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Federer, Nadal set-up Wimbledon blockbuster

● Roger Federer racked up his 100th match win at Wimbledon

● Novak Djokovic crushes Goffin to make ninth Wimbledon semi-final

AFP | London

Roger Federer and Rafael Nadal set up a Wimbledon semi-final blockbuster on Wednesday, 11 years after their epic 2008 title duel which is widely regarded as the greatest Grand Slam final ever played.

Eight-time champion Federer racked up his 100th match win at Wimbledon and reached his 13th semi-final with a 4-6, 6-1, 6-4, 6-4 defeat of Japan's Kei Nishikori.

The 37-year-old will be playing in the semi-finals of a major for the 45th time.

Nadal, the two-time champion, made the last-four for the seventh time and 32nd at the Slams, by beating Sam Querrey 7-5, 6-2, 6-2.

Friday's semi-final will be the pair's 40th meeting and third at Wimbledon after Federer won the 2006 and 2007 finals before Nadal swept to his famous 2008 triumph.

The other semi-final will see four-time champion and top seed Novak Djokovic tackle Roberto Bautista Agut, the 23rd Spaniard who has made the last-



Roger Federer of Switzerland plays a forehand

four at a major for the first time.

Federer is also the oldest man to make the semis of a major since Jimmy Connors at the 1991 US Open.

"We have a lot of information on Rafa and so does he about us. I know people always hype it up in a big way," said 20-time major winner Federer.

"They did that again in Paris this year (when Nadal won their semi-final in straight sets). I'd love to play against him here at Wimbledon.

"But I go about it like every other match."

Nadal, who was also champion in 2010, broke Querrey six times, sent down 10 aces and 44 winners in a convincing display which will give him great hope of beating Federer for the 25th time.

Djokovic reached the Wim-

bledon semi-finals for the ninth time, racking up his 70th career win at the All England Club in the process.

The defending champion hit back from a break down in the first set to carve out a commanding 6-4, 6-0, 6-2 win over 21st seed David Goffin of Belgium.

In a ruthless display, Djok-

ovic reeled off 15 of the last 17 games to secure a place in the semi-finals of the majors for the 36th time.

'He was everywhere'

Next up is Bautista Agut, who made his first Grand Slam semi-final with a 7-5, 6-4, 3-6, 6-3 victory over Argentina's Gui-

Murray and Williams' Wimbledon dream over

AFP | London

Andy Murray and Serena Williams' mixed doubles dream team came unstuck at Wimbledon on Wednesday when the star pairing were knocked out by the top seeds.

The pair lost 6-3, 4-6, 6-2 to Bruno Soares of Brazil and Nicole Melichar of the Unit-

ed States, who progress to the quarter-finals.

The third round match was played out on the 4,000-seater Court Two sunken bowl -- a rare appearance outside the Centre Court and Court One big show courts for the likes of multiple former champions Murray and Williams.



Andy Murray (R) and Serena Williams react after the match

do Pella.

"He started well and was dictating play from the baseline," 32-year-old Djokovic said of Goffin.

"Things could have gone a different way if I had lost the first set but I was very pleased with the second and third.

He added: "I had a tough match in the third round (against Hubert Hurkacz). Other than that, I've won in straight sets and played really well throughout the tournament.

"It's exactly what I wanted and hopefully I can go in the right direction in the semis as well."

Goffin was on top in the early stages as he sensed the opportunity to become the first Belgian man to make the semi-finals at a Slam since Xavier Malisse at Wimbledon in 2002.

He broke for a 4-3 lead but 15-time Slam winner Djokovic then reeled off the next nine games, taking the first set, and the second in which he allowed the Belgian just four points on his serve.

Sagan wins fifth stage, Alaphilippe retains lead



Hansgrohe rider Peter Sagan of Slovakia celebrates winning the stage

AFP | Colmar, France

Slovakia's Peter Sagan kept enough strength in reserve in the hills of Alsace to win a reduced bunch sprint for his 12th overall Tour de France stage win on Wednesday.

France's Julian Alaphilippe held onto the leader's yellow jersey and even had a tilt at the stage win with a downhill charge after the final climb.

