

SPORTS  
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# Djokovic toppled in Cincy

Top seed Novak Djokovic stunned by Daniil Medvedev in Cincinnati semi-final

● Daniil Medvedev faces David Goffin for title

AFP | Cincinnati

World number one Novak Djokovic wilted under pressure from Daniil Medvedev Saturday, falling 3-6, 6-3, 6-3 to the ninth-seeded Russian in the Cincinnati Masters semi-finals.

Medvedev's upset win sent him into a title showdown with another unexpected finalist, 16th-seeded Belgian David Goffin, who defeated France's Richard Gasquet 6-3, 6-4 to reach his first ATP Masters 1000 final.

A fuming Djokovic, who looked to have control of the contest in the early going, was caught out when Medvedev stepped things up in the second set.

"I don't know how I turned it around, I was so tired after the first set and I thought I might not be able to keep up the intensity," said Medvedev, who has competed in 15 hardcourt matches since July 30.

"But I had a momentum change in the second set and the crowd gave me energy," added the Russian, who will be playing his second Masters series final in eight days, after falling to Rafael Nadal in Montreal last Sunday.

"Novak had been destroying me on second serve, so I just



Novak Djokovic (R) of Serbia congratulates Daniil Medvedev of Russia

went for it," Medvedev said. "It's a great feeling to win and beat the number one."

Djokovic, the defending champion who was playing his first tournament since his Wimbledon triumph in July, need some time to cool down before pondering his loss.

"He deserves to be in the mix, certainly, with all his results," Djokovic said. "He's working his way to top 5. "He's definitely one of the best players in the world at this moment."

Djokovic said there was little he could do in the face of Medvedev's go-for-broke style.

"When I had my racquet on the ball I was returning also his serves, but you can't really pre-



Daniil Medvedev has reached his third successive final of the season

dict someone or prepare yourself for someone serving that big second serve consistently from 4-3 to the end of the match with making maybe two double faults

out of God knows how many serves," he said.

With the US Open starting on August 26, Djokovic said he took "mostly positives" from the week.

"Today I did lose a tennis match, but I didn't do too much wrong," he said. "So I'll take that and I'll move forward to New York and have a good practice week."

"I'm going to go to fight for a title as everyone else does -- and I like my chances."

Medvedev won 12 of the last 14 points in the second set to square the match against Djokovic, then ran up a 3-1 lead in the third on the way to victory on his first match point.

# Kuznetsova stuns Barty to set up finals clash with Keys



Svetlana Kuznetsova of Russia returns a shot to Ashleigh Barty of Australia

Reuters | Cincinnati

Ashleigh Barty lost her chance to regain the number one world ranking after she was unexpectedly beaten in straight sets by Russian Svetlana Kuznetsova in the semi-finals of the Cincinnati Masters on Saturday.

Top seed Barty, who would have replaced the injured Naomi Osaka as the world number one with a victory, struggled with the rhythm off her serve as she lost 6-2 6-4, losing eight consecutive games to the Russian at one point.

"I think it probably started with the serve for me," Barty said courtside. "I mean, giving Svetlana that many looks at second serves I know I'm not going to get free points off my first serve off Sveta. She's an incredible returner and retrieves a long way so is able to make a lot of returns."

"Just to be on the back foot of a lot of rallies from the start wasn't ideal. I felt like we have done well to fight all week and then to put ourselves in this position, but Sveta was unreal today."

Kuznetsova, ranked world number 153, will play American Madison Keys for the title.

Keys, the 16th seed, turned back compatriot Sofia Kenin 7-5 6-4 in their semi-final.

Winner of US Open in 2004 and the French Open in 2009, the 34-year-old Kuznetsova has struggled with injuries throughout her career but has now defeated eighth seeded Sloane Stephens, Czech third seed Karolina Pliskova and Barty in successive matches.

"It's amazing to play again on centre court," Kuznetsova said.

She entered the Cincinnati tournament as a wild card after winning two matches in Toronto. Issues in obtaining a U.S. visa kept her from defending her Washington DC title.

