

Hazlewood gets Australia nod ahead of Boland for Bangladesh Test



Australian captain Pat Cummins (L) and Bangladesh captain Najmul Hossain Shanto (R) pose ahead of the first Test in Darwin

AFP | Sydney

Australia yesterday opted for Josh Hazlewood ahead of fellow quick Scott Boland for the first Test against Bangladesh in Darwin, while veteran spinner Nathan Lyon returned after a long-term injury.

An injured Hazlewood missed the entire home Ashes series against England in 2025/26, with warhorse Boland playing all five Tests in his place.

But despite the 37-year-old's heroics it was not enough to keep out a fit-again Hazlewood who was reunited for the first time in more than a year with long-time pace partners Pat Cummins and Mitchell Starc.

"They're both pretty class, aren't they?" skipper Cummins told reporters of Hazlewood and Boland in naming Australia's team.

"We were pretty certain we wanted 'Lyono' in the side, so (it came down to) working out what the make-up of the quicks were.

"It's always a pretty tight call. It's one of those ones where there's not much you can say to Scotty other than

obviously there's a lot of cricket coming up."

The Test starting Thursday is the first of two against Bangladesh and kicks off a run of potentially 21 in 12 months for the world's top-ranked side, who have not played a red-ball game since January.

Lyon returns after hamstringing surgery curtailed his part in Australia's dominant 4-1 home Ashes win, a series where a back issue restricted Cummins to just one Test.

Under-pressure Cameron Green held his spot and will come in at five with fellow all-rounder Beau Webster also in the side at seven, split by wicketkeeper Alex Carey.

Jake Weatherald will open the batting alongside Travis Head with Marnus Labuschagne at three and Steve Smith at four.

Josh Inglis was the other player from the initial squad not to make the XI.

The clash at Marrara Oval will be only the third Test ever in tropical Darwin and the first since Sri Lanka visited in July 2004.

The series moves to Harrup Park in Mackay next week, which will host its maiden Test.

Roma signs Argentina's Molina from Atletico Madrid



Argentina's Nahuel Molina gestures during the World Cup final

AFP | Rome

As Roma completed the signing of Argentina's 2022 World Cup-winning right-back Nahuel Molina from Spanish side Atletico Madrid, the Serie A club announced yesterday.

The 28-year-old, who also featured in last month's World Cup final when Argentina lost its crown to Spain, cost Roma a reported 17 million euros (\$20 million).

The 65-times capped defender has also won two Copa Americas in 2021 and 2024 and made 249 appearances and scored 19 goals in all competitions in Europe while playing for Udinese and Atletico Madrid, Roma said.

Molina could make his debut when Roma, which is back in the Champions League after a seven-year hiatus, plays Fiorentina in its Serie A opener on August 24.

Defending champ Shelton rolls into Montreal semis

Learner Tien joins Shelton in an all-American semi-final showdown

● Jodar overcame Arthur Fils

AFP | Montreal

Ben Shelton took another step toward defending his ATP Montreal Masters title with a 6-3, 6-1 quarter-finals hammering of Jakub Mensik for his 10th straight victory in Canada.

World number 10 Shelton, the last top-10 player in the field, was never challenged by the Czech in advancing to a semi-final against fellow American Learner Tien, who ousted Spain's Daniel Merida 6-3, 6-2 in 72 minutes.

"It was a great performance for me, super happy with that and to be in the semis again," Shelton said.

Spanish teen Rafael Jodar booked a semi-final spot in only his fifth ATP Masters 1000 event by holding off France's Arthur Fils 7-6 (7/5), 6-3.

The 19-year-old will face the oldest remaining player when he plays 25-year-old American Brandon Nakashima in a battle for a place in Thursday's final.

Nakashima reached his breakthrough Masters semi in 77 minutes as he imposed his game on Luciano Darderi 6-2, 6-3, setting up three match points with his 11th ace as winning as the Italian missed on a drop shot.



