Nadal cruises through at Roland Garros

Rafael Nadal starts bid for title No 12 in style with win over Yannick Hanfmann

Serena survives scare

Wozniacki knocked out

AFP | Paris

efending champion Rafael Nadal got his bid for a record-extending 12th French Open title off to the perfect start by brushing aside German qualifier Yannick Hanfmann in the first round at Roland Garros yesterday.

The 17-time Grand Slam champion cruised to a 6-2, 6-1, 6-3 victory on set up a clash with another German qualifier -- world number 114 Yannick Maden -- in round two.

Nadal had suffered three consecutive semi-final defeats earlier in the clay-court season, but appeared to find his best in an Italian Open title success sealed with victory over old rival Novak Djokovic, while his French Open win-loss record now reads 87-2.

"It's always amazing to play here, the new Chatrier is very nice," the second seed said. "It's been an important place in my career.

Rome which was very important for said Wozniacki.

my confidence. Now we'll see."

a 3-0 lead in the opening set before a second break of serve in the eighth game sealed it after just 40 minutes.

The second set was over in a flash as Nadal crushed nine winners past his beleaguered opponent.

The winning line honed into view when Nadal broke after a lengthy game to take a 2-1 advantage in the third, and the Spaniard completed the job on his first match point as world number 184 Hanfmann blasted long.

Meanwhile, Serena Williams survived a first-set scare before defeating Russia's Vitalia Diatchenko 2-6, 6-1, 6-0 to reach the second round.

The 37-year-old American, who is attempting to equal Margaret Court's all-time record of 24 Grand Slam titles, racked up her 800th career main draw the rebuilt Court Philippe Chatrier to win with her victory in front of a halffull Court Philippe Chatrier

Wozniacki dumped out

Earlier yesterday, former world number one Caroline Wozniacki collapsed to a 0-6, 6-3, 6-3 loss to Russian world number 68 Veronika Kudermetova in the first round.

The Danish 13th seed had retired injured from her two previous matches in the lead-up to Roland Garros, and fell away badly after a strong first set.

"I think she got very lucky at the start of the second set and took ad-"I played a good tournament in vantage of the opportunities she got,"

"I ran out of steam in the end and The 32-year-old Nadal raced into made some unforced errors that I don't usually do, so that was very frustrating."

Sixth seed and two-time Wimbledon champion Petra Kvitova was forced to pull out before her scheduled opener against Sorana Cirstea with a left arm injury, but said she should be fit for Wimbledon, which starts on July 1.

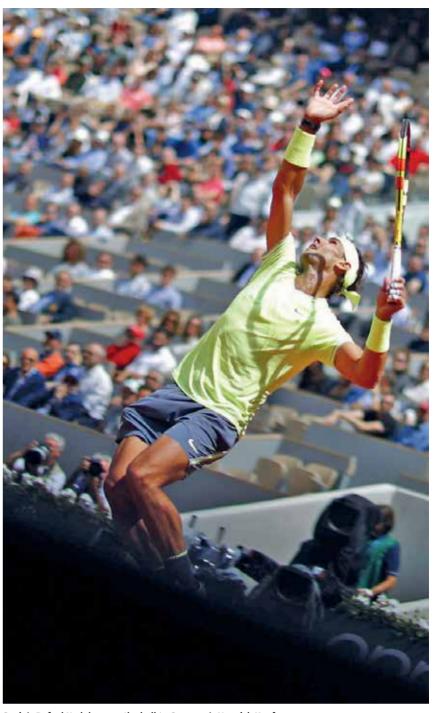
(I'll be out for) two to three weeks, so I'll do some fitness and everything that I can do to prepare my body for the tennis on the grass," said the

Dutch fourth seed Kiki Bertens looked in fine fettle, though, beating home player Pauline Parmentier 6-3,

Elsewhere in the women's draw, Australian eighth seed Ashleigh Barty saw off American Jessica Pegula 6-3, 6-3, while Britain's Johanna Konta clinched her first Roland Garros win at the fifth time of asking with a 6-4, 6-4 victory over German Antonia Lottner.

In the men's event, Australian Alex De Minaur, seeded 21st, beat the United States' Bradley Klahn 6-1, 6-4, 6-4, although Georgian 15th seed Nikoloz Basilashvili fell to a surprising 6-4, 6-1, 6-3 thrashing at the hands of Argentinian world number 78 Juan Ignacio

Russian 12th seed Daniil Medvedev also exited the tournament, blowing a two-set lead to lose 4-6, 4-6, 6-3, 6-2, 7-5 against Frenchman Pierre-Hugues Herbert.



