

Anderson hammers Nishikori

Anderson is close to becoming the first African to qualify for the last four at the ATP Finals

AFP | London

Kevin Anderson handed Japan's Kei Nishikori a humiliating 6-0, 6-1 thrashing at the ATP Finals as the South African moved to the brink of a semi-final berth yesterday.

Anderson won the first 11 games and needed only 64 minutes to demolish the woeful Nishikori in a remarkably one-sided group stage clash at London's O2 Arena.

Having also won his opening match against Dominic Thiem in his debut at the prestigious season-ending event, Anderson is close to becoming the first African to qualify for the last four at the ATP Finals.

The 32-year-old's place will be secure if Thiem beats Roger Federer, or if Federer defeats Thiem in three sets.

It was a landmark moment for Wimbledon finalist Anderson, who has set a new career-high of 47 victories in a calendar year.

He will rarely have had such an easy outing as this one throughout his memorable 2018.

Anderson won the Vienna final at Nishikori's expense in October before losing to the Japanese star in the Paris Masters four days later.



South Africa's Kevin Anderson returns against Japan's Kei Nishikori

But the close nature of those matches was a distant memory as Nishikori, who had beaten Federer in straight sets on Sunday, put his hopes of a semi-final spot in jeopardy with this tame surrender.

Anderson's final group match is against Federer tomorrow, while Nishikori faces Thiem.

It has been a curious year for Nishikori as the former US Open finalist, troubled by a wrist in-

jury, started 2018 losing to the world number 238 in a Challenger event in January and crashed to 39th in the ATP rankings in April after a prolonged slump.

But the 28-year-old had climbed back to ninth in the world after a strong second half of a campaign, featuring a semi-final appearance at US Open.

His renaissance peaked when he handed former ATP Finals champion Federer his first

Djokovic crushes Isner in opener

AFP | London

Novak Djokovic sent out a warning to his rivals at the ATP Finals on Monday, brushing aside big-serving John Isner 6-4, 6-3 to launch his bid for a record-equalling sixth ATP Finals title in style.

World number one Djokovic, though, was playing a different game, appearing little troubled by the howitzers coming off the giant Isner's racquet -- breaking his opponent three times and not conceding a single break point on his own serve.

In stark contrast to second seed Roger Federer, who produced an error-strewn performance in defeat to Kei Nishikori on Sunday, Djokovic hit just six unforced errors and won 86 percent of points on his serve, making a mockery of the apparent challenging nature of



Serbia's Novak Djokovic returns against US player John Isner

the playing surface.

"The match was great, obviously," said the 31-year-old. "I had three breaks of serve of John which is sometimes mission impossible but I managed to be at the right place at the right time.

"I held serve well, I backed it up from the baseline, I played very solid and didn't give him

many opportunities."

With Cristiano Ronaldo watching on, the top seed broke Isner in the fifth game of the first set to establish a stranglehold and never looked like allowing the American eighth seed back into the contest, breaking twice more in the second set to win in 73 minutes.

straight sets defeat in the group stage of the tournament.

But Nishikori seemed to have nothing left after that effort.

Anderson is back in London just four months after losing his

first Wimbledon final against Novak Djokovic.

And he didn't take long to seize the initiative as he broke Nishikori in the second game of the match.

Unloading some searing ground-strokes, Anderson, aided by 14 unforced errors from Nishikori, cemented his advantage with two more breaks in the fourth and six games.

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