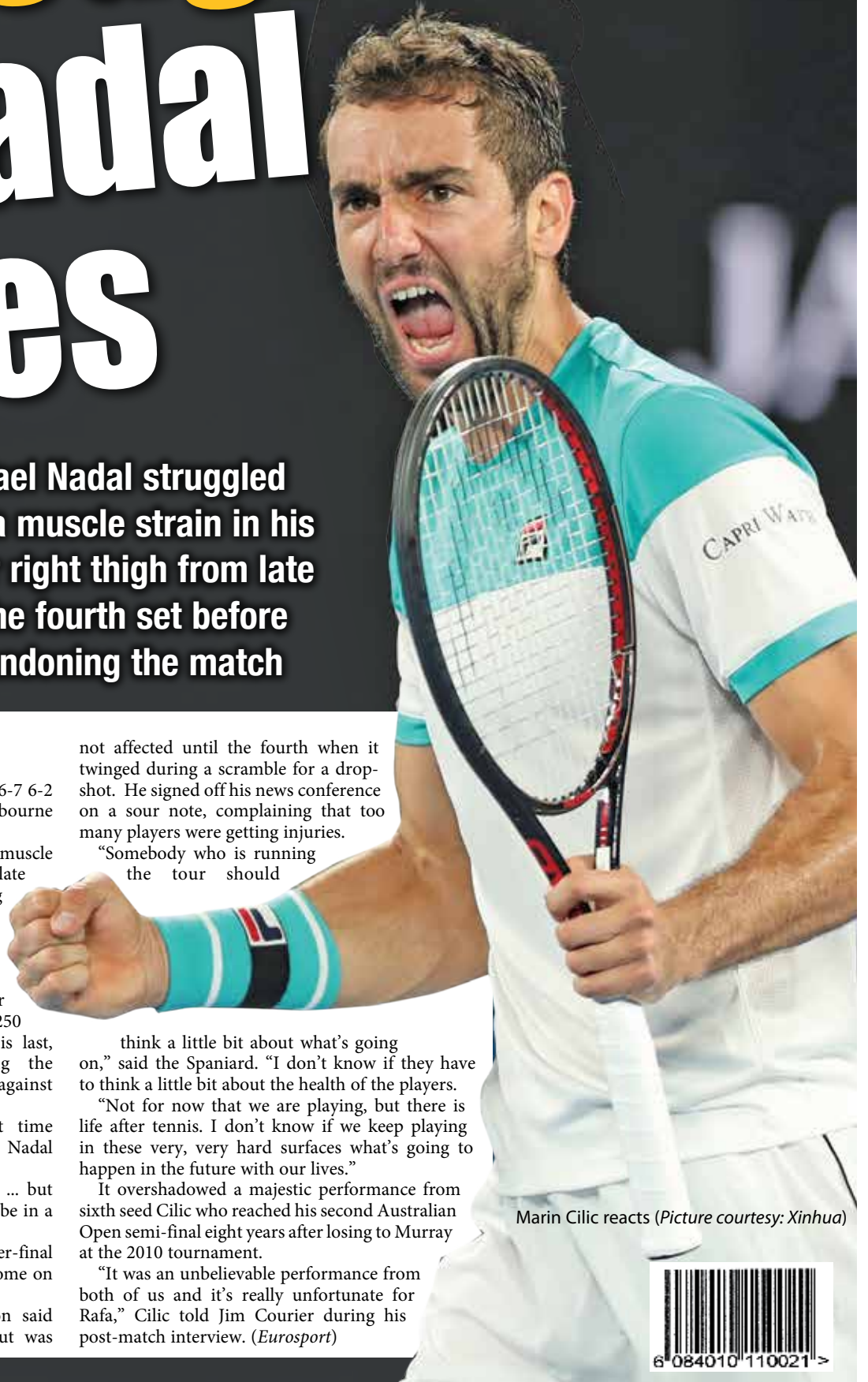
"Not for now that we are playing, but there is life after tennis. I don't know if we keep playing in these very, very hard surfaces what's going to happen in the future with our lives."

It overshadowed a majestic performance from sixth seed Cilic who reached his second Australian Open semi-final eight years after losing to Murray at the 2010 tournament.

"It was an unbelievable performance from both of us and it's really unfortunate for Rafa," Cilic told Jim Courier during his post-match interview. *(Eurosport)*



Rafael Nadal leaves the court
(Picture courtesy: Xinhua)



Marin Cilic reacts (Picture courtesy: Xinhua)