Spain's Rafael Nadal serves the ball to Germany's Yannick Hanfmann

Pochettino upbeat about Kane ahead of CL final

AFP | London

ottenham Hotspur manager Mauricio 1 Pochettino has said Harry Kane is in a portant than the game that "very positive situation" and could be fit to we have ahead, Tottenham face Liverpool in Saturday's Champions League deserve that we are all 100 final in Madrid.

England forward Kane has been out of action We can make history, we can since suffering an ankle injury during the first provide our fans the best hapleg of the quarter-final against Manchester City. piness in football," he said.

But Pochettino, speaking to reporters yes- Spurs midfielder Mousterday , indicated Kane was close to a return. sa Sissoko said the players "Harry Kane in the last week, Friday and were in a positive frame of

Saturday, started to be involved in the group, mind ahead of a final against it's a very positive situation for him," Pochettino said. "We will wait and see how he is progressing

in his problem."

The Spurs manager was equally positive we were close to be out but we showed regarding the prospects for the injured trio of a lot of character to win the game," said Davinson Sanchez, Jan Vertonghen and Harry

Meanwhile Pochettino faced fresh questions about his own future

The Argentinian has been linked with Juventus following the recent departure from to give our best and if we do it, we can the Italian giants of Massimiliano Allegri, but beat any team. In the past we have showed Pochettino insisted his focus was firmly on it."

Spurs' first appearance in a European Cup final.

'Today no one is more impercent focused on the game.

English rivals Liverpool, fivetime kings of European club football

"The spirit is fantastic, every time

"We know we can challenge against every team," the Frenchman added. "I am not scared of Liverpool or any team.

"We all need to challenge and we have



Reuters | Madrid

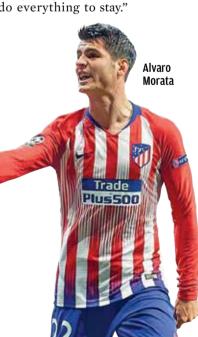
Madrid until the end of his career tract with Atletico already. I did and has no plans to return to Cheleverything to come here and I'll sea, who he left in January to join do everything to stay." the Spanish side on an 18-month

"I am very clear that I want to stay here. Leaving here has not crossed my mind. I hope it gets resolved as soon as possible, I'm happy here and I want to be here for the rest of my career," Morata told Spanish newspaper Marca.

"As long as the club wants me and the fans are happy I want to be here. I've found happiness here. I'm where I want to be."

Morata has rediscovered his form at Atletico after a poor spell at Stamford Bridge, scoring six goals in 13 La Liga starts, but Chelsea have the option to recall Morata from his loan spell.

"If it was up to me it would have been sorted a long time ago, that's Spain striker Alvaro Morata says what I want," Morata added. "I'd have liked to have signed my con-



Archer, Root strike as Afghanistan collapse in England warm up

AFP | London

John Archer and Joe Rose London. as Afghanistan slumped to

vious warm-up fixture, were Mohammad Nabi. too strong in the field for rank ofra Archer and Joe Root outsiders Afghanistan in south being dismissed for under 100 ghar Afghan to attack the occa- Najibullah Zadran carelessly run

Fast bowler Archer, in what last two wickets add 68 runs. 160 all out in a World Cup is tournament hosts England's warm-up match at the Oval last match before they open the and Rahmat Shah in a brisk new-first-ball full toss, Asghar tried duck World Cup against South Africa ball spell. England, fresh from their at the Oval on Thursday, struck 12-run defeat by world cham- twice with the new ball before saw scrapped his way to 30 be- stead. pions Australia in their pre- ending some late resistance from fore he played on to Ben Stokes.

before Nabi, with 44, helped the

Archer dismissed Hazratullah

Afghanistan were in danger of going and that prompted As- deliveries, Hashmatullah and sional off-spin of Test captain

to drive Root over the top but Meanwhile opener Noor Ali found Jason Roy in the deep in-

Afghanistan lost their next sort of target to chase.

Hashmatullah could not get four wickets in a mere seven out, Gulbadin Naib holing out to Moeen Ali and Rashid Khan But, having missed out on a steering Root to slip for a golden

> Nabi's defiant hitting, which included three sixes, at least en-

He was last man out when a thick edge off Archer carried to Jonny Bairstow on the boundary.

Before play started, England were boosted by the news that fast bowler Mark Wood had been passed fit to face South Africa after a foot injury and that one-day captain Eoin Morgan sured England would have some was back in the team following a fractured finger.