

SPORTS

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Medvedev secures Shanghai title

● **Ruthless Daniil Medvedev crushed Alexander Zverev to win Shanghai Masters**

● **Medvedev won his fourth title of the year**

AFP | Shanghai

Daniil Medvedev conceded that he had been “invincible” after he won his fourth title of a spectacular year with a thumping 6-4, 6-1 victory over Alexander Zverev in the Shanghai Masters final yesterday.

Victory for the 23-year-old Russian, contesting a sixth final in a row, was more evidence that he is the prime contender to join the “Big Three” of Novak Djokovic, Rafael Nadal and Roger Federer.

The US Open finalist is also able to say that he has finally beaten the German Zverev, another young contender at 22, at the fifth attempt.

This was an emphatic statement from the world number four, needing just 74 minutes to seal the crown and failing to drop a set all week.

“I can say that here I looked invincible this week, since I am the winner,” said Medvedev, who was planning to catch a 1:00am flight to Moscow and could play there this week.

“This week, yes, I probably was invincible, but for the coming weeks I’m not sure.

“Here this week there were definitely some matches that, let’s say, lose the set and we don’t know how it would have gone.”



Daniil Medvedev of Russia in action during the Men's Singles final match against Alexander Zverev of Germany



Victory in the Shanghai Masters final for Daniil Medvedev was more evidence that he is the prime contender to join the ‘Big Three’

Medvedev said that he is a better player than he was at the start of the year, but has really sparkled since the summer.

Starting with Washington, DC, in July, the Russian has reached six finals on the spin -- including the US Open -- winning three of them.

Asked in what respect he has improved, Medvedev, who now threatens to usurp Federer at three in the world, said: “I think it’s everything together, some-

thing clicked in my game in the US, I don’t know why.

“I think it’s the hard work I’ve been doing, but I started to understand even more about my game, my serve, my volley, my everything, what I have to do when.

“At crucial moments I know what I have to do and how I have to play.”

Zverev, long touted as the best of the new generation of men’s tennis stars, was error-prone, but had no complaints.

“As I said yesterday, you are probably the best player in the world right now,” the world number six told Medvedev.

“How you are playing is unbelievable.”

Medvedev made a fast start, winning his service game and then breaking Zverev’s for an early 2-0 lead.

Under a closed stadium roof because of rain in Shanghai, Zverev was suffocating, down 3-0 after 11 minutes.

But the German sent down an ace to finally get a foothold in the match and then broke back for 3-2.

Italy clinch Euro 2020 berth

Italy back among the elite as they qualify for Euro 2020

● **King penalty denies Spain in dramatic Norway draw**

AFP | Rome

Italy became the second team to qualify for Euro 2020 after a 2-0 win over Greece on Saturday, while three-time champions Spain edged closer to the finals despite conceding a stoppage-time equaliser away to Norway.

Chelsea midfielder Jorginho dispatched a second-half penalty as Italy, wearing green kits for just the second time in history, registered a seventh straight win in Group J.

The Azzurri, who failed to qualify for the 2018 World Cup, added a second in Rome on 78 minutes through a deflected

strike from Juventus forward Federico Bernardeschi.

Roberto Mancini’s side joined Belgium in the draw for next year’s finals, where Italy will play their first two group games at the Stadio Olimpico.

“We managed to create a team in a short period of time. It wasn’t easy but you have to thank the players, who have quickly developed an understanding between themselves,” said Mancini, who took over as Italy coach 18 months ago.

“It’s a team with character that fights and plays with the ball but one that must also improve. Now we have a year to try and get better.

“We have a lot of work but we’re not very far from the best European teams. I’m happy and proud to have helped the national team come through a tough patch.”

Spain dropped their first

points in Group F as Joshua King converted a 94th-minute spot-kick to rescue a 1-1 draw for Norway following a foul by goalkeeper Kepa Arrizabalaga on Omar Elabdellaoui.

Sergio Ramos broke the Spanish international appearances record as he won his 168th cap in Oslo to overtake Iker Casillas.

The visitors led when Saul Niguez slammed home from 20 yards moments after half-time but Spain were denied a seventh win in a row as King’s equaliser kept Norway in the running.

