

De Minaur tops Tsitsipas to set up Hewitt clash in Washington



Alex de Minaur of Australia returns a shot during a men's singles match against Stefanos Tsitsipas of Greece

AFP | Washington

Alex de Minaur launched his Washington Open title defense with a 6-4, 3-6, 6-3 victory over Stefanos Tsitsipas to set an all-Australian clash with teen Cruz Hewitt.

Tsitsipas, the former world number three from Greece, had won 12 of their prior 13 encounters, but de Minaur shrugged off a shaky start to turn the tables.

After surviving a break point in the fourth game he handed Tsitsipas a break with back-to-back double-faults.

The Aussie fought back with two breaks of his own and survived another break point in the 10th game to pocket the first set.

Tsitsipas broke first again in the second set and held on to force the third. But de Minaur

took advantage of an unforced error by Tsitsipas to seize an early break and held on for the win.

“It’s no secret my head-to-head isn’t the greatest against him. He’s gotten the better of me many, many times,” said de Minaur.

“I’m happy with how it went today... played the match on its own merits, and ultimately found a way in a tricky, tricky match.”

De Minaur next faces 17-year-old qualifier Hewitt, the son of Aussie great Lleyton Hewitt who captured his first-ever ATP Tour victory earlier this week.

De Minaur joked that he won’t be offended if his country’s Davis Cup captain -- former world number one Lleyton Hewitt -- is rooting against him.

Bahrain Beat Qatar 77-45 to Win Gulf U18 Crown

Mohammed Darwish

Bahrain blew hosts Qatar apart 77-45 in Doha on Thursday to take the Gulf under-18 basketball crown with a perfect four wins from four.

The young Bahrainis led from the off. They were 20-14 up after the first quarter, then tore through Qatar 25-9 in the second to build a huge 45-23 half-time lead.

There was no way back for the hosts. Bahrain went into the last quarter 62-37 ahead before winning the closing spell 15-8 to finish the job in style.

Hassan Abdulkadir led the charge with 22 points and 20 rebounds in 37 minutes. He sank nine of his 14 shots from the field and posted a game-best plus-29 rating.

Powerhouse Somto Patrick Onoduenyi was just as hard to stop, piling up 16 points, 19 rebounds and five blocks. Sharp playmaker Mahdi Habib weighed in with 11 points and nine assists.

Dead-eye shooter Yousuf Yaqoob hit three shots from long range for nine points, while lively guard Muftaba Mahmood added eight.

Abdulkadir and Onoduenyi racked up 38 points and 39 rebounds between them as Bahrain bossed the paint and shut



Qatar out near the rim.

The rout followed wins over Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Oman. Bahrain scored 339 points across the four games and gave up 199, leaving them with a points difference of plus 140.

Bahrain and Qatar had already earned the Gulf’s two spots at the FIBA U18 Asia Cup before Thursday’s game, turning their meeting into a straight fight for top place.

The Asia Cup will be held in Ahmedabad, India, from August 13 to 23. The top four sides will earn places at the 2027 FIBA U19 Basketball World Cup in the Czech Republic.

Atletico complain to FIFA over Barca’s Alvarez approach

AFP | London

Barcelona have received a complaint from Atletico Madrid filed with FIFA over allegedly tapping up Julian Alvarez, a source from the Catalan club said yesterday.

Argentina striker Alvarez said during the World Cup it would be “the best thing for everyone” for Atletico to let him leave, amid strong Barca transfer interest.

Atletico believe Barcelona made prohibited contact with the 26-year-old attacker to encourage him to force his departure.

Barca president Joan Laporta said at the start of July his side



Julian Alvarez reacts during a match (file photo)

had made an offer to Atletico leave on the table for as long as for Alvarez which they would they see fit.

Spanish media reported Atletico have also filed a complaint to the Spanish football federation (RFEF), but the RFEF did not respond to a request for comment.

Atletico rejected an offer of 150 million euros (\$172 million) from Real Madrid for Alvarez in June, widely viewed as a gambit by Los Blancos chief Florentino Perez to complicate a potential deal for Barca and fulfil a pledge made in his election campaign.

Barcelona are hoping to replace veteran striker Robert Lewandowski, who left at the end of last season, by adding Alvarez to their squad.

Alvarez joined Atletico from City in 2024 for a deal worth up to 85 million euros.

Mancini wants Italy back to trophy-winning ways



Newly appointed Italy head coach Roberto Mancini

AFP | Rome

Newly-appointed Italy coach Roberto Mancini said he was dreaming of bagging a major trophy, the Azzurri having missed out on the last three World Cups.

Mancini was speaking at his first press conference since being unveiled as successor to Gennaro Gattuso, who resigned as Italy coach after their World Cup qualification play-off final defeat by Bosnia and Herzegovina in March.

The 61-year-old Mancini was previously Italy boss from 2018 until 2023, leading them to the Euro 2020 title.

He has been preferred to another ex-national team coach in Antonio Conte.

“I hope to win another trophy, maybe two,” Mancini said.

“My goal is to make sure the team immediately gets back to winning ways.”

Mancini’s first period at the helm of the Italy side ended suddenly when he took up the Saudi Arabia job.

Leaving the Italy setup at the time, he said, was “a bit like losing the woman of your life”.

But the former Manchester City and Inter Milan coach, who has signed a four-year deal, vowed “to make sure the team is so good that the fans fall in love with it all over again”.

Mancini added: “I believe there are young, talented players in Italy. I simply believe we need to trust them and let them play.”

Mancini’s first game in charge is a Nations League match against Belgium in Rome on September 25, before facing Turkey three days later.

Then comes a trip to Paris when Italy take on France, with Zinedine Zidane at the helm.

De Zerbi wants Bergvall at Spurs, but can’t promise starting role

AFP | Sydney

Roberto De Zerbi said he wants in-demand midfielder Lucas Bergvall to stay at Tottenham, but cannot guarantee the Sweden World Cup player a starting role.

The 20-year-old reportedly wants to leave with interest from Newcastle and Nottingham Forest.

His future was cast into doubt by the recent arrivals of club-record signings Matheus Fernandes from West Ham and Sandro Tonali from Newcastle.

Spurs manager De Zerbi denied Bergvall had told him he was looking for an exit after starting him in the pre-season friendly against Sydney FC on Wednesday.

Tottenham won 4-2 on penalties after the match finished 1-1.



Tottenham's Lucas Bergvall (left) tussles for the ball during the match against Sydney FC

“I’m always being very clear with him and with you. I would like that he stays with us,” De Zerbi said.

“I think he’s potentially a top,

“I can’t give, for any player in the world, a place in the first XI guaranteed.”

French striker Mathys Tel scored a stunning free-kick to put Spurs 1-0 ahead at half-time against Sydney, but they failed to capitalise and the hosts’ new Japanese signing Takahiro Sekine levelled.

Tottenham’s shootout win came after a 2-0 victory over Auckland FC on Sunday as they build towards their English Premier League opener against Brentford on August 22.

“I think we played well, especially in the first half,” he said.

“In the second half, we changed many players, but good quality of play, good performances and I think we are working very well with the younger players.”

top, player. But then I don’t want to convince anyone to stay.

“Tottenham is already, without me, a top club and we are not to convince anyone to stay.