

Exhibition matches ‘perfect’ preparation for Nadal ahead of Slam

Rafael Nadal beat Stan Wawrinka at the exhibition match in Hurlingham Club

● Nadal says good to get the feel of the surface again

Reuters | London

Rafael Nadal played his first grasscourt match in three years on Wednesday and the Spaniard says a couple of exhibition games at the Hurlingham Club is the perfect preparation for Wimbledon, where he will bid for a third straight Grand Slam this season.

Nadal won the Australian and French Opens back-to-back for the first time and a win at Wimbledon,” said Goetze, who scored down “numerous offers” in order to join Frankfurt.

“We have lacked a type of player like him so far,” said Kroesche.

Loew, who brought Goetze on as a substitute in the World Cup final, is backing the midfielder to stake a claim for an international recall despite last playing for Germany in 2017.

“He has all the qualities for it,” Loew, who stepped down as coach after Euro 2020, told Sky.

“He will play in the Champions League again, will be the



Rafael Nadal in action during the exhibition match in London

loss at Wimbledon to Roger Federer, beat Stan Wawrinka 6-2 6-3 on Wednesday and said it was good to get the feel of the surface again.

“It has been a while without playing on grass,” he told reporters. “Since 2019 I haven’t been able to play on grass through the tough moments we went through with the pandemic and last year I got injured.”

“I am older now - I can’t manage to play so many matches. For

YOU KNOW WHAT

Nadal, who holds a men’s record 22 Grand Slam titles, has struggled with a chronic foot injury over the last year and had pain-killing injections prior to each match at Roland Garros

me it is perfect to play a couple of matches here before Wimbledon starts. That helps me to feel at least some competition before

Wimbledon.”

Nadal, who holds a men’s record 22 Grand Slam titles, has struggled with a chronic foot injury over the last year and had pain-killing injections prior to each match at Roland Garros.

The 36-year-old underwent radio frequency treatment after his French Open victory and said the pain had subsided.

“I don’t know how he is feeling, it looks like normal Rafa,” said three-time major champion Wawrinka. “He has been saying he is feeling better and if he is playing he is ready to play his best and to win.”

Novak Djokovic, who has won Wimbledon the last three times, also played at London’s Hurlingham Club on Wednesday, defeating Canada’s world number nine Felix Auger-Aliassime 6-2 6-1.

Loew tips Goetze for Germany recall after Frankfurt move

AFP | Berlin

World Cup winner Mario Goetze has been tipped for a Germany recall by former national team coach Joachim Loew after returning to the Bundesliga by signing for Champions League side Eintracht Frankfurt.

Goetze completed his transfer from Dutch Eredivisie runners-up PSV Eindhoven by signing a three-year contract.

“I’m really looking forward to playing for Eintracht Frankfurt,” said Goetze, who scored an extra-time winner in Germany’s victory over Argentina in the 2014 World Cup final.

“The club has developed incredibly and embarked on an exciting, ambitious path which I am glad to be a part of.”

Frankfurt have qualified for the Champions League for the first time since losing the 1960 European Cup final to Real Madrid after winning the Europa League last season.

Sporting director Markus Kroesche said Goetze turned



Joachim Loew (R) head coach of Germany instructs Mario Goetze (L) during a match (file photo)

focus here in the Bundesliga and will want to put himself forward for a World Cup place.”

Goetze rebuilt his confidence during his two-year spell at PSV after struggling for form at Bayern Munich and Borussia Dortmund.

As a fresh-faced teenager in the 2010/11 season, Goetze helped Dortmund win the first of back-to-back Bundesliga titles.

At the time, German legend Franz Beckenbauer described Goetze as “impossible to stop”

YOU KNOW WHAT

Loew, who brought Goetze on as a substitute in the World Cup final, is backing the midfielder to stake a claim for an international recall despite last playing for Germany in 2017

and likened him to Lionel Messi.

Bayern signed Goetze in 2013 by triggering a release clause in his Dortmund contract for 37 million euros (\$39 million).

Yet Goetze never nailed down a first-team place under Pep Guardiola at Bayern, leaving in 2016 to return to Dortmund, where a metabolic disorder sidelined him in early 2017, after which he struggled to regain form.

US swimmer Alvarez saved from drowning by coach



Anita Alvarez of the US receives medical attention during the women's solo free final in Budapest

Reuters | Budapest

American artistic swimmer Anita Alvarez was in danger of drowning after losing consciousness in the pool at the world championships in Budapest on Wednesday before being rescued by her coach Andrea Fuentes.

Spaniard Fuentes, a four-time Olympic medallist in synchronised swimming, jumped into the pool after she saw Alvarez sink to the bottom at the end of her solo free final routine.

She was given medical attention beside the pool before being taken away on a stretcher.

It was the second time Fuentes has had to rescue Alvarez after she leapt into the pool during an Olympic qualification event last year and pulled her to safety along with the American’s swim partner Lindi Schroeder.

“Anita is much better, she is already at her best. It was a good scare, to be honest,” Fuentes told Spanish newspaper Marca on Wednesday.

“I jumped into the water again because I saw that no one, no lifeguard, was jumping in. I got a little scared because she wasn’t breathing, but now she’s fine. She has to rest.”

India’s Pujara credits Sussex stint for regaining form

AFP | London

India batsman Cheteshwar Pujara said his spell in English county cricket with Sussex has enabled him to regain top form ahead of next week’s rescheduled fifth Test against England.

Pujara was dropped from India’s Test squad for the home series against Sri Lanka in March after a poor run with the bat during the preceding South Africa tour.

But the 34-year-old has made four hundreds -- including two double centuries -- in amassing 720 runs in just eight County Championship innings.

“Once I had the first big knock against Derby... my concentration, rhythm everything started



Cheteshwar Pujara reacts during a match (file photo)

falling into place,” Pujara said in an interview published by India’s cricket board on Wednesday.

“When you want to get back into form, when you want to find your rhythm, your concentration, it’s important to have some long innings



and when I was playing for Sussex I could do that,” he added.

“I was finding my footwork, my backlift, everything was coming along well. After that I made sure I enjoyed the game.”

India start a four-day practice match against Leicestershire yesterday ahead of the Test at Edgbaston in Birmingham,

“When you want to get back into form, when you want to find your rhythm, your concentration, it’s important to have some long innings and when I was playing for Sussex I could do that

which begins on July 1.

It is the rescheduled fifth and final match of the 2021 series, originally meant to have been played at Old Trafford in Manchester last September before being postponed due to a coronavirus scare.

Top-scorer Nkunku extends with RB Leipzig until 2026

AFP | Berlin

RB Leipzig have extended the contract of their top-scoring France forward Christopher Nkunku until 2026, it was announced yesterday.

The 24-year-old was in stellar form last season, banging in 35 goals, including 20 in the



Christopher Nkunku Bundesliga, plus 19 assists in 50 matches in all competitions.