



15-year-old sensation Coco Gauff battled past names like Venus Williams and title-holder Naomi Osaka, but her journey at the Australian Open ended in tears as she was outgunned by Sofia Kenin 6-7 (5-7), 6-3, 6-0 yesterday.

PHOTO: TWITTER

Coco's bid ends in tears

Federer, Djokovic power through to quarters

AFP, Melbourne

Novak Djokovic and Roger Federer swept into the Australian Open quarterfinals but 15-year-old Coco Gauff exited in tears on Sunday after her quest to become the Open era's youngest Grand Slam winner came screeching to a halt.

As Melbourne marked Australia Day with formation jets and a 21-gun salute, world number one Ashleigh Barty had home fans celebrating before crowd favourite Federer dismantled Marton Fucsovics in the night match.

Djokovic, hunting his eighth Melbourne title, was remorseless against Argentina's Diego Schwartzman, crushing the 14th seed 6-3, 6-4, 6-4 to book an 11th appearance in the last eight.

The Serb's reward is a match-up with big-serving Canadian Milos Raonic, who is back in form after a run of injuries and dismissed 2018 finalist Marin Cilic 6-4, 6-3, 7-5.

"I've got to be ready for missiles coming from his side of the net," said Djokovic, the 16-time Grand Slam winner.

Gauff's giant-killing Australian debut generated hype dubbed 'Cocomania' as she attempted to become the youngest Major winner in the post-1968 Open Era, breaking the record set by a 16-year-old Martina Hingis

in 1997.

Gauff beat seven-time Grand Slam champion Venus Williams in round one and title-holder Naomi Osaka in the third, but she came unstuck against a determined Sofia Kenin.

Gauff raised hopes by edging the first set but then her fellow American took control and it was one-sided at the finish as Kenin won 6-7 (5/7), 6-3, 6-0.

"The thing I'm most proud of myself is how I handled it on the court," said Gauff, who shed tears after her defeat. "Even though today I lost a set 6-0, I was still believing I could win it."

Kenin, already on the best Grand Slam run of her career, next faces Tunisia's Ons Jabeur, who beat China's Wang Qiang to become the first Arab woman to reach a Major quarter-final.

Wang stunned Serena Williams in the third round but the 27th seed ran out of steam against Jabeur, who fought back from a break down in the first set to win 7-6 (7/4), 6-1.

Jabeur, the highest-ranked Arab woman in history -- she reached a career-high 51 last year -- is the first Tunisian woman to win a main-draw match at the Australian Open.

"I'm really shaking right now, it's unbelievable, I can't describe how I feel," said the 25-year-old.

Australia's Barty had some nervy moments

against American Alison Riske, dropping the second set and briefly losing her way before recovering to win 6-3, 1-6, 6-4.

She now has an improving chance of becoming the first home-grown winner since Chris O'Neil in 1978 after six of the top 10 seeds exited in the previous round.

"I just had to hang in there and try and give myself a chance," said Barty, who next plays Petra Kvitova, after the two-time Wimbledon champion beat Maria Sakkari 6-7 (4/7), 6-3, 6-2.

Later, Federer sent ripples of consternation around Rod Laver Arena when he dropped the first set against Hungary's Fucsovics, the world number 67.

But the 38-year-old Swiss, pushed to a fifth-set tie-breaker by Australia's John Millman on Friday, came alive in the second set as he rattled through the match 4-6, 6-1, 6-2, 6-2.

"It just took me some time, I tried to mix it up a bit and just had to figure it out. From the beginning of the second set it got a little bit easier," Federer said.

The 20-time Grand Slam champion's quarter-final is against unseeded American Tennyis Sandgren, who upset Italian 12th seed Fabio Fognini in four tough sets, 7-6 (7/5), 7-5, 6-7 (2/7), 6-4.

