

Azarenka books spot in Indian Wells final against Badosa



Victoria Azarenka hits a return

AFP | Indian Wells

Victoria Azarenka, who is hoping to become the first three-time WTA winner in Indian Wells, punched her ticket to Sunday's final by rallying to beat former French Open champion Jelena Ostapenko 3-6, 6-3, 7-5 on Friday.

Two-time Australian Open winner Azarenka continued her solid play in the California desert as she goes for her first title of 2021 and 22nd of her career.

The 32-year-old arrived in the semi-finals without dropping a set and after losing the first one to Ostapenko on Friday night she settled in and found her form.

Azarenka will face Spaniard Paula Badosa, who defeated Ons Jabeur in straight sets 6-3, 6-3.

Azarenka is seeking to win the tournament for the third time after victories in 2012 and 2016.

She is the only former champion left in either the women's or men's field, and with another victory can separate herself from the list of women who have won the trophy twice -- which includes Martina Navratilova, Serena Williams and Maria Sharapova.

Azarenka clinched victory on her first match point when Ostapenko slammed a forehand into the net.

This was the second career meeting between the two but the first on hardcourt, so it took Azarenka time to feel her opponent out and figure out

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VICTORIA AZARENKA

her weaknesses.

“She was playing really incredible in the first set, not giving me much,” said Azarenka.

“I was just trying to find an opportunity -- actually create an opportunity -- for me to get back into the match and take a little bit more control. I really had to fight for every ball.”

Ostapenko controlled most of the first set, breaking Azarenka in the second game to go up 2-0. She then held serve to jump out to a 3-0 lead using her powerful ground strokes to move the Belarusian around the court.

Azarenka went down again 2-0 in the second set but then caught fire while holding serve in the third game.

That started a run of five straight games to take a 5-2 lead. Ostapenko held serve once more but Azarenka served out the set to level the match.

Azarenka raised her level another notch in a hard-fought third set, winning the final three games to get to the final where she will face Badosa for the first time.

Man Utd lose at Leicester, five-star Liverpool go top

Leicester City won a rollercoaster of a match against Manchester United to put more pressure on Ole Gunnar Solskjaer

● **Salah's latest stunner caps Liverpool's 5-0 win at Watford**

AFP | London

Manchester United succumbed to a first away league defeat for 30 games by losing 4-2 at Leicester as Liverpool stormed to the top of the Premier League with a 5-0 demolition of Watford on yesterday.

Manchester City moved into second with a 2-0 win over Burnley, while Chelsea can move back to the top of the table when they travel to Brentford later in the day.

But the focus will fall on United manager Ole Gunnar Solskjaer after his side failed to win for the third consecutive Premier League game.

United led at the King Power thanks to Mason Greenwood's spectacular strike, but were quickly pegged back by Youri Tielemans' dinked finish beyond David de Gea.

A flurry of four goals in the final 12 minutes then condemned Solskjaer's men to a first defeat on the road since January 2020.

Caglar Soyuncu put Leicester in front before Marcus Rashford equalised on his first appearance of the season after shoulder surgery.



Liverpool's Mohamed Salah, left, and Watford's Danny Rose battle for the ball

Straight from kick-off, United's leaky defence was breached once more as Jamie Vardy smashed home and Patson Daka's first Leicester goal in stoppage time sealed a much-needed win for Brendan Rodgers' men.

‘No one better’ than Salah

Roberto Firmino scored his first hat-trick since 2018 as Liverpool ran riot at Vicarage Road in Claudio Ranieri's first match as Watford boss.

But it was Mohamed Salah who again took most of the plaudits for another stunning solo goal to take his tally for the season to 10 in as many games.

“In this moment it is clear that there is no one better than him,” said Liverpool manager Jurgen Klopp of the Egyptian.

Salah helped open the floodgates with a defence-splitting pass that teed up Sadio Mane to score his 100th Premier League goal.

Firmino would have been unavailable due to a late return from international duty but for an injury that forced him to withdraw from the Brazil squad.

He tapped home his first goal from James Milner's cross before half-time and took advantage of another open goal after Ben Foster parried Craig Cathcart's attempted clearance.

Salah left four Manchester City defenders trailing to score in a thrilling 2-2 draw before the international break and pulled off a similar feat before curling into the far corner.

