

SPORTS

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Federer survives five-set epic

- Williams, Osaka out as surprises rock Australian Open
- Djokovic breezes through
- Tsitsipas sent packing

AFP | Melbourne

Serena Williams crashed out, 15-year-old Coco Gauff stunned Naomi Osaka and Roger Federer survived a five-set thriller as the form book went flying out of the window at the Australian Open yesterday.

Men's title-holder Novak Djokovic eased into the last 16 but elsewhere there were surprises all over Melbourne Park with Williams the biggest victim and Federer fighting back from 4-8 down in a fifth-set tie-break with John Millman.

Williams' bid for a record-equalling 24th Grand Slam was shattered by the unlikely figure of China's Wang Qiang, who triumphed in three tough sets -- after winning just one game when they played at the US Open in September.

Gauff then stepped up her giant-killing Melbourne debut as she ousted Japanese defending champion Osaka, 22, in dismissive style, winning 6-3, 6-4 in just 67 minutes to reach round four.

"Oh my gosh. Two years ago I lost first round in the juniors and now I'm here -- this is



Roger Federer clinch his 100th win at the Australian Open

crazy," said the teenager, who shocked Venus Williams in the first round.

Federer came within a whisker of repeating his 2018 US Open upset by Millman as he was taken to five punishing sets by the tough Australian.

The 20-time Grand Slam champion was facing defeat in the super tie-breaker but he clawed back from 4-8 down to clinch his 100th win at the Australian Open.

"Oh God, it was tough," said Federer. "Thank God it was a super tie-breaker (10 points), otherwise I would have lost this one."

"It came down to the wire in the end."

'I made it happen'

With Williams now 38, 23 years older than Gauff, the two

players are at opposite ends of their careers.

And with Williams' close friend Caroline Wozniacki retiring yesterday, after defeat to Ons Jabeur, it looked like a changing of the guard in women's tennis.

But Williams, who has now had eight winless Grand Slams since returning from childbirth, said she hadn't given up hope of matching Margaret Court's 47-year-old record for Grand Slam titles.

"I definitely do believe (I can equal it) or I wouldn't be on tour," said Williams.

Williams was the bookies' favourite to lift the trophy for the eighth time but she came unstuck against a determined Wang, who won 6-4, 6/7 (2/7), 7-5.

Her defeat came just minutes after Denmark's Wozniacki was

knocked out by Tunisia's Jabeur, bringing a tearful end to the former world number one's final tournament before retiring.

"I had a dream when I was a kid. I wanted to win a Grand Slam. I wanted to be number one in the world," said Wozniacki, the Melbourne winner in 2018. "People thought that I was crazy being from a small country. But I made it happen."

Williams' exit removes a major hurdle for Australia's world number one Ashleigh Barty, 23, who had been on course to meet her in the semi-finals.

Barty, bidding to become the first Australian champion since 1978, hit form in a 6-3, 6-2 demolition of Elena Rybakina, saying she had played her best tennis so far this year.

Gauff, who trained with Serena Williams in the off-season,

had promised she would be less nervous than in her last meeting with Osaka, when she was thrashed in round three of last year's US Open.

And so it proved as the teenager broke once in the first set and twice in the second to floor a rattled Osaka and ramp up a rivalry that could run and run.

In the men's draw, reigning champion Djokovic thrashed Japan's Yoshihito Nishioka 6-3, 6-2, 6-2 to reach the round of 16 at a canter.

But Greek sixth seed Stefanos Tsitsipas was also on the receiving end of an upset as he went down in straight sets to Canada's Milos Raonic, the world number 35.

Former US Open champion Marin Cilic, 31, outlasted Robert Bautista Agut in five tough sets and Tennys Sandgren, under fire during his last deep run in Melbourne over links to right-wing activists, beat fellow American Sam Querrey in straight sets.

Arsenal boss Arteta urges Ceballos to prove his worth

AFP | London

Arsenal manager Mikel Arteta has urged Dani Ceballos to prove he is worth keeping after the on-loan Real Madrid midfielder was linked with a return to Spain.

