Simona Halep

Rain slows Djokovic

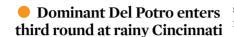
eight events in the elite ATP series.

just one of eight prior encounters with

Djokovic, prevailed easily in the open-

for a second time to take a 5-3 lead.

rain moved in.



Halep through but **Stephens exits**

AFP | Cincinnati, United States

ovak Djokovic's third-round struggle with defending champion Grigor Dimitrov was halted by rain, forcing the pair to come back on Friday at the ATP-WTA Cincinnati

able to take the court for his thirdround match against Leonardo Mayer.



Officials called a halt to a frustrating day on which Roger Federer was never Wimbledon cham- pion Djokovic tin del Potro at last managed to com-

victories. World number one Halep took advantage of an early afternoon respite from the weather to finish off a 4-6, 6-3, 6-3 victory over Ajla Tomljanovic. Halep, clearly frustrated when the match was halted at 3-3 in the third on Wednesday night, won three straight games to finish off the victory in 10 minutes -- just in time for drizzle Argentina's world number three

> in the first game of his postponed second-round match against serve well today. I'm really rain came again. But the weath-

a 6-2, 6-3 win up a meeting ond round, with Aus-

empty in five finals. He lost the first tralian Nick Kyrgios for a place in the reached the last eight with a 6-4, 6-2 set 6-2 and won the second 6-3 when quarter-finals - a match originally set win over France's Kristina Mladenovic. rain stopped the contest for 90 minutes. for Thursday night but now on tap for When play resumed, Djokovic edged Friday.

ahead 2-1 in the third, but another storm Two men's quarter-finalists were rolled in and organizers called a halt. decided as Milos Raonic defeated Denis Cincinnati remains the only one of Shapovalov 7-6 (8/6), 6-4 -- avenging a the nine Masters 1000 events that the loss to his young Canadian compatriot

Serb star hasn't won. He has lifted troin Madrid three months ago. phies at least twice at each of the other Pablo Carreno Busta also advanced, beating Robin Haase of the Netherlands Bulgaria's Dimitrov, who has won 6-4, 6-2.

"I just need to get out there and really fight, I was telling myself to fight," the two-time Wimbledon champion said.

"I did a lot of talking to myself today, pushing myself to just go for it. I'm glad that in the important points I played aggressively - that was important

Stephens ousted

ing set and broke early in the second In women's third-round action, before Djokovic roared back, breaking reigning US Open champion Sloane Stephens was elimi-The 10th-seeded Serb squared the nated while Madison Keys, match as the day's second bout of major runner-up at Flushing Meadows last year, moved Earlier, Simona Halep and Juan Mar-

Belgian Elise Mertens plete weather-delayed second-round scored the second top five win of her career, beating Stephens 7-6 (10/8), 6-2 while Keys rallied to defeat fourth-seeded Wimbledon champion Angelique Kerber 2-6, 7-6 (7/3), 6-4.Keys fired 55 winners with 44 un-

forced errors against the German, who is playing her first hardcourt tournament in the buildup to the US Open. "I had to keep it cool, she

del Potro had played just six points gets lot of balls back," Keys said. "I used my forehand and Chung Hyeon before the happy and I'm looking to go further."

Keys next faces Aryna Saer cleared long balenka of Belarus, who upset enough for del Po- French sixth seed Caroline tro to polish off Garcia 6-4, 3-6, 7-5.

Petra Kvitova, who over the South toppled Serena Wil-Korean to set liams in the sec-



Djokovic disagrees with Federer, advocates for 3-set matches

ESPN | Cincinnati

The top stars of men's ten-**1** nis are divided on how long they should be playing.

Novak Djokovic, responding Wednesday to Roger Federer's pitch for more five-set matches during the season, said he wants to go the other way, even reducing Grand Slams to three sets to keep the attention of younger fans.

"I would have even Grand Slams best of three, to be honest," Djokovic said in an interview on the Tennis Channel. "This new generation of tennis fans and millenials, they don't have the great attention span. They want things to happen very quickly. So for the players as well and to attract more people, more viewers of a younger audience, I think we have to keep tennis matches dynamic, shorter and Roger Federer and Novak Djokovic (file photo) no shot clock."

"On the ATP Tour, we actual- his Tennis Channel interview. "I understand the reasons."



Juan Martin del Potro

A day earlier, Federer had pro- ly don't have any best-of-five- feel like that's a bit of an opporposed adding five-set match to set matches. They're all at the tunity wasted. I know it's also for for the "Big Four" of the men's Masters 1000 events and the ATP Slams, Davis Cup and at the player protection, for injuries. ... game. Federer, Djokovic, Rafael Olympics finals," Federer said in I think that's a bit of a pity, but I Nadal and Andy Murray have a Grand Slam since last year's not actually watching the whole

Attrition has been an issue

This new generation of tennis fans and millenials, they don't have the great attention span. They want things to happen very quickly. So for the players as well and to attract more people, more viewers of a vounger audience. I think we have to keep tennis matches dynamic. shorter and no shot

clock **NOVAK DJOKOVIC**

forced them out of at least one Grand Slam since 2016, and last month's Rogers Cup, citing to do that," he said. "A lot of his schedule as the reason.

all dealt with injuries that have Wimbledon due to a hip injury, thing."

was split in his opinion, telling The New York Times that he enjoyed playing five-set matches but found them less enjoyable as a spectator.

"As a player, I really like best-of-five. It's been good to me," Murray said. "I feel like it rewards the training and everything you put into that. But then, when I sat and watched the match -- that Nadal-[Juan Martin] del Potro [Wimbledon quarterfinal] in the commentary booth -- it was an amazing match, it was a brilliant match, but it was really, really long to sit there as a spectator for the first time."

Murray added that he thought this year's Wimbledon semifinals, in which both matches lasted more than five hours, was not "good for tennis."

"People that are sitting there during the week watching that Federer recently withdrew from all, I don't think you can plan people are going to be getting Murray, who hasn't played up and leaving the matches and

Hon. Chairman Najeb Yacob Alhamer | Editor-in-Chief Mahmood | Deputy Editor-in-Chief Ahdeya Ahmed | Chairman & Managing Editor P Unnikrishnan | Advertisement: Update Media W.L.L | Tel: 38444692, Email: sales@newsofbahrain.com | Newsroom: Tel: 38444680, Email: mail@newsofbahrain.com Subscription & circulation: Tel: 38444692/17579877 | Email:subscription@newsofbahrain.com | Website: www.newsofbahrain.com | Printed and published by Al Ayam Publishing