



Swiss star Martina Hingis bids bye to the fans at the Rod Laver Arena following her loss to Belgian Kim Clijsters in a classic quarterfinal clash at the Australian Open in Melbourne on Wednesday.

Gonzalez stamps out Nadal



AP, Melbourne

Fernando Gonzalez rode his big serve and even bigger forehand to knock second-ranked Rafael Nadal out of the Australian Open and advance to his first Grand Slam semifinal.

Shedding the inconsistencies that hampered him in the past, Gonzalez was simply dominating in a 6-2, 6-4, 6-3 victory that took just over two hours. The Chilean broke Nadal five times, and his 41 winners were almost triple Nadal's 14. His 10 aces gave him 76 in five matches for the tournament lead; Andy Roddick is second with 71.

The 10th-seeded Gonzalez said he may have never played better.

"I played really unbelievable tennis," he said. "I hope to continue this week. I am trying to slice more, trying to run more. I used to just hit, hit, hit, and maybe I win the point."

Nadal said he was hampered by pain in his left leg that cropped up after his last match, a five-setter against Andy Murray.

"I can't run a lot," he said, adding that he hopes to play Davis Cup in a week but will go to a doctor first. "It was difficult to play one match like this, quarterfinals of one Grand Slam, with pain."

Gonzalez next plays Germany's Tommy Haas on Friday. The 12th-seeded Haas saved a match point before upsetting No. 3 Nikolay Davydenko 6-3, 2-6, 1-6, 6-1, 7-5.

Twenty of Gonzalez's winners

came off his stinging forehand, one of the best in the game, which kept Nadal off-balance and unable to get into the long rallies that he relishes.

"I think that my forehand was the key of the match," Gonzalez said. "I've been playing really good, feeling the ball, defending, serving really well and, of course, hitting my forehand all around the court."

Gonzalez broke Nadal twice in the first set and again in the opening game of the second when the Spaniard crashed a forehand into the net on double breakpoint.

Gonzalez saved a breakpoint in the eighth game with a stunning forehand swipe, and took a 2-0 lead when Nadal's service return landed long on set point.

Nadal called for a medical timeout because of his leg after the third game of the third set. Because he had to remove his long shorts, he had to leave the court for treatment.

Gonzalez pounced on a second serve at break point in the fifth game of the third set, ripping a forehand winner for a 3-2 lead.

Nadal sent a pair of forehands wide on the last two points while serving at 3-5 to surrender the match.

"If I am playing bad, you can go home and say 'disappointing,'" Nadal said. "But today I just say, well, I can't do more. I try my best."

Haas wore down relentless Russian Davydenko 6-3 2-6 1-6 6-1 7-5 in three hours 19 minutes to reach the semi-finals at Melbourne Park for the third time where he will play Gonzalez.

Haas, the 12th seed and former

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Chilean dark-horse Fernando Gonzalez pumps his fist in celebration after winning a game on way to beating Spanish second seed Rafael Nadal in their Australian Open quarterfinal in Melbourne on Wednesday.

DeMerit seals Watford win

AFP, Watford



Jay DeMerit's header 20 minutes from time secured only Watford's second

Premiership win of the season as the league's basement club beat Blackburn Rovers 2-1 at Vicarage Road here Tuesday.

Australia international Brett Emerton's 12th minute own-goal gave the hosts the lead before Rovers's South Africa striker Benni McCarthy equalised on the stroke of half-time.

But DeMerit scored the final goal when, after Rovers failed to clear a free-kick, he headed in from close range.

Rovers's defeat was compounded when it was confirmed that Robbie Savage had suffered a broken leg following a challenge with Al Bangura.

The Welsh midfielder was hurt early in the second half and had to be carried off on a stretcher.

Rovers manager Mark Hughes said: "We have just got news from the hospital that it is a break. How

FIXTURES									
Team	P	W	D	L	G/F	A	Pts		
Man United	24	18	3	3	53	18	57		
Chelsea	24	15	6	3	41	19	51		
Liverpool	24	14	4	6	37	16	46		
Arsenal	24	13	6	5	45	20	45		
Bolton	24	12	4	8	28	26	40		
Portsmouth	24	10	7	7	34	24	37		

severe it is, we don't know yet."

