

‘Miracle pills’ power Djokovic Win

Seven-time champion credits ‘doctors’ miracle pills’ after four-set victory in Wimbledon opener

● Djokovic beat Alexandre Muller in opening match

● Overcame discomfort, lost second set

● Aims for record 25th Grand Slam

AFP | London

Novak Djokovic thanked “doctors’ miracle pills” after he overcame feelings of discomfort and the loss of a set to launch his mission to win a record 25th Grand Slam at Wimbledon.

The veteran Serb, a seven-time winner at the All England Club, beat French world number 41 Alexandre Muller 6-1, 6-7 (7/9), 6-2, 6-2 in a late-night match on Centre Court.

Djokovic dominated the first set, breaking three times, but Muller levelled the match after taking the second set tie-break.

The sixth seed resumed nor-



Serbia's Novak Djokovic plays a forehand return to France's Alexandre Muller

mal service in the third set and a couple of breaks in the fourth set sealed the deal.

“I enjoyed myself, obviously a bit less in the second set but I went from feeling my absolute

best for a set and a half to my absolute worst for about 45 minutes,” he said.



At 38, Djokovic could become the oldest Wimbledon men’s champion in the Open Era, surpassing Roger Federer’s 2017 title win at age 35

“Whether it was a stomach bug, I don’t know what it is.

“I struggled with that but the energy came back after some doctors’ miracle pills and I managed to finish the match on a good note.”

Djokovic said he was delighted to be back at Wimbledon.

“I have to acknowledge the sacredness of this court, of this tournament,” he said.

“It has always meant a lot to me and many other players. It’s a childhood dream tournament, so I never take anything out on the court for granted.”



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NOVAK DJOKOVIC

Djokovic has been tied with long-retired Margaret Court on 24 Grand Slam singles titles since 2023 and he believes his most realistic hope of a historic 25th win lies at the All England Club.

The 38-year-old, who has lost the past two Wimbledon finals to Carlos Alcaraz, has the added incentive of pulling level with the retired Roger Federer, who won a record eight men’s titles at the All England Club.

Djokovic has been in every Wimbledon final since 2018 but knows time is running out as Alcaraz and Jannik Sinner establish a stranglehold at the top of the men’s game.

Sabalenka praying for no more upsets after battling win



Aryna Sabalenka reacts during the match

AFP | London

World number one Aryna Sabalenka said she hopes there are “no more upsets” at Wimbledon after reaching the third round with a hard-fought 7-6 (7/4), 6-4 win over Marie Bouzkova on Wednesday.

Several stars suffered shock first round exits from the All England Club, including second seed Coco Gauff, third seed Jessica Pegula and fifth seed Zheng Qinwen.

Top seed Sabalenka was pushed hard by Bouzkova in Wednesday’s opening match on Centre Court as her Czech opponent matched fire with fire in a bruising encounter.

But she eventually had too much in her locker for her 48th-ranked opponent, firing an impressive 41 winners in a match lasting one hour and 35 minutes.

The Belarusian said after her win she was aware of the seeds who had crashed out but planned to focus on her own game.

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ARYNA SABALENKA

better focus on yourself and stay away from the results,” she said.

“I mean of course you’re going to know the overall picture but it’s better to take it one step at a time and do your best every time you’re out here competing and I’m trying to stay away.

“I hope it’s no upsets anymore in this tournament, if you know what I mean!”

The first set went with serve until Sabalenka doubled-faulted in the 11th game to hand Bouzkova the chance to serve for the set.

But the Belarusian broke back with a searing backhand down the line and came out on top in the tie-break to establish a foothold in the match.

Gauff vows to make changes after early Wimbledon departure

AFP | London

Coco Gauff pledged to do things differently next time after crashing out of Wimbledon in the first round on Tuesday, just weeks after winning the French Open.

The US second seed was beaten 7-6 (7/3), 6-1 by Ukrainian world number 42 Dayana Yastremska.

Gauff, who has won two majors, was expected to make a strong run at the All England Club after her triumph at Roland Garros in June.

But instead of building on her success on the Paris clay, the



Winner Ukraine's Dayana Yastremska (R) shakes hands with US player Coco Gauff (L)

21-year-old endured her earliest Grand Slam exit since another first-round loss at Wimbledon in 2023.

Yastremska powered to victory in 78 minutes, with Gauff joining third seed Jessica Pegula and fifth seed Zheng Qinwen as high-profile departures from the tournament on a day of shocks.

“I feel like mentally I was a little bit overwhelmed with everything that came afterwards (following the French Open triumph), so I didn’t feel like I had enough time to celebrate and also get back into it,” said Gauff.

England captain Stokes makes Jaiswal breakthrough in second Test

● Jaiswal falls short of century

AFP | London

England captain Ben Stokes again proved his worth as a Test-match partnership-breaker at Edgbaston on Wednesday by denying India dangerman Yashasvi Jaiswal his second hundred of the series.

India were 182-3 at tea on the first day of the second Test after Jaiswal had fallen for 87, with the tourists looking to level the five-match series at 1-1 after last week’s five-wicket loss at Headingley.

India captain Shubman Gill and Rishabh Pant, who between them scored three of the team’s five hundreds at Headingley -- something no other losing side had achieved in more than 60,000 games of first-class cricket -- were 42 and 14 not out respectively.

Jaiswal was closing in on a century after another dazzling display of stroke-play when the left-handed opener cut flat-foot-



England captain Ben Stokes (L) celebrates after dismissing India's Yashasvi Jaiswal

edly at a short and wide ball from all-rounder Stokes, bowling from around the wicket, only to edge a poor delivery straight to wicketkeeper Jamie Smith.

It was a tame end and meant Jaiswal was unable to match his excellent 101 at Headingley -- a game England won as they made light of chasing 371 for victory.

The 23-year-old’s exit also saw the end of a third wicket partnership of 66 with India

captain Shubman Gill that had taken the tourists to 161-3.

New batsman Pant, fresh from becoming just the second wicketkeeper in Test history to score hundreds in both innings of a match with 134 and 118 in Leeds, waited a relatively restrained 23 balls until he scored his first boundary Wednesday -- a six over midwicket against off-spinner Shoaib Bashir.

Earlier Stokes, as he had done



Jaiswal’s dismissal marked the 12th time Stokes has broken a 50+ partnership since becoming captain - the most by any bowler in Tests during this period

at Headingley, opted to field after winning the toss, with England having achieved their all-time record fourth innings victory chase of 378 at Edgbaston, against India three years ago.

KL Rahul, fresh from a second-innings hundred at Headingley, rarely looked comfortable Wednesday as he took 26 balls to score two in an innings that ended when he played on to Chris Woakes, on his Warwickshire home ground.