

SPORTS  
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## Federer soars into semis



Federer struggles but tops

● **Federer defeats Ebden to reach semi-finals in Halle**

Reuters | Halle, Germany

World number one Roger Federer was tested once again in Halle but did enough to overpower Australian Matthew Ebden 7-6(2) 7-5 in the quarter-finals yesterday.

Nine-time Halle champion Federer, who saved two match points to beat Benoit Paire in the second round, edged a tense opening set against 60th ranked Ebden in the tiebreak

with a backhand winner.

Ebden was leading 5-3 in the second set against the 36-year-old before the Swiss fought back to secure four consecutive games to set-up a semi-final against American Denis Kudla. Federer extended his grasscourt streak to 19, which includes the Stuttgart title and last year's triumphs at Wimbledon and Halle.

Qualifier Kudla, ranked 109th in the world, eased past Japan's Yuichi Sugita 6-2 7-5 earlier in the day.

Kudla progressed to only his 2nd semi at ATP tour-level when he roared back from a 2-5 deficit in the 2nd set and saved a set point in the process.

## Hami sets the pace

● **Hamilton heads Bottas in Mercedes one-two in opening practice**

Reuters | Le Castellet, France

Formula One world champion Lewis Hamilton was fastest for Mercedes in the first French Grand Prix practice in a decade yesterday with the session halted after Swedish driver Marcus Ericsson suffered a fiery crash.

Hamilton, a point behind Ferrari's Sebastian Vettel after seven races, complained about his car's handling over the radio but still put in a best time of one minute 32.231 seconds.

His Finnish team mate Valtteri Bottas, also with a new Mercedes engine in his car, was second fastest in 1:32.371 as France made its return to the



Mercedes' Lewis Hamilton during practice

F1 calendar for the first time since 2008.

The 90 minute session was red-flagged with a minute remaining when Ericsson lost control at the Beausset corner, spun and hit the barriers hard, with the Sauber car then catching fire.

The Swede worryingly remained in the car, with flames licking the airbox, be-

fore marshals arrived with an extinguisher and he clambered out from underneath the halo head-protection system.

Video images later showed extensive scorching to the rear of the car.

Australian Daniel Ricciardo, winner of two races this season and still mulling his future options, was third fastest for Red

Bull in 1:32.527.

Ferrari's Kimi Raikkonen was fourth on the timesheets with Vettel fifth.

Romain Grosjean, in the Haas, was the highest-placed French driver in sixth place and ahead of Dutch 20-year-old Max Verstappen.

Frenchman Pierre Gasly was eighth for Honda-powered Toro Rosso.

## French GP: Mercedes brings new engine, but won't say which one

Reuters | Le Castellet, France

Formula One world champion Lewis Hamilton and other drivers using Mercedes power units started French Grand Prix practice with new engines yesterday but the German manufacturer kept a lid on the details.

The latest specification engine had been due for introduction in Canada two weekends ago but that was postponed at short notice due to concerns about a "quality issue".

That left four times world champion Hamilton, now a point behind Ferrari's Sebas-

tian Vettel after seven races, at a disadvantage to rivals who had engine upgrades for the race in Montreal.

With drivers allowed only three engines a season before penalties are applied, Hamilton and Finnish team mate Valtteri Bottas were always going to get

fresh ones having completed the lifespan of the ones they started the season with.

The question was whether it would be the planned upgrade or the same specification as the previous one, which would mean being locked into that for the next seven races.

## Murray takes wildcard into Eastbourne

Reuters | London

Andy Murray will play at next week's Eastbourne grasscourt championships in a bid to prove his fitness for Wimbledon.

The Briton returned to action at Queen's Club this week after almost a year away with a hip injury but lost in the first round of the Fever-Tree championships to Nick Kyrgios.

"I'm looking forward to getting some more time on the grass courts at Eastbourne this week," the three-times Grand Slam champion, who had surgery in January, said in a statement.

"I played Davis Cup there in 2006 and I know the courts and facilities there are excellent. It was good to get back to competition at Queen's this week, and I'm hoping to building on that next week at Devonshire Park."

After defeat by Kyrgios, Murray cast doubt on his fitness for Wimbledon, saying he was unsure whether he would have been able to play a best-of-five-set match. He did impress, however, pushing the Australian to 3 sets and he will look to further test his movement and gain some match sharpness at the ATP 250 event on the south coast.

## Roy ton powers England into 4-0 lead over Australia



England's Joe Root is bowled by Australia's Ashton Agar (not pictured) as Tim Paine looks on

Reuters | London

England's rampant one-day side powered to a fourth straight win over Australia, following up their world record rampage at Trent Bridge with a commanding six-wicket victory at Chester-le-Street on Thursday led by centurion Jason Roy.

Roy cracked his second century of the series, a brilliant 101 off 83 balls, to pave the way for England to make easy meat of Australia's 310-8, which had also featured hundreds for Aaron Finch and Shaun Marsh.

After piling up a world record total

of 481 from a 50-over international at Trent Bridge on Tuesday and inflicting Australia's heaviest-ever defeat, England again outplayed the visitors, pulling off their second-highest ever ODI run chase.

It gave England's hugely talented, big-hitting side a 4-0 lead in the series with the chance of an unprecedented whitewash in Sunday's fifth and final match at Old Trafford.

After the Trent Bridge humiliation, Australia seemed determined to rebound strongly and when their captain Tim Paine won the toss and opted to bat, opener Finch's 100 off 106 balls and a 92-ball 101 from Marsh promised much.

## Dazzling Kyrgios beats Lopez to set up Cilic clash at Queen's club

Reuters | London

Australian maverick Nick Kyrgios blazed past Feliciano Lopez with a barrage of aces to reach the semi-finals of the ATP 500 Fever-Tree championships at Queen's Club yesterday.

The 23-year-old was in dazzling form as he claimed a 7-6(5) 7-6(3) victory against the defending champion to set up a clash with top seed Marin Cilic who breezed past Sam Querrey.

Kyrgios has his detractors, and his volatile temperament has frequently landed him in hot water with the game's authorities.

But on his day, when his mind does not wander and he lets his racket do the talking, there are few players who can electrify a tennis court quite like him.



Australia's Nick Kyrgios

He finished off Lopez with his 32nd ace yesterday, matching the total he landed against Briton's Kyle Edmund on Thursday, having also served 18 against Andy Murray on Tuesday.

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