"Maybe one week or two weeks helped me back home," she said. "Something important happened in my life and now I feel better."

Barty won the first two games, then lost the set as Kuznetsova, handling the Australian's slices effectively and serving well, won the next six.

# Klopp impressed as Liverpool hold firm to see off Saints

AFP | Southampton

Jurgen Klopp denied that exhaustion was behind Liverpool's inconsistent display in their hard-fought 2-1 win at Southampton on Saturday.

Klopp's team struggled in the first half and it was completely against the run of play when Sadio Mane put Liverpool ahead in first half stoppage-time at St Mary's.

Clinical finishing from Roberto Firmino after 71 minutes seemed to have secured the three points.

But a dreadful error by Liverpool goalkeeper Adrian gifted a goal to Danny Ings, who later miskicked from six yards

when an equaliser seemed inevitable.

Reds boss Klopp had argued for a later start to the domestic season after his players' busy international schedule during the summer.

And his team, who played extra-time in Istanbul before beating Chelsea in the European Super Cup on Wednesday, looked fatigued for long periods.

But after the final whistle at St Mary's, Klopp insisted tiredness had not been a major factor in the uneven performance.

"Southampton are a good team, they defend well with good counter-attacks, good organisation," he said.



Liverpool's Sadio Mane (L) vies with Southampton's Pierre-Emile Hojbjerg

# 'Better every day' - Dortmund launch title charge with Augsburg rout

AFP | Berlin

Borussia Dortmund coach Lucien Favre said his team could get even better after they made a perfect start to the new Bundesliga season on Saturday, thrashing Augsburg 5-1 to take an early lead in the title race.

England international Jadon Sancho, who claimed his first goal of the term in Dortmund's Supercup victory over Bayern Munich two weeks ago, was among the scorers again as Dortmund ran riot to go top of the table.

"We did well and had a lot of possession today, and we deserved to win," said Favre, but said his side could still improve in some areas.

"The important thing is that we get better every day," he said. Having thrown away a nine-point lead and narrowly missed the title last season, Dortmund had promised another attack on Bayern's hegemony in 2019/20.

Dortmund received a boost on Friday when the champions dropped two points against Hertha Berlin in the season opener. They then romped to victory in front of their own



Dortmund's English midfielder Jadon Sancho jumps for a ball

fans on Saturday. Florian Niederlechner's first-minute opener for Augsburg left Dortmund stunned, but it took the hosts two minutes to draw level. Paco Alcacer gratefully pounced on a mistake from Augsburg keeper Tomas Koubek.

Koubek was at fault again when Sancho put Dortmund ahead after the break, flapping at a low cross before the Englishman smashed the ball in at the far post.

The Czech keeper then crowned a miserable Bundesliga debut by dropping the ball at the feet of Marco Reus to gift

Dortmund a third goal.

A curling long-range strike from Alcacer and a debut goal for new signing Julian Brandt completed the rout for Dortmund.

Elsewhere, former Huddersfield manager David Wagner made a gritty start to his new job at Schalke, as his side were held to a 0-0 draw by Borussia Moenchengladbach.

"I've had worse days in my career. The boys gave everything in defence. We still need time on the training pitch, but today it was about showing commitment and passion," Wagner told broadcaster Sky.

# BOC organises coaching course

TDT | Manama

A Level 3 course of the National Coaching Programme, organized by the Bahrain Olympic Committee's (BOC) Bahrain Olympic Academy, got underway with 25 coaches from Bahrain and Saudi Arabia, in the fray.

The two-week course is being organized in cooperation with the Coaching Association of Canada, and will continue until August 29 with the practical exams that determines the coaches moving up to Level 4, the highest in the programme.

Level 4 graduates Abdulla Al Dakheel, Adel Al Asfoor and Mohsin Ali conducted sessions on effective leadership, mental skills development and recovery, on the opening day of the course.

All participants will undergo theoretical exams on August 22 in order to pass this level 3 course, at the end of which the practical exams are due to take place.

Level 3 of the programme is part of the Bahrain Olympic Academy annual plans to qualify and develop national competencies in the field of sports in Bahrain.