Ben Shelton of the United States reacts during his singles Quarterfinals match against Jakub Mensik of Czechia on

It's the first time since 1992 that three American men have reached the last four in Canada. Shelton was on fire in his 72-minute thrashing of Mensik, the American producing 18 winners and only three unforced errors.

Shelton has yet to lose a set at this event. "I felt great, I played well form the ground from point one," Shelton said. "I'm right where I

want to be. I maintained a high level throughout the match. I hope to continue to build on this in the semis."

Jodar shrugged off a slight tweak of his ankle in the second set against Fils and remained calm throughout as his French opponent smashed a racquet after being broken early in the second set.

Jodar, who does not turn 20 until after the US Open, has won



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34 matches this season and risen to 15th in world rankings, but sees improving his game as more important than his ranking.

"That shouldn't be your primary thing and your goal," he said. "My goal is to have fun on court and to enjoy all the tournaments that are new for me."

Fils, back after injury, saved three match points in the final game before Jodar lanced a winner to the empty court after an hour and three-quarters.

"I played a very high level today against a tough player like Arthur," Jodar said. "I had to give my best to win this match."

Nakashima, who won his fifth quarter-final of the season, credited his serve with the win.

"My serve was super important. It got me out of some tough holes," Nakashima said.

Rybakina ousts Osaka to book Toronto semi-final against Gauff

AFP | Toronto

World number two Elena Rybakina came from a set down to defeat four-time Grand Slam winner Naomi Osaka and reach the WTA Toronto Masters semi-finals, where she will face fourth-ranked Coco Gauff.

Rybakina, the reigning Australian Open champion from Kazakhstan, fired 13 aces in a 4-6, 7-6 (7/5), 6-4 victory.

"Super happy. It was a very difficult match," Rybakina said after a tight battle lasting 2hr 33min.

"In the first set (I made) a few mistakes, a poor start.

"It was a really tough one but I'm glad I could turn it around, I don't yet know how, but I think my serve helped me a little bit."

Gauff, a 22-year-old American, had a walkover into her first Canada semi-final when Switzerland's Belinda Bencic withdrew with a hip injury.

"I'm really sorry to not be able to compete," Bencic said in a statement. "I tried everything possible to be ready. Looking forward to being back in Toronto next time."

Gauff, the 2023 US Open and 2025 French Open champion, defeated Rybakina in their only previous meeting, which came



Elena Rybakina reacts during the match

at Toronto in a 2022 third-round match.

"She's a fighter," Rybakina said of Gauff.

"I definitely need to bring my energy and serve well."

Poland's Iga Swiatek and Ukraine's Elina Svitolina meet in the other semi-final.

Osaka and Rybakina staged a dramatic duel in their first ever meeting on tour.

"We practised couple of times before so I more or less knew how the ball was going to come, what to expect," Rybakina said.

"In some moments my energy wasn't there but I'm glad in the end it went my way."

'Just keep going'

Rybakina double-faulted to hand Osaka a break in the opening game and the Asian star held serve from there to claim the first set in 42 minutes.

The pair exchanged breaks of service twice in a drama-filled second set but in the tiebreak Rybakina never trailed and smashed a forehand winner to force a third set.

"I was trying to stay close on the score, trying not to think if I make a mistake, just keep going," Rybakina said.

Osaka was denied on four break points in the sixth game



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ELENA RYBAKINA

as Rybakina held

The Kazakh broke for a 4-3 lead as Osaka missed a forehand smash wide on game point, then sent forehands long and wide.

Rybakina sealed the match with a second-serve ace, winning all 18 of her first-serve points in the final set.

World number 13 Osaka, who took a break has not won a title since the 2021 Australian Open.

Rybakina is within touching distance of becoming world number one for the first time.

If two-time Grand Slam champion wins the Toronto title she would move to just four ranking points behind Aryna Sabalenka, who lost in the last 16.