

Djokovic eases past Shapovalov

World number one Novak Djokovic continued his fine form with a straight-set win over Canadian Denis Shapovalov in Shanghai

● **Novak Djokovic set up a last-16 clash with John Isner**

Reuters | Shanghai

World number one Novak Djokovic extended his winning run in Asia when he strolled into the last-16 of the Shanghai Masters with a 6-3 6-3 victory over Canada's Denis Shapovalov yesterday.

The ATP Masters 1000 event is the Serb's second tournament since a U.S. Open fourth round withdrawal due to a shoulder injury and he arrived in Shanghai after winning the Japan Open in Tokyo over the weekend without dropping a set.

Djokovic, the defending champion, broke the 20-year-old Canadian three times and never dropped serve, wrapping up the match in 70 minutes to set up a clash with American



Novak Djokovic of Serbia hits a return during his men's singles second round match against Denis Shapovalov of Canada



Novak Djokovic won all 10 sets he played last year in Shanghai and did the same last week when he won the Japan Open

John Isner, who beat Frenchman Lucas Pouille 7-5 6-3.

Austrian fourth seed Dominic Thiem, who won the China Open in Beijing at the weekend, beat Spaniard Pablo Carreno Busta 7-6(3) 6-3 to set up a last-16 clash with Georgia's Nikoloz Basilashvili.

After the opening set went with serve until the tiebreak, Thiem needed only one break of serve in the second to advance.

Fifth seed Alexander Zverev saved three set points in a 16-minute opening set tiebreak during his straight sets victory over French qualifier Jeremy Chardy, winning 7-6(13) 7-6(3) in one hour and 47 minutes.

Greece's sixth seed Stefanos Tsitsipas came out on top in two tiebreaks to beat Canada's Felix Auger-Aliassime 7-6(3) 7-6(3) in their second round match.

"I knew it was going to be tough, and it was very tough," Tsitsipas, who plays Poland's Hubert Hurkacz next, said.

"I think, mostly, the concentration that I have put and the work that I have put into that match, I still felt like I had to put a lot in in order to get that outcome at the end."

The top three seeds Djokovic, Roger Federer and U.S. Open runner-up Daniil Medvedev all play in the last-16 today.

USA's injured Altidore to miss Nations League opener

AFP | Washington

Jozy Altidore will miss the United States' opening matches in the CONCACAF Nations League against Cuba and Canada after the forward was removed from the team's training camp roster on Tuesday thanks to a thigh injury.

The 29-year-old is unavailable after the knock forced him off in the 70th minute of Toronto FC's 1-0 Major League Soccer home victory over Columbus on Sunday.

He will miss Friday's match in Washington DC against the Cubans and the clash with Canada four days later on the home ground of his MLS team, BMO Field.

Altidore, who has scored 11 goals this season for Toronto, has 42 hit goals in 115 matches for his national team.

The USA failed to reach the 2018 World Cup in Russia, but are hoping to boost their ranking at the new CONCACAF Nations League in the hope of ensuring an automatic spot in the final round of North American 2022 World Cup qualifying.

Rankings for the final qualifying round will be decided after the event, so Nations League matches will help boost teams ahead of that competition.



Jozy Altidore

Murray shows comeback could yet have fairytale ending

AFP | Shanghai

Andy Murray exited the Shanghai Masters in a fiery defeat but three tournaments in China offered enough evidence to suggest that his comeback from major surgery could have a fairytale ending.

Just over two weeks ago the 32-year-old Briton told AFP that it would be "naive" to think he will return to being the player that topped the world rankings in 2016.

At that point, the start of his time in China, he had yet to win an ATP Tour singles match since undergoing career-saving hip-resurfacing surgery in January.

At the Zhuhai Championships two days later he got that landmark first victory.

He lost his next match, to eventual champion Alex de Minaur, and said afterwards that he was playing "top 70, top 60" tennis.

Most observers felt that the three-time Grand Slam winner, who only returned to playing singles in mid-August, was being harsh on himself.

Last week he moved on to the



Andy Murray of Britain leaves the court after losing against Fabio Fognini of Italy

"I think this (week) was maybe the best in terms of how I played since I came back"

ANDY MURRAY

China Open in Beijing, which boasted a stronger field, and offered more proof that his comeback was moving along very nicely.

In his opener Murray claimed

his biggest post-surgery scalp yet, defeating 13th-ranked US Open semi-finalist Matteo Berrettini.

Murray has consistently said his hip is pain-free but that he does not have the fitness to play several matches a week and needs to be quicker across the court.

Nevertheless, the next day he beat fellow Briton Cameron Norrie in three sets.

Victory brought another small landmark, putting Murray in the quarter-finals of a tournament for the first time in a year.

Tsitsipas reins in social media, primed for 'pain,

AFP | Shanghai

Rising tennis star Stefanos Tsitsipas said yesterday that he is reaping the benefits on and off the court of staying away from social media.

The 21-year-old Greek was speaking after defeating another promising talent, the 19-year-old Felix Auger-Aliassime, to reach the last 16 of the Shanghai Masters.

Tsitsipas, who has won two titles this year but lost Sunday's China Open final to Dominic Thiem, still has accounts on Twitter, YouTube and Instagram.

But he now lets someone else run them.

"I feel much more connected than before with people that I care about, I spend more quality time," said the seventh-ranked Tsitsipas.

"I feel more human and more like me than ever before."

"I feel like I can also concentrate more in the sport that I play, in a way trying to spend more hours on the court instead of my phone."

"I also feel very attached to the people that I talk to, and I always try to get the best out of it and not think too much of



Stefanos Tsitsipas of Greece in action against Felix Auger-Aliassime of Canada

my other life, the social media life, which at the time before took a lot of my thinking, a lot of my concentration."

Yesterday's tough victory was the first time that Tsitsipas had beaten the Canadian Auger-Aliassime in matches stretching back to when they were juniors.

Tsitsipas, who plays Poland's Hubert Hurkacz next, said he will face more struggles if he is to challenge the established trio of Novak Djokovic, Rafael Nadal and Roger Federer for Grand Slams.

"At some point we will see change -- it can't be that Rafa, Roger and Novak win everything," he smiled.

Stokes calls allegations of quarrel with wife 'irresponsible'

AFP | London

Ben Stokes has labelled allegations that he and his wife Clare were involved in a physical altercation at an awards ceremony as "totally irresponsible".

The all-rounder played a starring role in England's maiden World Cup win in July before repeating his heroics to help salvage an Ashes draw with

Australia.

The 28-year-old Durham player was honoured for those achievements when he was named players' player of the year at last week's Professional Cricketers' Association awards in London.

On Tuesday, pictures emerged of Stokes and his wife seemingly involved in a physical confrontation at the event.

Clare Stokes defended her husband in



England's Ben Stokes looks on during a match

a Twitter post which included a photo of her pushing the cricketer's face, in apparent mockery of the images that surfaced from the awards night.

"Unbelievable what nonsense these people will make up!" she said.

"Me and Ben messing about squishing up each other's faces cos that's how we show affection and some pap tries to twist it into a crazy story! And all before we then have a romantic McDonalds 20 mins later!"