“It’s a real pain to lose points in the final seconds. It’s complicated to play against a team who knew that if they lost they were pretty much out,” said Spain captain Ramos.

Norway last qualified for a major tournament at the 2000 European Championship and are fourth in the group, four points adrift of neighbours Sweden with three games to play.

Sebastian Larsson netted two spot-kicks as Sweden cruised to a 4-0 rout of Malta to reclaim second place behind Spain. Marcus Danielson broke the deadlock on 11 minutes in Ta’ Qali and home skipper Andrei Agius also scored an own goal.

Romania remain a point behind Sweden following a 3-0 win in the Faroe Islands secured by second-half goals from George Puscas, Ionut Mitritu and Claudiu Keseru.

Kasper Schmeichel produced a series of excellent saves as Denmark defeated Switzerland 1-0 to climb level with the Republic of Ireland in Group D.

Leicester City goalkeeper Schmeichel pulled off superb stops to deny Granit Xhaka, Admir Mehmedi and Ricardo Rodriguez before Yussuf Poulsen grabbed an 84th-minute winner for Denmark in Copenhagen.



Jorginho of Italy scores a goal from the penalty spot

Shaikh Nasser expresses pride in Endurance 13’s results at Kona

TDT | Manama

Representative of HM the King for Charity Work and Youth Affairs and Chairman of the Supreme Council for Youth and Sports Affairs, HH Shaikh Nasser bin Hamad Al Khalifa, has expressed pride in the historic win achieved by Bahrain Endurance 13’s Jan Frodeno, who clinched the Ironman World Championship at 2019 Kona Ironman World Championships.

The win is the third for Jan Frodeno, who broke the record after clocking 7:51:13.

In the 3.8-km swimming race, Jan Frodeno and his team mate, Alistair Brownlee, finished behind Josh Amberger, who finished first by 47:28 seconds.

In the 180-km bike race, Frodeno and Brownlee were among the first five, clocking 04:16:02 and 04:19:58 respectively.

In the marathon, Jan Fro-



Bahrain Endurance 13’s Jan Frodeno celebrates his victory

deno came first with 02:42:43, breaking the existing record.

Meanwhile, Daniela Ryf failed to defend her title after coming 13th in the race.

Ryf who was a favourite, said that she had suffered from health problems days before the championship.

Teenage star Gauff wins first WTA title

AFP | Linz, Austria

Teenage prodigy Coco Gauff won her first WTA title yesterday following a 6-3, 1-6, 6-2 victory over Jelena Ostapenko in the final in Linz that saw her hold her first trophy aloft aged 15.

Gauff, who only entered the field as a lucky loser after failing to qualify, completed a dream week in Linz in front of a supportive crowd to become the youngest player to win a WTA event since Czech Nicole Pietrangeli, who triumphed in Vancouver and Tashkent two months apart in 2004.

“I’ll remember this day for the rest of my life,” the delighted Gauff said after receiving a minutes-long standing ovation from 3,000 spectators.

“I had an amazing week and I hope to be back in the future.”

“I’m still overwhelmed, it’s shocking and crazy to say I’ve won my first WTA title,” she added.

“This tournament was defi-

“I’ll remember this day for the rest of my life. I had an amazing week and I hope to be back in the future”

COCO GAUFF

nitely not even on the calendar for me at the start of the season.

“I didn’t think I’d have a chance to get in - now I’m the champion.”

Gauff will shoot up from 110 in the rankings into the 80s, according to WTA calculations, after becoming the youngest American to earn a WTA trophy since Jennifer Capriati at Toronto in 1991.

The hype surrounding the youngster has grown this year after solid performances this summer at both Wimbledon and



Coco Gauff celebrates with the trophy

the US Open, where she was defeated in the third round by defending champion Naomi Osaka, and her displays in Linz have enthralled tennis fans.

Gauff had to make a recovery in the final after sweeping the opening set but losing serve three times in the second as 2017 Roland Garros winner Os-

tapenko levelled.

“She started hitting the ball fast and coming up with winners,” Gauff said. “There was not much I could do.”

But the American came alive in the third set, going up two breaks before her opponent managed to save a pair of match points while trailing 5-1.