

Sinner triumphs amid Cincinnati chaos

Sinner and Sabalenka endure delays and drama to keep Cincinnati Open title defenses alive with gritty wins

- Sinner beats Diallo 6-2, 7-6
- Power outage halts play for 75 minutes
- Audio system failure disrupts line calls
- Stadium alarm briefly stops second set
- Sabalenka edges Raducanu in three-hour thriller
- Fritz, Tiafoe also advance to fourth round

AFP | Cincinnati

Jannik Sinner ignored power failure interruptions and a blaring alarm to defeat Gabriel Diallo 6-2, 7-6 (8/6) on Monday's day of distractions at the ATP and WTA Cincinnati Open.

The top seeded defending champion got down to business against a Canadian ranked 35th who was plagued by eight first-set double-faults and 49 unforced errors in the match as he faced the best in the world.

Sinner recovered smoothly from an early break down and had his hands full on his

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JANNIK SINNER

way into the fourth round, sending over an ace on match point after saving a set point in the tiebreaker.

Play was stopped briefly with Sinner leading 4-2 as the audio portion of the electronic line-calling system suddenly failed.

Earlier, both



Aryna Sabalenka is congratulated by Emma Raducanu of Great Britain after the match

players had to deal with flickering LED screens directly behind them courtside.

The pair agreed to soldier on without the system, with the chair umpire temporarily relaying the algorithm's decisions -- which he saw on his chair's tablet -- to the players when necessary as a re-boot was undertaken.

That minor malfunction came two hours after the chaos of a widespread power outage which completely stopped play around the grounds for 75 minutes.

Five minutes later, with Sinner leading 1-0 in the second set after winning the first, the chaos continued with an alarm going off somewhere in the stadium and play suspended for the third time.

Sinner and Diallo continued to carry on with the distraction blaring somewhat faintly in the background be-

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During Sinner's match, players had to continue without electronic line-calling audio after a system failure, with the chair umpire relaying decisions verbally from his tablet screen

fore it finally halted after another game.

Sinner polished off victory for his 23rd consecutive hardcourt win in under two hours.

"It was a very difficult day at the office," the Italian said. "You have to find the balance against these big servers. I struggled with that at times today.

"But I need tough matches like this, I'm happy I got one be-

fore the Grand Slam... I'm happy about today, but I know I can do things better."

US fourth seed Taylor Fritz endured a one-hour delay after the first set before defeating Lorenzo Sonego 7-6 (7/4), 7-5 for a 21st win in 25 matches.

"I can play better, but there has been no time to really train and get ready," Fritz said. "I'm looking forward to fine tuning the week before the US Open."

Compatriot Frances Tiafoe advanced past Ugo Humbert of France 6-4, 6-4 in 82 minutes and lines up next against Holger Rune, who beat Alex Michelsen 7-6 (7/4), 6-3.

No.1 Sabalenka wins

In the WTA event, top-ranked Aryna Sabalenka fought through a three-hour battle to hold off an inspired Emma Raducanu 7-6 (7/3), 4-6, 7-6 (7/5) for a fourth-round spot in a repeat of a victory from the Wimbledon third round in July.

Defending champion Sabalenka endured a struggle but finished with two aces in the clos-

13

deuces highlighted Raducanu's 25-minute service game in the final set against Sabalenka, a marathon that saw 38 points played and four break points saved before the Brit eventually held

ing stages.

"I'm happy to get through this difficult match," Sabalenka said. "I just hope tomorrow is a day off. I need time to recover from such a great battle."

British number one Raducanu survived a 25-minute eighth game of the final set, which went to 13 deuces, with Raducanu saving four break points before finally holding for 4-all and eventually into a tiebreaker.

Sabalenka squeezed out victory with a sixth ace for 5-4 in the breaker and delivered her seventh on her second match point to win in three hours and nine minutes.

"It was all about momentum," Sabalenka said. "I took some risks at the end, went for crazy shots, went to the net."

Sabalenka is bidding for her 10th trophy at the 1000 level and second this season after winning at Madrid.

"I can take lessons from this," Raducanu said. "With work and practice I think I can hold my level higher for longer.

"She's world number one for a reason. We had a three-hour match and I felt pretty good out there for the most part."

Raducanu was called out by the chair umpire on unauthorized conversations with new Spanish coach Francisco Roig.

Australian Open champion Madison Keys lost just four games in defeating Japan's Aoi Ito.

Spain's Jessica Bouzas Maneiro ousted American wild card Taylor Townsend 6-4, 6-1 and faces Sabalenka on Wednesday.

Brevis smashes record ton as South Africa level T20 series

AFP | Darwin

Dewald Brevis belted South Africa's highest Twenty20 individual score with a blistering 125 not out from 56 balls as the tourists stayed alive in the three-match series after a 53-run victory over Australia in Darwin yesterday.

Australia's decision to bowl backfired as South Africa powered to a massive 218-7 on the back of Brevis' maiden century in international cricket.

The 22-year-old rescued South Africa from a shaky 57-3 and dominated a 126-run partnership with Tristan Stubbs (31).

"I'm extremely grateful, just happy to be out here on the winning side," said Brevis, who surpassed Faf du Plessis' 119 against the West Indies in 2015.

Playing just his ninth T20 international, Brevis smashed eight sixes to leave Australia's powerful batting line-up with an uphill task.

Australia's daunting chase was made more difficult after the



South Africa's batsman Dewald Brevis plays a shot

Scorecard

South Africa 218 for 7 (Brevis 125*) beat Australia 165 (David 50, Bosch 3-20, Maphaka 3-57) by 53 runs

early wickets of opener Travis Head (five) and Cameron Green (nine).

Australia's hopes rested with in-form Tim David, fresh off his match-winning 83 in their 17-run victory in the series-opener at the same venue.

Promoted to number four, David started with a trio of boundaries and then bludgeoned several massive sixes, including one that landed on the roof.

But David's 24-ball assault ended on 50 when he hit spearhead Kagiso Rabada straight to cover.

Australia's chase ran out of steam, bowled out for 165 in the 18th over with quicks Corbin Bosch and Kwena Maphaka picking up three wickets each.

"Chasing that down was always going to be tough and we needed a few partnerships,

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Brevis was dropped on 56 by sub fielder Kuhnemann - he then smashed 69 off his next 20 balls to eclipse Faf du Plessis' nine-year-old national record

which we couldn't do," Australia captain Mitchell Marsh said.

Without several key batsmen for this tour, South Africa had struggled to fire in the opening game.

Captain Aiden Markram signalled his intent with a sublime boundary off the first ball of the innings, rattling quick Josh Hazlewood.

But Markram (18) fell tamely

to a fired-up Glenn Maxwell, who celebrated another wicket when he had Lhuan-dre Pretorius (10) stumped to leave South Africa in trouble.

Likened to legendary South Africa batsman AB de Villiers, Brevis turned the innings on its head to power past his previous highest T20 international score of 41.

Brevis received a life on 56 when substitute fielder Matthew Kuhnemann fumbled on the boundary off the bowling of an increasingly frustrated Maxwell.

Brevis made Australia pay and in a flash he was saluting the crowd after reaching his century with a boundary off his 41st delivery.

Maxwell and quick Ben Dwarshuis picked up two wickets apiece in an unusually ragged effort in the field for Australia, whose nine-match T20 win streak ended.

The series-decider will be played in the Queensland city of Cairns on Saturday.