



Simona Halep

AFP | Cincinnati, United States

The women's draw took a beating on Wednesday in Cincinnati, where world number one Simona Halep's was still battling when rain halted play.

The top-seeded Romanian stood 4-6, 6-3, 3-3 against Australian qualifier Ajla Tomljanovic when storms rolled in to bring the night session to an end on a day that had already seen one three-hour rain delay. Halep had regained some momentum after falling two breaks down in the third set, with both women taking medical timeouts.

Halep was just one of the top women to run into trouble in the combined WTA and ATP Masters hardcourt tournament -- the last major



Halep had been a win away from No.1 three times in 2017. She would've become world No.1 last year had she won the final of the French Open (she lost to Jelena Ostapenko), her quarterfinal match at Wimbledon (she lost to Johanna Konta) or the final of Cincinnati (she lost to Garbine Muguruza)

tuneup for the US Open.

Defending champion Garbine Muguruza, playing for the first time since losing in the second round of her Wimbledon title defence, fell 2-6, 6-4, 6-4 to Lesia Tsurenko.

"It was a very ugly match, but I'm happy that I fought, even if the level wasn't very high," said Muguruza, who got a late start to her buildup to the US Open because of an arm injury.

"At the end she managed to come back in the third set and play better and found a way to win the match," said Muguruza, who was at least pleased to report that she played without any pain in her arm.

Second seed Caroline Wozniacki, however, retired with a left knee injury after surrendering the first set 6-4 to Kiki Bertens.

The Dane also lost her opening match a week ago in Montreal, following a second-round defeat at Wimbledon.

Wimbledon champion Angelique Kerber, the fourth seed, claimed her 40th win of the season, but she had to recover from a set down and needed two chances to serve for a 4-6, 7-5, 6-4 victory over Russian Anastasia Pavlyuchenkova.

"This was really a match where I was fighting after the first set to coming back," Kerber said. "It was an important match to get my rhythm, feel the ball, especially now after few weeks off."

US Open champion Sloane Stephens bucked the upset trend, winning easily into the third round 6-3, 6-2 over German qualifier Tatjana Maria.

Aryna Sabalenka of Belarus continued her successful tournament debut, beating ninth seed Karolina Pliskova 2-6, 6-3, 7-5. Australian 16th seed Ashleigh Barty defeated Estonian Kaia Kanepi 7-5, 6-3.

Ailing Djokovic advances

In the men's draw Novak Djokovic battled stomach issues to beat Adrian Mannarino and reach the third round.

The Wimbledon champion called for the doctor during the second set but put aside his discomfort to progress 4-6, 6-2, 6-1 over the Frenchman before rain halted afternoon play for nearly three hours.

"I wasn't feeling well, I didn't have a great night and wasn't feeling that well for the first set and a half," said Djokovic, who has won every Masters 1000 title except Cincinnati.

"I made it through, and with the help of the doctor and God...I'm just, you know, happy that I managed to overcome the challenge."

Fifth seed Grigor Dimitrov launched his title defence with a 7-6 (7/5), 7-5 win over Mischa Zverev, the Bulgarian belting 33 winners in a match that started late.

Wimbledon finalist Kevin Anderson beat Jeremy Chardy 7-6 (8/6), 6-2 while Canadian Milos Raonic advanced over Malek Jaziri of Tunisia 6-3, 7-5.

Wawrinka ousts Kei Nishikori



Stan Wawrinka

Kydo | Cincinnati

Kei Nishikori made a second-round exit from the Western & Southern Open on Wednesday, losing in straight sets to former world No. 3 Stan Wawrinka.

The 2016 U.S. Open champion from Switzerland showed his game is back on track following a prolonged absence with a knee injury that saw his ranking tumble to 263 in June.

Wawrinka, 33, converted 60 percent of his first serves and lost just six of the 31 points in which he did so, allowing just one break in a 6-4, 6-4 win

over 28-year-old Nishikori.

After both players held serve through the first three games of the opening set, world No. 23 Nishikori broke Wawrinka to take a 4-1 lead.

However, the Swiss won the next three games to draw level at 4-4, before earning three break points in the ninth game. Nishikori fought his way back to deuce, but Wawrinka secured the break to go up 5-4 before serving out the set.

Wawrinka held serve throughout the second set and did not face a single break point as he booked his ticket to the round of 16.

Kyrgios victorious after bizarre encounter

Sky News | Cincinnati

Nick Kyrgios is through to the third round of the Cincinnati Masters after a chaotic encounter with Borna Coric.

Kyrgios completely lost the plot in the second set when a line call went against him, smashing a ball petulantly into the night sky before chuntering with the crowd as he gave up on the set.

But he then bounced back in the decider, eventually prevailing 7-6 0-6 6-3, to set up a clash with Hyeon Chung or Juan Martin del Potro.

All was relatively serene during a hard-fought first set between two of the best young players on tour - Kyrgios winning the tie-break 7-1.

But Coric went 2-0 up in set two and, when he then had a passing shot called in, an incredulous Kyrgios smashed the ball into the stands - and started ranting about the umpire.

The set continued but Kyrgios made only sporadic effort, informing his team in the stands that he was going to 'tank', and complaining of boredom while Coric was preparing to serve.

At set point, Kyrgios hit a tame return and



Nick Kyrgios

began walking to his chair before Coric had even finished off the point.

However, Kyrgios then upped his game in set three, producing some brilliantly flamboyant tennis - including power-packed forehands with both feet off the floor - and clinching victory with a service winner.

"I knew I was always going to compete in the third set," said Kyrgios.

"I competed too hard in the first set to sort of just let the match slip and not give

myself a chance to win, at least.

"The second set, when I was 4-0 down, I knew there was no real point going out there and competing and obviously waste energy trying to battle back.

"I knew at 4-0, if I lost the set 6-0, I was going to be serving first in the third set. I think I carried a lot of momentum from the first game, and it ended up being a smart move."

Kyrgios made the final in Cincinnati last year, before losing to Grigor Dimitrov.

"I competed too hard in the first set to sort of just let the match slip and not give myself a chance to win, at least"

NICK KYRGIOS