

SPORTS

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Djokovic crushes Dimitrov

Djokovic put in a flawless display to book his spot in the quarter-finals at Queen's

AFP | London

Novak Djokovic swept into the Queen's Club quarter-finals and recorded his 799th career win with a 6-4, 6-1 demolition of Grigor Dimitrov yesterday.

Djokovic needed only 65 minutes to crush world number five Dimitrov in the second round of the Wimbledon warm-up event.

In the last eight, the former world number one faces the winner of the all-French clash between Adrian Panatta and Julien Benneteau.

"Hopefully we can get 800 tomorrow," said the Serb.

If Djokovic is successful in his next match, the Serb will become only the 10th man in the Open era to join the 800-win club.

It was Djokovic's first win over a top 10 player in just over a year and the impressive display suggested he made the right decision to play at Queen's for the first time since 2010.

Djokovic is a lowly 22nd in the ATP rankings after an em-



Serbia's Novak Djokovic returns against Bulgaria's Grigor Dimitrov

barrassing French Open quarter-final defeat against Italian Marco Cecchinato extended his wretched run in 2018.

Hampered by an elbow injury last year, he has failed to reach the semi-finals in any of his last five Grand Slam appearances.

Djokovic hasn't earned a major title since competing his career Grand Slam by winning the 2016 French Open.

Dogged by rumours that he

no longer has the motivation to return to the top, the 12-time Grand Slam winner decided to start his bid for a fourth Wimbledon crown by accepting a Queen's wild card.

Speaking after finishing off former Queen's winner Dimitrov, Djokovic admitted his confidence is finally starting to return.

"Grigor made some crucial double faults today that handed

me the first set. He loves playing on grass, he's a great quality player," he said.

"Being able to get the first set under he belt was a huge confidence booster for me.

"I made three double faults in the last game and was serving with new balls which usually, on grass, is easier.

"I made it stressful for myself. I'm glad I manage to close it out."



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'I don't care' -- Kyrgios defiant over foul-mouthed Queen's

AFP | London

Nick Kyrgios refused to apologise after the controversial Australian's foul-mouthed rant overshadowed his Queen's Club win against Kyle Edmund.

Kyrgios smashed 32 aces in a 7-6 (7/3), 6-7 (5/7), 6-3 second round victory at the Wimbledon warm-up yesterday.

But it was the 23-year-old's verbal volleys that marred his progress to a first Queen's quarter-final.

The notoriously volatile Kyrgios said sorry to the crowd on one occasion after swearing in frustration, then aimed an x-rated outburst towards his coaching team in the courtside players' box.

Although Kyrgios escaped a code violation, the BBC, broadcasting the match live, were forced to apologise after his expletives were picked up by their microphones.

But Kyrgios, who has found himself in hot water for his petulant on-court behaviour on numerous occasions, was unrepentant when quizzed about the swearing.

"Fine. I don't care," he said



Australia's Nick Kyrgios returns against Britain's Kyle Edmund

at a press conference when informed the BBC had issued an apology for his language.

When a reporter asked if he felt he needed to keep his emotions more under control, Kyrgios gave a surly reply. "Do you swear? Yes or no? Yes or no? Do you swear? Do you swear?" he said.

When the reporter replied that he had been known to, Kyrgios dismissively responded: "Okay, great. Good question."

Kyrgios's latest outburst took the spotlight away from an impressive win against Edmund.

Bennett open for more challenges in Brave CF

TDI | Manama

2017 IMMAF Gold Medalist, Ben Bennett made his pro debut at Brave Combat Federation with a victory. Bennett had announced that he is ready to compete again at Brave Combat Federation. Currently Bennett competes in the highly active Welterweight division of Brave Combat Federation. Bennett embarked on his professional career after accumulating a successful record of 30 wins in his amateur career.

"I love the way Brave Combat Federation works and it will give me a chance to travel around the world and gain fans around the world. Brave Combat Federation is the right place for emerging athletes to compete and prove to the world that they are the best. The exposure that we get is



Ben Bennett

amazing and as a fighter, I understand that the promotion genuinely cares about athletes. So I am ready to get back as soon as possible", said the native of Alaska, USA about competing again in Brave Combat Federation.