City cruise past 10-man Fulham

AFP, Manchester



Holders Manchester City cruised into the FA Cup fifth round with a 4-0 thrashing of 10-man Fulham at the Etihad on Sunday.

Tim Ream's sixth-minute red card gave the Championship side a mountain to climb after he hauled down Gabriel Jesus inside the box.

Ilkay Gundogan converted the resulting penalty before Bernardo Silva's smart turn and shot quickly doubled City's advantage.

The visitors then held out for nearly an hour but two headers in three minutes from Jesus gave the scoreline a more accurate reflection of the English champions' dominance.

Pep Guardiola's men have now won 17 domestic cup ties in a row.

The Catalan is relying on more cup success for silverware this season after conceding the Premier League title is beyond his side with Liverpool 16 points clear at the top of the table.

Guardiola made eight changes to the

team that won 1-0 at Sheffield United in midweek, but still named a strong side with both David and Bernardo Silva among those coming into the team.

Fulham boss Scott Parker also rotated with his priority securing a return to the Premier League at the first time of asking.

Any hope of an upset was quashed within minutes by a rash challenge from Ream.

City have had problems from the spot this season with Guardiola even claiming goalkeeper Ederson is his best taker. However, with the Brazilian on the bench Claudio Bravo in goal, it was Gundogan who took responsibility to dispatch the spot-kick.

A moment of magic from Bernardo then gave the hosts breathing space as the Portuguese international fired into the bottom corner from outside the box.

Only a lack of killer instinct prevented City from further running up the score as Raheem Sterling came off the bench to hit the crossbar.

Jesus, though, bagged a confidence-boosting double.



Ilkay Gundogan opened the floodgates for Manchester City in their FA Cup match against Fulham yesterday, opening the scoring eight minutes in. The reigning champions of England won the game 4-0.

PHOTO: TWITTER



Josip Ilicic played down his free-kick goal from the halfway line, but that mantra worked as the 31-year-old got a hat-trick in an eventful if ultimately one-sided 7-0 Serie A thrashing of Torino on Sunday.

PHOTO: TWITTER

'They told me to kick it and I did'

AFP, Milan

Atalanta striker Josip Ilicic said he was just "shooting at goal" as he capped another Serie A hat-trick with a stunning goal from the halfway line in a 7-0 thrashing of Torino on Saturday.

The Slovenian has scored a hat-trick in each of the last three Serie A campaigns, including two last season.

"I didn't know I had done all these hat-tricks, but it's all about the team, how we're playing and the opportunities we're creating," said the 31-year-old Ilicic.

"I grabbed the ball right away afterwards, it's for my daughters, they love to play."

Fifth-placed Atalanta have the top attack in the league with 57 goals scored -- thrashing Udinese 7-1 in October, and both Parma and AC Milan with a 5-0 scoreline, in the last month.

Ilicic marked his 100th game for Atalanta by bringing his tally to 42 goals for the club, against 10th-placed Torino who finished the game with nine men.

But his second came in sensational style after 53 minutes when he spotted Salvatore Sirigu off his line and sent a free-kick from just inside the halfway line sailing over the head of the Torino goalkeeper.

"I saw they were positioned badly, Sirigu was outside the area, my teammates told me to kick and I did it," he said.

Afterwards teammate Papu Gomez pretended to polish the Slovenian's left boot. "These gestures show how close the group is. It shows how far we've all come together, but we want to go even further."

"Goal of the season? This is the first year I haven't set myself any target," he added.

He has already scored 13 goals in 17 Serie A appearances.

Premier League to be deferred?

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) is likely to be deferred by a week and is likely to be held at six venues across the country.

The BPL was scheduled to begin on January 30, but the participating clubs want to defer it owing to the Dhaka City Corporation polls on February 1 as well as Abahani's AFC Cup engagement on February 5.

Sheikh Russel KC have written to the BFF to defer the league by a week due to the AFC Cup tie between Abahani and Maziya R&SC while Abahani also want to start the league after their international engagement.

