

Alcaraz advances to Miami fourth round with victory over Monfils

Spanish rising star overcomes French veteran in straight sets at Hard Rock Stadium

● Carlos Alcaraz defeats Gael Monfils 6-2, 6-4 in Miami Open

● Monfils sustains ankle injury but continues to play bravely

● Alexander Zverev and Alex De Minaur also secure victories in earlier matches

AFP | Miami



Carlos Alcaraz in action against Gael Monfils

Top seed Carlos Alcaraz powered into the fourth round of the Miami Open with a 6-2, 6-4 win over French veteran Gael Monfils at Hard Rock Stadium on Monday.

The 37-year-old Monfils was coping well with the power play of the talented Spaniard until he hurt his ankle in the fifth game.

While Monfils carried on bravely, bringing out some wonderful defensive shots from Alcaraz, the world number two was too much for the Parisian.

There were plenty of smiles, in between the occasional wince from Monfils, who enjoyed some

entertaining rallies where Alcaraz could show his deftness of touch.

With the outcome feeling like a formality, Alcaraz eased off the gas and Monfils was able to break for the first time to reduce the deficit to 5-3.

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Despite an ankle injury, Monfils pushed through, showcasing his defensive prowess against Alcaraz

Monfils then held his serve with a brilliant cross court winner before Alcaraz wrapped up business to book a place in the fourth round against either Lorenzo Musetti or Ben Shelton.

"He's a great athlete," Alcaraz said of Monfils, "He reads almost every ball so I had to be patient but at the same time, with my forehand, my best shot, try to move him around the court, to get him tired a little bit and give myself the chance to dominate the point, get to the net, hit my best shot."

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"That's what I was trying to do in the match and it worked pretty well," he added.

Earlier, fourth seed German Alexander Zverev came through a tricky test against American

Christopher Eubanks, winning 7-6 (7/4), 6-3.

Zverev delivered a crucial break when Eubanks was serving for the set at 5-3 before breaking early in the second to go 3-0 up and see himself through to victory.

"He came out swinging and didn't give me chances to be aggressive. I tried to mix it up from the baseline," said Zverev.

"I was surprised how well he was playing from the baseline, not giving me many unforced errors. He makes a lot but usually misses a lot but today he wasn't missing, especially through some stages of the first set," he added.

Australian Alex De Minaur moved on with a 7-6 (7/3), 6-4 victory against 24th seed Jan-Lennard Struff of Germany.

De Minaur will face Fabian Marozsan in the next round after the Hungarian continued his impressive tournament with a 7-5, 6-3 win over Alexei Popyrin.

Hawks stage 30-point comeback to stun Celtics



Atlanta's DeAndre Hunter shoots a three-pointer

AFP | Los Angeles

The Atlanta Hawks produced a comeback for the ages to overturn a 30-point deficit and defeat the Eastern Conference-leading Boston Celtics 120-118 on Monday.

Boston, who were confirmed as having clinched the Eastern Conference's top seed earlier on Monday, appeared to be cruising towards a resounding win after outscoring Atlanta 44-22 in the first quarter.

The Celtics raced into a 30-point advantage midway through the second quarter before Atlanta woke up and began chipping into the Boston lead.

The Hawks kept the rally going into the second half, narrowing the gap further with a 34-22 third quarter before harnessing that momentum into the fourth quarter to complete a dramatic win.

DeAndre Hunter led the Hawks scoring with 24 points, including a decisive three-pointer with 10 seconds remaining that gave Atlanta a four-point cushion and effectively made the game safe.

Hunter was backed with 22

points from Bogdan Bogdanovic while Dejounte Murray finished with 19 points, 15 assists and five rebounds.

Hawks coach Quin Snyder praised the unrelenting support of the Atlanta home crowd in helping drive his team to a remarkable victory.

"Tonight the way we started the game, and the way Boston started, their energy really gave us a lift," Snyder said of the Atlanta fans.

"Anytime you're down that much you have to have something out of the ordinary a little bit to get back in the game.

"And when you have a group of people you know who are behind you thick or thin, rain or shine -- and there was a lot of rain early -- they were a big part of helping the sun come out tonight."

Atlanta improved to 32-39 and remain in 10th place in the East, on course for a spot in the play-in tournament.

Celtics coach Joe Mazzulla said his team paid the price for not killing the game off, adding that Atlanta's physicality had caused his team problems in the second half.

Top seed Swiatek exits Miami with Gauff after upsets

AFP | Miami

World number one Iga Swiatek was knocked out of the Miami Open after inspired Russian Ekaterina Alexandrova triumphed 6-4, 6-2 in their fourth round match on Monday.

The 16th seed Alexandrova played brilliant attacking tennis from the outset to beat the Pole and leave the WTA tournament without any of the top three seeds in the quarter-finals with Aryna Sabalenka and Coco Gauff also out.

France's Caroline Garcia upset world number three Gauff beating the American 6-3, 1-6, 6-2 on Monday to advance to the quarter-finals of the Miami Open, while world number two Aryna Sabalenka had been eliminated by Ukraine's Anhelina Kalinina on Saturday.

Swiatek never looked com-



Ekaterina Alexandrova reacts after upsetting Iga Swiatek

fortable after Alexandrova broke her in the opening game and took control of proceedings with some outstanding, attacking tennis.

Swiatek generated just one

break point in the match but Alexandrova saved it to take a 4-2 lead in the second set.

Having come from a set down in the previous round against Linda Noskova, Swiatek would

have had some belief in turning the contest around but her Russian opponent was in no mood for mistakes.

She made short work of the second set, breaking to go 2-1 up with an startling cross-court return and ending the match with 31 winners to Swiatek's 11.

The match was the first in which Swiatek has not broken serve since her defeat to Ash Barty in Adelaide in January, 2022.

Alexandrova laughed off the suggestion that she had played a perfect match but was certainly not going to downplay her performance.

"It was such a great game for me in consistency, the serve, the returns, the playing from the baseline, I think it was pretty good and I hope I can keep for the next match," she said.

'Strategist' Alonso to make right call on future, says Lahm

AFP | Berlin

Philipp Lahm backed Bayer Leverkusen coach Xabi Alonso yesterday to make the right decision on his future, calling his former Bayern Munich teammate "a strategist".

"Xabi Alonso has always been a strategist. You could already predict he was going to become a great coach," Lahm told AFP in an interview.

Lahm played alongside Alonso for three years at Bayern, with both retiring in the summer of 2017.

Lahm is now tournament director for Euro 2024 hosts Germany, while Alonso has since emerged into the hottest coaching property in football.

Alonso's Leverkusen are on track for a first-ever Bundesliga title, sitting 10 points clear of



Former Bayern Munich teammates Philipp Lahm (R) and Xabi Alonso (L) celebrate together after a match (file photo)

Bayern in the league with eight games remaining.

Unbeaten in all competitions, Leverkusen have made it to the semi-finals of the German Cup

and the last eight of the Europa League.

As a result Alonso has been linked to a return to former clubs Bayern and Liverpool,

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PHILIPP LAHM

with both sides set to have coaching vacancies this summer.

Lahm said Alonso's on-field smarts were evident not only in his coaching, but in his career progression.

"Xabi was an intelligent player, but is also an intelligent person and that's why I think he is thinking carefully about what his next steps could be.