

Aussie qualifier stuns Fonseca in Toronto

Schoolkate reaches top 100 after toppling NextGen champ in ATP Toronto Masters

- Schoolkate wins 7-6(5), 6-4
- First victory over top-50 opponent
- Live ranking jumps to No. 98

AFP | Toronto

Australian qualifier Tristan Schoolkate dispatched rising Brazilian talent Joao Fonseca 7-6 (7/5), 6-4 on Monday in the ATP Toronto Masters, ensuring a breakthrough into the world ranking top 100.

The 24-year-old from Perth moved to 98th in the ongoing live rankings as he claimed his biggest career victory by knocking out the ATP NextGen champion from last November.

Schoolkate, son of a tennis coach, won his first match over a top-50 opponent on his sixth attempt as he dealt out the number 49 teenager from Brazil. The qualifier played a quarter-final this month in Los Cabos and won through qualifying for his spot in the Masters main draw.

“I’m very happy with the result,” Schoolkate said. “I played



Tristan Schoolkate of Australia celebrates his win against Joao Fonseca of Brazil

a good match and made it tricky throughout.

“He’s so young (18) but already an established player. I’m looking forward to my next match.”

That will be against 2024 Canadian semi-finalist Matteo Arnaldi of Italy.

Schoolkate advanced with 10

aces among his 23 winners.

He caught Fonseca in a first-set tiebreaker and broke for a 2-1 lead in the second set on his way to victory in windy and quick court conditions.

“The conditions suit the way I play,” he said. “I like to serve big and get forward to make

things uncomfortable for the opponent.”

The Aussie said he had given some thought to his potential top-100 breakthrough but is not stressing over any self-imposed deadlines.

“My goal now is to be in the top 100 but I’ll just keep playing

BETTER YOU KNOW

Schoolkate became just the seventh Australian man in 37 years to reach the Toronto second round

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TRISTAN SCHOOLKATE

week-in, week-out, pushing hard and it will come,” he said.

With seeds all receiving byes at the pre-US Open event, the supporting cast again dominated the programme.

American Mackenzie McDonald beat Belgian veteran David Goffin 6-4, 6-4 while Spain’s Jaume Munar put out Canadian wild card Dan Martin with the loss of just three games.

“I’ve been improving my serve a lot,” Munar said. “I’m putting more pressure on the baseline and my mindset is clear.

“I still need to be more aggressive to compete against the best ones, I’m going that more and more but I have a long way to go.”

Munar next faces Czech Jiri

Lehecka.

France’s Hugo Gaston advanced when Italian opponent Mattia Bellucci quit injured, handing over a 3-6, 6-4, 2-0 win.

Australian Christopher O’Connell joined Schoolkate as a winner with his 6-1, 6-2 defeat of Taiwan’s Tseng Hsin Chun.

World number three Alexander Zverev is the top seed of the expanded 12-day event, which will play its final on a Thursday instead of the more traditional Sunday.

ATP number one Jannik Sinner and second-ranked Carlos Alcaraz along with Novak Djokovic all withdrew with various injuries and fatigue issues prior to the tournament, which began only a fortnight after the Wimbledon final.

Australia complete Caribbean sweep

Dwarshuis takes key wickets as Australia recover to clinch 5-0 T20 series victory

- Australia win by 3 wickets
- Dwarshuis takes 3 key wickets
- Hetmyer top-scores with 52

AFP | Basseterre

Ben Dwarshuis removed both openers and took the crucial wicket of top-scorer Shimron Hetmyer as Australia beat the West Indies on Monday in Basseterre, St Kitts and Nevis, to sweep the T20 series 5-0.

Chasing a modest 171 to win the fifth T20 international, Australia recovered from 25-3 and 60-4 to score 173-7 with three overs to spare.

Cameron Green anchored the middle-order recovery with 32, big-hitting Tim David raced to 30 off 12 balls with four sixes and a four, and Mitchell Owen scored 37.

When Green departed, Australia were 141-6, still needing 30, and the West Indies sniffed a consolation win.

But Aaron Hardie kept his composure to see Australia home by three wickets with an unbeaten 28.

“I didn’t expect 5-0 at the start of the series. But we played some great cricket,” said Australia captain Mitchell Marsh.

West Indies captain Shai Hope pinpointed the reason for his team’s failure to win a match.

“We never put together a proper batting display. We either started well or finished



Sean Abbott (C) and Ben Dwarshuis (R) of Australia celebrate the dismissal of unseen Shimron Hetmyer of West Indies

Scorecard

Australia 173 for 7 (Owen 37, Hosein 3-17) beat West Indies 170 (Hetmyer 52, Dwarshuis 3-41) by three wickets

poorly or the other way round,” said Hope.

“Against a quality team you can’t get away with that.”

The West Indies were in trouble early, having been asked to bat when Marsh won the toss.

Dwarshuis removed Brandon King for 11 and Hope for nine to reduce the hosts to 22-2 in the fourth over.

That became 64-4 until Hetmyer led a fightback, hitting three fours and three sixes on his way to a half-century.

It looked like the left-hander

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It was a little bit of a slower wicket so we tried to hit the wicket hard and use the slower balls as well

BEN DWARSHUIS

might take the West Indies to a challenging total, but Dwarshuis is returned to induce a miscue to Sean Abbott at long-off from a slower bounce.

Hetmyer departed for 52 from 31 balls to leave West Indies 155-7 in the 17th over.

“It was a little bit of a slower wicket so we tried to hit the wicket hard and use the slower balls as well,” said Dwarshuis,

YOU KNOW WHAT

Australia became the first team to achieve a perfect 8-0 tour (3 Tests + 5 T20Is) in the Caribbean since England in 2004

who was named player of the match.

Australia also won the three Tests which preceded the T20 series to sweep all eight matches on the tour.

Portugal’s Felix joins Ronaldo at Al Nassr in Saudi

AFP | Jeddah

Portuguese forward Joao Felix has signed a two-year deal with Saudi Arabia’s Al Nassr, where he will join Cristiano Ronaldo, the club announced yesterday.

Felix, now 25, made a blockbuster move from Benfica to Atletico Madrid in 2019, but has since seen his fortunes decline.

“I’m here to spread joy. Let’s win together,” said Felix in a video posted on the Riyadh club’s X account. A separate post said he had signed until 2027.

Felix remains one of the most expensive transfers in history, following his move to Atletico for 127.7 million euros (\$147.3 million) six years ago.

He has since failed to score more than 10 goals a season, despite stints at Barcelona, AC Milan and Chelsea.

According to Arryadia, a Riyadh sports newspaper, Felix will earn \$10 million a year.

Saudi Arabia has shaken up football by spending heavily on stars from Europe, starting with Ronaldo’s arrival in 2023, and the nation will host the World Cup in 2034.

Many of the signings have been ageing stars, but Felix bucks the trend along with Mateo Retegui, 26, the Serie A top-scorer who joined Al Qadsiah last week.

French international

BETTER YOU KNOW

Felix remains the 4th most expensive transfer ever (€127.7M), but never scored 10+ league goals in a season since his record move

Theo Hernandez, 27, left AC Milan for Al Hilal in a reported \$29 million deal earlier this month.

Top coaches have also been lured to Saudi Arabia, including Italy’s Simone Inzaghi who led Al Hilal to an upset win over Manchester City at the Club World Cup.



Joao Felix