

SPORTS  
sports

# Murray sweeps into Antwerp quarters

● Andy Murray takes out Pablo Cuevas to move into quarterfinals

● Murray wins seventh ATP Tour singles win of the season

AFP | Antwerp, Belgium

Former world number one Andy Murray cruised into the quarter-finals at Antwerp on Thursday with a 6-4, 6-3 defeat of Uruguay's Pablo Cuevas.

Murray, a three-time Grand Slam champion, is attempting to work his way back to form almost 10 months after career-saving hip surgery.

The Scot, currently ranked 243rd in the world, held serve throughout against eighth seed Cuevas before sealing victory in 84 minutes.

He will take on Romania's Marius Copil -- who hit 13 aces past third seed Diego Schwartzman in a 6-4, 5-7, 7-6 (9/7) win -- for a place in the last four.

"I felt a bit better today. I



Britain's Andy Murray returns a shot during a tennis match against Uruguay's Pablo Cuevas

thought I served quite well for most of the match and when I was able to get into the baseline rallies, I felt I was hitting the ball quite clean, which is good," Murray said.

"He served very well, which made it difficult for me to get the breaks, but I thought for me it was a good match."

Italian teenager Jannik Sinner dumped out top seed and 2018 runner-up Gael Monfils 6-3, 6-2 to reach his first ATP quarter-final.

Next up for the 18-year-old

**"I felt a bit better today. I thought I served quite well for most of the match and when I was able to get into the baseline rallies, I felt I was hitting the ball quite clean, which is good"**

ANDY MURRAY

Sinner is American Frances Tiafoe, a straight-sets winner over seventh-seeded German Jan-Lennard Struff.

"I played a very solid game. He didn't play his best tennis for sure. It's not easy if you make the final the year before and then to come here to play a young player and wild card," world number 119 Sinner told [atptour.com](http://atptour.com)

"I think I played solid today. I served good on the important points and I think that was the key today."

## Klopp keen to make Man Utd wait for turnaround

AFP | London

Liverpool manager Jurgen Klopp believes Manchester United will turn their floundering fortunes around, but wants to make sure they have to wait at least another week to do so.

Klopp's men travel to Old Trafford on Sunday already 15 points ahead of their rivals just eight games into the campaign.

United manager Ole Gunnar Solskjaer has called on his side

to rise to the challenge of facing the European champions, citing it as the "perfect game" to motivate his struggling side.

Klopp has sympathy for Solskjaer's view, but he is confident of winning for the first time at Old Trafford as Liverpool boss.

"I don't think there are a lot of teams who would love to play against us at the moment. It looks like Man Utd is the only team that wants to play us, and

we have to make sure that is a misunderstanding," said Klopp yesterday.

"I would do the same if the situation was the other way around. This is the game we can change the world, that is the way I would prepare it.

"They are in a situation that they don't like and they want to change it. We just have to make sure that if they want to change it, they start a week later and that's all."

United will be without the injured Paul Pogba and David de Gea, while Anthony Martial and Aaron Wan-Bissaka remain doubts.

And Klopp expects the Red Devils to improve once they get a number of key players back.

"They had a lot of injuries," he added. "A number of really decisive players for them. No one can play the same football when five or six first-team players are out. That will change."

## Modric and Bale to miss Madrid trip to Mallorca

AFP | Madrid

Real Madrid will be without both Gareth Bale and Luka Modric for this weekend's Liga match against Real Mallorca, Zinedine Zidane confirmed yesterday.

Modric and Bale both picked up injuries during the Euro 2020 qualifier between Croatia and Wales on Sunday, which finished 1-1.

Wales coach Ryan Giggs suggested after the match that Bale was suffering with cramp in his calf but the forward has not trained with the rest of the Madrid squad this week.

## Liverpool match can spark Man Utd revival: Solskjaer

AFP | London

Manchester United manager Ole Gunnar Solskjaer believes the visit of rivals Liverpool to Old Trafford could help galvanize his struggling side to pull themselves out of their alarming slump.

The difference in current fortunes between English football's two most successful clubs could not be greater, with Liverpool top of the table after eight wins out of eight.

The European champions are also on a run of 17 consecutive league victories, while United have made their worst start to a season for 30 years.

If results go against them on Saturday, United could even be



Ole Gunnar Solskjaer waves to fans during a match

teetering just above the relegation zone by the time they kick off on Sunday, but Solskjaer is



Real Madrid's Croatian midfielder Luka Modric (R) jumps for the ball with Barcelona's Argentinian forward Lionel Messi (file photo)

## Barca, Real eye Dec 18 date for postponed Clasico

AFP | Madrid

Barcelona and Real Madrid appear set to agree December 18 as the date for a rearranged Clasico after Spain's biggest football match was postponed yesterday due to protests in Catalonia.

The Spanish Football Federation (RFEF) announced that Barca and Madrid have until 10:00am (0800 GMT) on Monday to find a new date, which will be decided by the RFEF if they cannot reach an agreement.

But according to the RFEF, Real Madrid have already approved December 18, meaning the fixture looks set to move to that date, pending official confirmation.

In a statement yesterday, Barcelona proposed the new date but also stressed their desire for the original fixture, scheduled for October 26 at Camp Nou, to go ahead.

"The club's desire was to play the Clasico at Camp Nou on the 26th, the date and time previously agreed and the Committee was informed of this in writing," read yesterday's statement.

"The club has the utmost confidence in the peaceful behaviour of its members and fans who always express themselves in exemplary fashion at Camp Nou.

"Nevertheless, having received the decision of the RFEF Competition Committee to postpone the game citing 'ex-

ceptional circumstances' and given that it falls to the clubs to agree a new date for the game before Monday, the club will propose December 18."

Barcelona added the club "regrets the inconvenience" caused to fans and will refund those that had bought tickets for the original fixture. In a press conference yesterday, Real Madrid coach Zinedine Zidane said: "We will do as we are told. I know there is a lot of debate but that's our position. I have my own preferences but I'm not going to tell you them."

Barca play away at Eibar in La Liga on Saturday and planned to make the 589-kilometre journey by bus to avoid demonstrations at El Prat airport. Real Madrid also play on Saturday, away at Real Mallorca.



**After the Catalan independence referendum in 2017, Barcelona played a league match against Las Palmas behind closed doors in protest, after their request for a postponement was rejected**

looking forward to this game," said the Norwegian yesterday.

"This is a perfect game for the players and the fans. We've had a tough time and a difficult time lately but I am sure we will give them a good game."

United have just nine points from their first eight league matches of this season and are currently 12th in the table.

Stretching back to Solskjaer's permanent appointment in March, they have won only five games out of 21 in all competitions.

It is far below expectations, which the manager knows, but he believes that the work going on behind the scenes will pay dividends eventually.

"We have come a long way on

what you call the culture and environment that we are working in. That is positive," added Solskjaer, who said the mood around the club had changed from the final days under Jose Mourinho last season.

"At times last season I didn't feel the players had the robustness or the mentality. But from the culture I am seeing every day and the attitude in training, the players want to give everything.

"The staff and players know when it's Liverpool coming up. When you sign for Manchester United, this is the first game you look for against one of the main rivals.

"And it's a chance as I did, a couple of times, to get in the history books."