Firmino then completed the

“Come on, who is better than him? We don't have to talk about what Messi and Ronaldo have done for world football and their dominance, but right now, he is the best”

JUERGEN KLOPP

rout in stoppage time.

City did not need to hit top gear to see off Burnley at the Etihad and remain one point behind Liverpool at the top of the table.

Bernardo Silva and Kevin De Bruyne were on target either side of half-time for Pep Guardiola's men.

Wolves produced a miraculous comeback from 2-0 down with 10 minutes remaining to win 3-2 at Aston Villa.

Danny Ings and John McGinn had put the hosts in a commanding position at Villa Park.

But Romain Saiss, Conor Coady and Ruben Neves handed Bruno Lage's men a dramatic three points.

Southampton got their first league win of the season thanks to Armando Broja's goal to beat Leeds 1-0.

Norwich remain winless and bottom of the table after a 0-0 draw with Brighton.

Ten-match win streak in UAE gives Pakistan edge over India, says Babar

TDT | Manama

Pakistan have won their last 10 Twenty20 internationals in the United Arab Emirates and captain Babar Azam claims that will give his men the edge over India in their World Cup opener.

The arch-rivals will meet in Dubai on October 24 in what will be the biggest clash of the tournament that starts Sunday in Oman and the UAE.

Pakistan have never won a World Cup match against India, but that does not bother Babar who believes familiarity with

the UAE pitches will help them break the jinx.

“Definitely we have played a lot of cricket in the UAE,” Babar said in a captain's press conference when asked about his team's dismal 0-5 record against India in T20 World Cup clashes.

MG Bahrain announces sponsorship of Muharraq Club

TDT | Manama

MG Bahrain has signed a partnership deal on Thursday with Muharraq Club to sponsor the Club's basketball team in the 2021-2022 season.

The deal comes as part of the British-born brand's strategic approach to engage with the different sectors in the Kingdom, including the flourishing sports sector, in order to strengthen its position as a leading establishment in Bahrain and bolster its bonds with the society.

The sponsorship was announced during a press conference held at MG Showroom, in the presence of Rashid Zayed Alzayani, Managing Director at Zayani Motors, the exclusive distributor of MG Motor in the Kingdom of Bahrain, Shaikh Abdulrahman bin Nasser Al Khalifa, Muharraq Club Board Member and Head of the Basketball Section, representatives of the media and a number of officials in the club and company,



Officials after signing the agreement at MG Bahrain showroom

as well personalities involved in the Bahraini sports scene.

During the Conference, Rashid Zayed Alzayani stressed MG's keenness to play an active role in the sports sector, adding that this is reflected by partnerships and sponsorship deals the brand has signed with various sports clubs around the world, including Al Ahli Football Club in Saudi Arabia, Liverpool Foot-

ball Club in the UK and many more.

Commenting further, Alzayani said, “We are thrilled with the signing of this deal with a well-established sports club such as Muharraq Club. This partnership would have a positive impact on our efforts to promote the diversity of MG cars, which suit different tastes and age groups, thanks to its

various sizes, features and specifications. This move will also highlight the exceptional services and privileges offered by Zayani Motors as one of the best car dealerships in the Kingdom and the GCC region. Muharraq Club is in the forefront of sports clubs in the region, and we aspire, through this partnership, to achieve more growth, success and prosperity together,

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RASHID ZAYED ALZAYANI, MANAGING DIRECTOR AT ZAYANI MOTORS

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On his part, Shaikh Abdulrahman welcomed the signing of the partnership deal with MG Bahrain, stating that it would certainly have a positive impact on the team and push it towards additional positive results at the local, regional and continental levels.

On the occasion, Shaikh Abdulrahman stated: “This is a de-

lightful occasion and we are excited to compete in the upcoming tournaments and leagues under the MG logo. MG is a renowned brand with a solid global presence and a continuously growing reputation, especially in our region. We believe that this partnership would reflect positively on the team's performance, as well as the Brand's endeavours to cement its leading position not only in Bahrain, but also the region.”

MG Motor and Zayani Motors have partnered to introduce MG's state-of-the-art fleet of sedan and SUVs in the thriving Bahraini automotive market, making Zayani Motors the sole and exclusive distributor of the British-born brand in the Kingdom. MG Motor and Zayani Motors are keen to roll out sensational offers and promotions for MG's existing and new clients throughout the year, granting them the chance of winning hundreds of rewardable prizes and valuable discounts.