Loman express support for WBA Asia bantamweight champion

TDI | Manama

Stephen Loman was present to support when Carl Jammes Martin who stopped George Lumoly of Indonesia in the third round to become the new WBA Asia bantamweight champion.

Loman had recently defended his championship in Belfast at Brave 13 where he faced Frans Mlambo from SBG Ireland. The fight went the distance and was attended by greats from the combat sports world including Conor McGregor and Amir Khan.

Stephen Loman is the first fighter from Philippines who competed in Brave Combat Federation. Loman went forward to capture the bantamweight championship by knocking out Gurdarshan Mangat at Brave



Stephen Loman

9: The Kingdom of Champions hosted in Bahrain.

After defending his championship in Belfast, Loman created history as the only fighter from Philippines to defend his championship in Europe. He is also the only fighter from Philippines to score a win against a fighter from SBG Ireland.

Brave Combat Federation under the leadership of His High-

ness Sheikh Khalid bin Hamad Al Khalifa had been successful in bringing multiple athletes from Philippines and giving them a global opportunity.

Bahrain's Brave Combat Federation made it possible for athletes from Philippines to compete in nations including Bahrain, UAE, Brazil, India, Mexico, Jordan, Indonesia and United Kingdom.

Saudi take positives for Asian Cup

Reuters | Rostov-On-Don, Russia

Saudi Arabia are looking towards the Asian Cup with hope after they showed signs of progress in their 1-0 defeat to Uruguay as they exited the World Cup on Wednesday.

The Saudis were crushed 5-0 by hosts Russia in the opening game of Group A before a goalkeeping blunder from Mohammed Al-Owais handed Uruguay their place in the last 16 and eliminated the Green Falcons.

Saudi Arabia, however, were competitive throughout, playing neat football and enjoying most of the possession at the Rostov Arena.

"We played at a much better level than in the Russia game, and that is more our style of play, but we just did not have the right tools to break Uruguay down," said Saudi Arabia coach Juan Antonio Pizzi.

Despite occasions of clever passing, the Saudis rarely threatened and managed only three shots on target in their two matches in Russia.

"We had a lot of ball possession and were able to impose our style of play and distribution," said Pizzi. "We conceded a goal from a random play and didn't have the weapons or tools to try to equalize. We kept the ball well and weren't really troubled defensively, but lacked that ability to score."

"This is our weakness. We have good ball possession, but no effectiveness."

Beckham tips England vs Argentina final

AFP | Beijing

Former captain David Beckham has tipped England to play Lionel Messi's Argentina in the World Cup final, reflecting rising optimism about the Three Lions' chances after a positive start in Russia.

Beckham was speaking at a promotional event in China after England beat Tunisia 2-1 in their opening game, boosting their chances of reaching the knockout rounds.

England have long stuttered on the big stage and they last reached the World Cup quarter-finals in 2006, when Beck-



David Beckham

ham was captain. Their only World Cup final was way back in 1966, when they beat Germany at Wembley.

"I believe Argentina will play against England in the final," Beckham predicted at an event to promote China's largest col-

legiate football league.

"I think obviously my choice would be England to win the competition, but that's me being biased and passionate about my country," he added.

But the former Manchester United and Real Madrid midfielder, a veteran of three World Cups, warned that the road ahead looked hard for Gareth Southgate's team.

"I'm very happy that we won the first game in the group," he said. "England is a very young team, they don't have a lot of experience yet and the journey of the World Cup will become harder and harder."

Garbine Muguruza falls short

Reuters | Birmingham

Wimbledon champion Garbine Muguruza suffered a 6-2 6-4 defeat at the hands of unseeded Czech Barbora Strycova in the second round of the Nature Valley Classic in Birmingham.

The experienced Strycova, a runner-up at this Edgbaston tournament in 2014 and 2016, picked up a double break early in the first set and eventually defeated the top seed with surprising ease in just under one and a half hours.

The defeat comes as a setback for the Spaniard's grass-



Petra Kvitova celebrates winning

court preparations ahead of Wimbledon.

Defending Birmingham champion Petra Kvitova continued her impressive grass-court form after overpowering Australia's Daria Gavrilova 6-2 6-2 to book a spot in the quarter-finals.