Ceballos joined Arsenal in August on a season-long loan, but he has struggled to make an impact and is reportedly keen to leave.

The 23-year-old played in Spain's most recent internationals but is said to be concerned about his chances of making the national squad for Euro 2020.

Ceballos, who has scored just once in 17 appearances for Arsenal, was sidelined by a hamstring injury in November and is yet to feature since Arteta took charge.

Speaking ahead of Monday's FA Cup fourth round tie at Bournemouth, Arteta made it clear Ceballos will have to show his quality and desire on a consistent basis to get back in the team.

"I had a conversation with Dani. When I joined the club he wasn't here. He was in Madrid because he was doing his rehab for over a month with the team that owns him," Arteta told reporters yesterday.

"I haven't seen much of him because he only trained with us for a week or 10 days.

Lampard concerned by Abraham injury

AFP | London

Chelsea manager Frank Lampard is facing an anxious wait to learn how long England striker Tammy Abraham will be sidelined with his ankle injury.

Lampard revealed Abraham will miss Saturday's FA Cup fourth round tie at Hull after suffering the injury when he crashed into an advertising board during Tuesday's 2-2 draw against Arsenal.

The Blues face Leicester, Manchester United and Tottenham in a pivotal Premier League schedule in February.

So Lampard is keeping his fingers crossed that Abraham, who has scored 15 goals in his breakthrough season, is back to fitness as quickly as possible.

"The good news is he hasn't fractured anything, but the other news is we still have to see how he develops," Lampard told reporters yesterday.

"He's not fit for the weekend, but whether he'll be fit for Leicester I'm still not sure. It's still not clear at the moment."

Lampard last week refused to rule out a move for Paris Saint-Germain striker Edinson Cavani and he admitted Abra-

ham's injury has increased his desire to bring in a forward during the January transfer window.

"I think the impetus to bring in a striker, or players potentially that can get on the end of these chances we're creating, is there, we have to be honest," Lampard said.

"When you're creating 20 chances a game and not scoring enough goals that can be crucial. I don't think it absolutely changes it but Tammy has been our main source of goals, so yes, it's very relevant.

"I think there's choice (in the transfer market), but it's not the ideal window, history's proven that. I think it's about trying to get the choice right of the player we can bring in considering what's available.

"The club know, and the games are showing that, my thoughts on that. So we'll have to see how that goes between now and the end of the window."

Tammy Abraham

Newcastle sign Lazaro on loan from Inter Milan

AFP | London

Newcastle signed Austria winger Valentino Lazaro on loan for the rest of the season from Inter Milan yesterday.

Magpies boss Steve Bruce moved for Lazaro in a bid to bolster the Premier League club's misfiring attack.

The 23-year-old is unlikely to make his debut in the FA Cup fourth round clash with Oxford on Saturday due to a reported delay in processing the paperwork.

Instead, Lazaro's first appearance may come in next weekend's Premier League match against Norwich.

"I've only heard great things about the club. I've had good talks with the coach, so I feel very happy to be here. Those conversations convinced me this is the right place for me to come," Lazaro said.

Vardy's injury not as bad as first feared: Rodgers

AFP | London

Leicester manager Brendan Rodgers says Jamie Vardy's glute injury is not as bad as first feared and he expects the club's leading scorer to be back in action soon.

Vardy was forced off during the first half of Wednesday's Premier League win against West Ham after initially trying to continue playing after he suffered the injury.

Vardy has scored 17 goals for Leicester this term, mak-

ing him a key figure in the team's unexpected surge into the top four. It was feared the 33-year-old could be sidelined for several weeks in a blow to third-placed Leicester's hopes of securing a spot in next season's Champions League.

But while Vardy will not be involved in the FA Cup fourth round tie at Brentford on Saturday, Rodgers said there is an outside chance he could feature in Tuesday's League Cup semi-final second leg against Aston Villa.



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