It has been learnt that defending champions Bashundhara Kings, too, want deferment to give their national players time to recover after the Bangabandhu Gold Cup, which ended on Saturday.

A BFF source said that most clubs demanded deferment for the Dhaka City Corporation polls as there will be restriction on vehicular movements.

Army, Ansar sweep up

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Army emerged champions in men's category of Mujib Year Trust Bank 17th national Senior Taekwondo Championship with eight gold, seven silver and two bronze medals as the competition ended at the NSC Auditorium yesterday.

In women's category, Bangladesh Ansar and VDP emerged champions with 12 gold, four silver and one bronze medals.

BKSP clinched men's title of junior division. In junior women's division, Rajshahi became champions.

Women's league to feature eight teams

SPORTS REPORTER

The transfer window of Women's Football League closed yesterday, with eight participating teams, except for Bashundhara Kings, completing the official formalities at the BFF House.

Among the eight teams, Bashundhara Kings are the only outfit who play in top-flight men's football while the other seven -- Begum Anowara Sporting Club, FC Uttar Bango, Kacharipara Akadash, Cumilla United, Nasrin Sporting Club, Shopnochura & Akelpur Football Academy, Spartan MK Galactico Sylhet FC -- are quite unknown quantities in the women's league, which is going to be held after a six-year gap.

Sylhet-based outfit Spartan MK Galactico confirmed their participation lately to turn it into an eight-club competition.

Bashundhara Kings have formed the strongest side by roping in 19 players of different national women's teams. The league was scheduled to begin on January 31, but may be deferred.

National team players like Sabina Khatun, Maria Manda, Monika Chakma,

Akhi Khatun, Sanjida Akter, Tahura Khatun arrived at the BFF House riding on horse carriages surrounded by band parties and supporters to complete their registration procedures for the Kings.

"The women teams have brought laurel for the nation in recent past. Introduction of women's football league is very important because the players will get a platform in domestic circuit which will help them to do better at international level," Bashundhara Kings president Imrul Hasan said, adding that their target is to become champions and participate in AFC tournaments.

Apart from Bashundhara Kings, other participating teams have formed below-average squads. Only Nasrin Sporting Club and FC Uttar Bango signed up two national players while Cumilla United got one, but the rest of the clubs collected players from different districts who played in Bangamata Primary School Football tournament and JFA Cup. Around 30 players at different national teams didn't get any clubs due to fund crisis of the clubs.

No club has started training camp yet and some of them are yet to confirm their coaches.



(1947 - 2020)

Rensenbrink dies at 72

AFP, Brussels

Robbie Rensenbrink, who famously came within a goalpost's width of winning the 1978 World Cup for the Netherlands, has died at the age of 72, former teammate Jan Mulder told the Belga news agency on Saturday.

Rensenbrink, who had been fighting muscular atrophy for a number of years, played in the famous Dutch team which lost the 1974 World Cup final 2-1 to West Germany and the 1978 decider against Argentina four years later.

He came agonisingly close to settling the final in Buenos Aires when, with just 30 seconds left and the teams level at 1-1, Dutch captain Ruud Krol freed Rensenbrink on goal.

However, his shot from a narrow angle came off the post and was cleared. Argentina then scored twice in extra-time for a 3-1 victory.

In his club career, Rensenbrink made his name at Belgian giants Anderlecht where he won league titles in 1972 and 1974 as well as four Belgian Cups in 1972, 1973, 1975 and 1976.

No player scored or assisted more World Cup goals for the Netherlands than Rensenbrink, who had 10 with 6 goals, 4 assists.

He also played in the teams which won the European Cup Winners Cup in 1976 and 1978.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina handed a crest to K-Sports CEO Fahad Karim (R) after the successful completion of the Bangabandhu Gold Cup on Saturday. K-Sports was the rights holder of the sixth edition of the tournament.

PHOTO: COLLECTED