Alaphilippe, who was cheered throughout by French fans again Wednesday, will start leader for Thursday's first real mountain test that concludes with a tough summit finish in the Vosges.

"My legs are killing me," said Alaphilippe, who took the overall lead on Monday with a gun-slinging offensive from 15 kilometres.

"Tomorrow is going to be a huge test, for me and everyone," said the 27-year-old former soldier.

Sagan's win will be popular with armchair fans as the charismatic former triple world champion, and six-time green sprint jersey winner, had had two near misses so far.

"I try every day, and then one day you get it," said the burly Sagan.

Bahrain in final preparations for Volleyball U21 Championship

TDT | Manama

Bahrain's junior national volleyball team have begun their final preparations for the upcoming FIVB Volleyball Men's U21 World Championship 2019.

The Kingdom of Bahrain is set to host the global competition from July 18 to 27 at Shaikh Isa Sports City in Riffa.

Bahrain's national team will be the same as the one that played in the recent Asian Volleyball Confederation Western Zone Qualification Tournament for the Asian Men's U23 Volleyball Championship.

The Bahrainis, who are all 21 years old or younger, were hugely successful in the qualifiers, which were also held in the country. They took first place amongst the six participating nations and secured one of three berths in the continental event, which is scheduled for next month.

The juniors now turn their focus to the world championships. The squad is being guided by Bahraini head coach Yousuf Khalifa and his staff. The players include Mahmood Alhussain



Bahrain players in action during training

Mohammed, Sayed Al Abbar, Jawher Fares, Saif Yusuf Saif, Mohammed Abdulla, Mohammed Haroona, Hassan Haider, Jasim Matrook, Hussain Thamer, Hasan Abdulla, Sayed Jaffer and libero Husain Sultan.

Bahrain Volleyball Association (BVA) President Shaikh Ali bin Mohammed Al Khalifa expressed his delight with the ongoing work being done ahead of the competition.

Shaikh Ali especially praised the Bahrain Olympic Committee

(BOC), under the presidency of Supreme Council for Youth and Sports First Deputy President HH Shaikh Khalid bin Hamad Al Khalifa, for their unparalleled support of the event.

Shaikh Ali also spoke highly of BOC Secretary General Mohammed Al Nusuf, who has given great attention and follow-up to all details regarding Bahrain's organisation of the FIVB Volleyball Men's U21 World Championship 2019.

Shaikh Ali said that staging

the global tournament cements Bahrain's place as one of the sport's most trusted host nations of international-level volleyball events.

The BVA has arranged only the very best for the competition, and they are now in the final stages of their completion.

A total of 16 countries representing five confederations under the Federation Internationale de Volleyball (FIVB) are competing in Bahrain. They have been divided into four groups of four countries each for the tournament's opening stage.

Bahrain are in Pool A along with China, Morocco and Puerto Rico. Pool B is composed of Cuba, Argentina, Egypt and South Korea. Pool C includes Russia, Iran, the Czech Republic and Tunisia. Pool D consists of Italy, Canada, Brazil and Poland, who are the defending champions.

Bahrain are playing in the tournament for the fourth time. Aside from the years they hosted, the nationals also competed in 1989 when they event was held in Greece.

Brave president says London debut will change the sport

TDT | Manama

The fastest-growing MMA promotion in the world is set on taking over Europe and changing the sport of mixed martial arts in the process. BRAVE Combat Federation will hold an exclusive, invite-only show in London, on July 25th, designed to connect the highest level of celebrities, influencers, politicians, and businessmen to the sport of mixed martial arts.



BRAVE CF president Mohammed Shahid speaks to the press

And BRAVE CF president Mohammed Shahid has talked about details of the show, explaining that the promotion is looking to showcase the sport in a different light, and to a new audience, and that this strategy will empower mixed martial arts in Europe and in the world, changing it for the better.

"When we go to London, we're going to showcase an event capable of connecting people, and we will make sure mixed martial arts is never looked at the same. We want to change perceptions about the sport, we want everyone to see MMA as something that can bring people together. Mixed martial arts is not only a great and exciting sport, not only the most global sport out there, not only the fastest-growing, but it is also a sport that has equal power, that can bring government, business, advertisers and revenue-generating industries under one roof, into one sport", commented Shahid.