Victory was Watford's first in the league since they beat Middlesbrough 2-0 at Vicarage Road in November. But this result still left them four points adrift of second-bottom Charlton and seven shy of safety.

Nevertheless, it represented a huge morale boost on a day when star player Ashley Young was sold to Premiership rivals Aston Villa.

Rovers had won five out of their last six matches in all competitions to climb into 10th place in the table and came into this fixture on the back of a 3-0 victory away to Manchester City.

Watford's spirit, however, has not been in question this season

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Football

AFP, London

Chelsea and England captain John Terry has announced his return to full training.

The Blues skipper has been out of action with a calf injury following back surgery. However, he has now rejoined the first team squad and could be fit enough for the Premiership champions' league match against Blackburn Rovers a week on Wednesday.

Second-placed Chelsea have struggled to cope in defence during Terry's absence but the centre-half says it is now time to put the pressure on leaders Manchester United following their weekend defeat away to Arsenal.

"I've been needing more power in my calf to join properly, but I have started full training again," Terry told Chelsea's match programme for Tuesday's League Cup semi-

final second leg match against Wycombe Wanderers at Stamford Bridge.

"I've managed to get some power back now. I still need to improve it and it's been taking longer than we thought. But I am delighted to be back involved with the lads."

Terry watched Chelsea lose 2-0 in the league away to Liverpool on Saturday from the touchline at Anfield.

But the Blues ended the weekend as they started it, six points behind United, after Arsenal's come-from-behind 2-1 win on Sunday.

"I'm disappointed that we lost at Anfield, obviously, and we need to pick ourselves up, but in a way that's already happened."

"When Manchester United scored I thought that the game was over. But credit to Arsenal, they've given us another opportunity and it is time to put pressure on United now."

Roddick warns Federer



AFP, Melbourne

As the saying goes there are lies, damn lies and statistics. Andy Roddick is hoping the weight of evidence won't prevent him from upsetting Roger Federer to reach the Australian Open final.

The stats indicate that the American sixth seed has little chance against the rampant world number one in Thursday's marquee semifinal on Rod Laver Arena.

"A-Rod" has won only one of his 13 matches with the Swiss superstar and has to go back nine

matches to Montreal in 2003 for his last success.

Federer, the top ranked player since February 2004, is in his 11th successive Grand Slam semi-final, he hasn't drop a set in five matches here and is on a hot streak of 34 unbeaten matches.

He has tormented Roddick in recent years, denying the power-server three major titles in losses in the 2004 and 2005 Wimbledon finals and last year's US Open final.

But Roddick is tuning out the doomsdayers. He says there are signs that the gap between him and the incomparable Federer is closing.

Since hiring tennis great Jimmy Connors as his coach last July, Roddick has been making steady

improvement and came within a point of beating Federer in a second set tiebreaker at the Masters Cup in Shanghai last November.

He also downed Federer in a exhibition event at Kooyong here just days before the Australian Open, but that does not count on the official match records.

It has given the 24-year-old American optimism that something special is around the corner, starting with Thursday's showdown.

"I've said for the past five or six months, the gap has either been closing a little bit or just he hasn't been extending it, which he's probably done the last three years or so. That's a good thing," Roddick

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CARLING CUP Sheva sends Chelsea into final

AFP, London

Andriy Shevchenko got back in Jose Mourinho's good books as his double strike sent Chelsea through to the League Cup final with a 4-0 win against Wycombe Wanderers at Stamford Bridge here Tuesday.

Shevchenko had been frozen out by Mourinho in recent weeks after failing to live up to his 30 million pounds price tag, but he went some way to redeeming himself with two clinical finishes against the visitors from the fourth tier of English professional football.

Former AC Milan striker Shevchenko, making just his second start of 2007, also set up the first of Frank Lampard's two goals in a semi-final second leg victory that sealed a 5-1 aggregate triumph.

Afterwards Mourinho paid tribute to Shevchenko, telling Sky Sports: "I demand commitment, effort, being aggressive, working and playing for the team, working with the ball, working without the ball—that's what I demand."

