

Zverev returns strong in Toronto

Seeds advance as Zverev, Rune, Musetti show resilience, while star absences reshape Toronto field

● Alexander Zverev beats Adam Walton 7-6(6), 6-3

● Career win #499 achieved

● Ruud, Khachanov advance

● Shapovalov's home drought continues

● Sinner, Alcaraz withdrew

AFP | Toronto

Alexander Zverev made a storming return after a month away from tennis on Tuesday, with the top seed pounding out a 7-6 (8/6), 6-3 win over Adam Walton to reach the third round of the ATP Toronto Masters.

The German top seed, who lost in the Wimbledon first round, has spent the last weeks dealing with mental burnout and also made a trip to Rafael Nadal's Mallorca academy for consultations and perhaps some career advice during his time away.

The ATP world number three came from 4-1 down in the opening set tiebreaker and did not face a break point until he found himself down 0-40 as he tried to serve out victory leading a set and 5-3.

Though he lost that game, the German immediately broke back, with his Australian opponent double-faulting on a Zverev match point.

His victory included a massive 52-shot rally, with the triumph putting Zverev on 499 wins in his career.

"Sometimes it's just about winning," Zverev said. "It was not the prettiest match, though."

The 2017 champion in Canada will now play Italian Matteo Arnaldi,

Sometimes it's just about winning. It was not the prettiest match, though

ALEXANDER ZVEREV



Lorenzo Musetti of Italy serves to James Duckworth of Australia

who defeated qualifier Tristan Schoolkate 6-3, 3-6, 6-3.

Third-seeded Lorenzo Musetti and number five Holger Rune both eased into action with comfortable straight set wins. The pair began after byes and wasted little time in advancing into the third round, with Musetti hammering Australian qualifier James Duckworth 7-5, 6-1.

Rune dispatched big hitter Giovanni Mpetshi Perricard 7-6 (9/7), 6-3.

Number eight Casper Ruud put out Roman Safiullin 6-3, 6-3 for another seeded win.

The event is missing the absolute cream of the player field, with both number one Jannik Sinner and second-ranked Carlos Alcaraz out with injury and fatigue issues.

Musetti, a former semi-finalist at both Wimbledon and Roland Garros, was ruthless with Duck-

worth, advancing in 82 minutes.

He broke for a set and 5-1 on his opponent's double-fault and finished up a game later with an ace.

The Italian is coming back into form after losing his only grass match of the summer (Wimbledon) and then going down last week in his Washington opening match. His last victory came in early June in the Roland Garros quarters.

Musetti had 17 winners while Duckworth was undone by more than 30 unforced errors.

The Italian next faces American Alex Michelsen, a 7-6 (9/7), 6-3 winner over Chilean qualifier Tomas Barrios Vera.

Rune, who was back in action a month after a first-round Wimbledon defeat, handed French Mpetshi Perricard a fourth career loss against top 10 players. Denmark's four-time finalist



Zverev's next win will make him the 5th active player (after Djokovic, Nadal, Murray, and Gasquet) to reach 500 career victories

at the Masters level produced his first hardcourt win since last March at Indian Wells.

"It was a very tricky first match for me, he's a big server and (there was) not a lot of rhythm in the match," Rune said after his 75-minute win.

"I had to really take care of my own serve, and then just look for the opportunities.

"It was about finding a way to win at the end of the (first set) tiebreak.

"In the second set I was pretty good when it mattered. I think I was serving very well today."

World number nine Rune limited his unforced errors to just 10 -- less than half of those struck by his opponent.

Elsewhere, 11th seed Karen Khachanov beat Juan Pablo Ficovich of Argentina 6-4, 6-2.

Last year's winner in Canada, Alexei Popyrin, defeated local wild card Nicolas Arseneault 7-6 (9/7), 6-3.

Canadian Denis Shapovalov continued his unlucky home streak taking a 7-6 (7/4), 7-5 loss to Learner Tien and extending a losing run dating to 2019 at home.

Tenth-seeded former champion Daniil Medvedev got through his opening match and will next face Popyrin after a 7-6 (7/3), 6-4 win against Czech lucky loser Dalibor Svrčina, ended with more than 40 unforced errors.

Marchand shatters record as US, Australia win more world gold

AFP | Singapore

Leon Marchand smashed the 200m individual medley world record in Singapore yesterday with another breathtaking swim while Australia and the United States celebrated more gold.

Racing in the semi-finals at the world championships, the 23-year-old Frenchman wiped more than a second off the previous record of 1:54.00 set by Ryan Lochte in 2011.

Marchand beat Michael Phelps's long-standing 400m medley record at the world championships in Japan two years ago.

"Actually I can't believe it right now," said Marchand, who won four individual golds in front of his home fans at the Paris Olympics a year ago and was the face of the Games.

"I knew I was going to be close to my PB (personal best) because I felt really good today and preparation has been pretty good.

"But 1:52 is unbelievable for



France's swimmer Leon Marchand competes in a semi-final of the men's 200m individual medley

me."

Marchand took an extended break from swimming after Paris and only returned to competition in May.

He is focusing on the individual medley events in Singapore

and had said he was gunning for Lochte's record.

Marchand got his world championships campaign under way yesterday morning, clocking a time of 1:57.63 in the heats.

He said he would go all-out

for the record in the semi-finals rather than conserve his energy for Thursday's final.

In yesterday's finals, Tunisia's Ahmed Jaouadi won the 800m freestyle thanks to a perfectly timed attack.

Jaouadi made his move midway through the race and eased away to touch the wall in 7min 36.88sec, ahead of German pair Sven Schwarz (7:39.96) and 400m champion Lukas Maertens (7:40.19).

Jaouadi, who finished fourth at last year's Paris Olympics, clocked the third-fastest time ever.

"At some point I saw that the rhythm wasn't that fast so I decided to just go and make the move," said the 20-year-old.

Ireland's Olympic champion Daniel Wiffen finished last.

Australia's Olympic champion Mollie O'Callaghan was just as emphatic in romping to victory in the women's 200m freestyle in 1:53.48.

Second was China's Li Bingjie (1:54.52) and third Claire Weinstein of the United States (1:54.67).

Goalkeeper Trafford returns to Man City from Burnley

AFP | Manchester

Goalkeeper James Trafford has signed a deal to return to Manchester City from Burnley, the Premier League giants announced on Tuesday.

Man City activated a £27.5



James Trafford

million (\$36.7 million) buy-back clause for the 22-year-old England youth international, according to British media reports.

Trafford, who never played for the City senior team during his first spell at the Etihad Stadium, left for Burnley in 2023.

He struggled in his first season as the Clarets were relegated from the Premier League, but equalled an English football record with 29 clean sheets last term to help Burnley earn promotion back into the top flight.

"This is the place I call home -- it's a truly special football club with fantastic people who make it such a unique place to work and play," he said in a statement.