"He did that, scored two goals, created some more. He was alive all the time while on the pitch. I think it's a step forward in the direction of how we want him to play and perform on the pitch."

"The team is happy with him. It's not just about me being happy with him."

Shevchenko, speaking in halting English, added: "Good game. I'm very happy to reach the final. It's important the team plays very, very well."

"I'm happy for the victory of the

team today. The support of this team and fans has been unbelievable."

Shevchenko's treatment has been central to a reported breakdown in relations between Mourinho and Roman Abramovich, Chelsea's billionaire Russian owner.

But Lampard praised the way Shevchenko had handled a difficult situation.

"You've got to give the man a lot of credit for his dignity because he hasn't come out and spoken too much."

Shevchenko was the only player ignored by Mourinho when he consoled his players as they walked off the pitch after Saturday's defeat against Liverpool, further fuelling talk of a rift between the Ukrainian and his manager.

But, despite not scoring since December 5, Shevchenko was granted a chance in a full-strength Chelsea side that also included Ricardo Carvalho, fit after recovering from a fever.

Shevchenko should have given Chelsea the lead after less than a minute when Ashley Cole's cross from the left picked him out, but he headed tamely wide from no more than six yards.

Wycombe had belied their League Two status when they battled to a 1-1 draw in the first leg at Adams Park.

But the breakthrough that Chelsea's dominance deserved arrived after 22 minutes and it was Shevchenko who finally delivered.]

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Chelsea striker Andriy Shevchenko celebrates the first of his two strikes against Wycombe during their Carling Cup clash at Stamford Bridge on Tuesday.

Zanetti recalled to Argentina squad



Football

REUTERS, Buenos Aires

Argentina defender Javier Zanetti, surprisingly left out of the World Cup squad last year, was recalled on Tuesday for next month's friendly international away to France.

Coach Alfio Basile also named two uncapped players, including Real Madrid's recently-signed defensive midfielder Fernando Gago, in his attempt to break his duck in his second stint in charge of the team.

Argentina face the French in Paris on Feb. 7 in their third match under Basile, who replaced Jose Pekerman following the World Cup.

Their previous outings ended in a 3-0 defeat to Brazil and a 2-1 loss to Spain, both in friendlies.

The gravel-voiced coach was previously in charge for a three-year spell which ended at the 1994 World Cup in the United States.

Zanetti, 33, won the last of his 102 caps in a 3-2 defeat by England in a friendly in November 2005 before falling victim to Pekerman's decision to revamp his squad with younger players for the World Cup.

Gago received his first call up one month after joining Real from Boca Juniors.

Midfielder Jonas Gutierrez, who plays for Real Mallorca, was

also given a chance to win a first cap.

There was a rare call-up for Villarreal left back Rodolfo Arruabarrena, who has won six caps at the age of 31, while Atletico Madrid's 18-year-old striker Sergio Aguero was also named.

All the players in the 21-strong squad, which included 11 survivors from last year's World Cup squad, are based with European clubs.

Lionel Messi, Carlos Tevez, Juan Pablo Sorin and Pablo Zabaleta were unavailable due to injury.

SQUAD

Goalkeepers: Roberto Abbondanzieri (Getafe), Leonardo Franco (Atletico Madrid)

Defenders: Roberto Ayala (Valencia), Gabriel Milito (Real Zaragoza), Nicolas Burdisso (Inter Milan), Javier Zanetti (Inter Milan), Gabriel Heinze (Manchester United), Fabricio Fuentes (Villarreal), Rodolfo Arruabarrena (Villarreal)

Midfielders: Fernando Gago (Real Madrid), Aldo Duschier (Deportivo Coruna), Esteban Cambiasso (Inter Milan), Luis Gonzalez (Porto), Leandro Somoza (Villarreal), Pablo Aimar (Real Zaragoza), Jonas Gutierrez (Real Mallorca)

Forwards: Javier Saviola (Barcelona), Sergio Aguero (Atletico Madrid), Diego Milito (Real Zaragoza), Hernan Crespo (Inter Milan), Lisandro Lopez (Porto). (Writing by Brian Homewood in Rio de Janeiro)