



Serbian youngster Novak Djokovic hits a backhand return against Igor Andreiev of Russia during their French Open quarterfinal match at Roland Garros on Wednesday.

PHOTO: AFP

Roberto Carlos signs for Fenerbahce

AFP, Istanbul

Turkish champions Fenerbahce said Wednesday that they had signed veteran Brazilian full-back Roberto Carlos from Spanish giants Real Madrid.

Vice-president Murat Ozyardinli said in a statement on the Istanbul club's website that the deal was clinched in a meeting late Tuesday with Carlos's agent Dino Pasalic.

"Our meeting for the transfer took only 15 to 20 minutes. We told them our principles and the deal was sealed," Ozyardinli said. "We signed a player who perfectly fits Fenerbahce's traditions."

He added that the 34-year-old Brazilian was expected to come to Turkey in the coming days to officially sign the contract.

The statement did not mention the duration of the contract, but Turkish newspapers said Carlos had signed for two years.

There was talk of a move by Carlos to Fenerbahce last year, but the former international decided to stay on with Real Madrid.

In April, he said he would leave after 11 years with the Spanish club and added, without giving details, that he had been talking to several European sides which would be involved in next year's Champions League.

Brazil play out Turkey draw

AFP, Dortmund

Brazil drew 0-0 with Turkey in a friendly at German side Borussia Dortmund's stadium on Tuesday as the South Americans warmed-up for the Copa America.

The Brazilians were a completely different side from the one which drew 1-1 with England at the new Wembley last weekend -- only central defender Naldo was retained as options were considered for the South American championships in Venezuela next month.

Brazilian stars Ronaldinho of Barcelona and AC Milan's Kaka were brought off the bench in the second half, but it was a lacklustre affair from two sides resting several top names.

Turkey were looking to restore some battered pride after their shock 3-2 defeat to Bosnia-Herzegovina in their Euro 2008 qualifying match last Saturday and are second in Group C behind European champions Greece.

Under the guidance of captain Yildirim Basturk, Turkey had the Brazilians on the back foot in the first-half, but could not get the breakthrough they needed.

In the second-half, midfielder Diego, one of the Bundesliga's top players last season for Werder Bremen, had the best chance to break the deadlock, but his header fell into the arms of the Turkish keeper in front of a crowd of 26,000.

Nadal outclasses Moya

AFP, Paris



Rafael Nadal moved effortlessly to within two wins of emulating Bjorn Borg's mark of three successive French Open titles when he mercilessly dismissed fellow Spaniard and close friend Carlos Moya on Wednesday.

Double defending champion Nadal took his career Roland Garros record to 19 wins in 19 matches with his 6-4, 6-3, 6-0 victory which put him into a semi-final showdown with Serbian dangerman Novak Djokovic.

It also kept him on course for a possible final clash on Sunday against world number one Roger Federer who has his sights on his own slice of history.

Victory for the world number one would make him only the third man in history to hold all four Grand Slam titles at the same time. The top seed faces Russia's Nikolay Davydenko in the other semifinal on Friday.

Nadal has beaten Djokovic three times in their four meetings including the quarterfinals here last year when the Serb was forced to retire with a back injury when trailing by two sets.

But the 21-year-old Spaniard will not take Djokovic lightly having lost to him in the final at the Miami Masters in March.

"He is one of the best players in the world and a possible future world number one," said Nadal.

Watched by Hollywood star, and fellow Spaniard, Antonio Banderas, Wednesday's quarter-final was no

action-thriller but a comedy of errors for 1998 champion Moya who wilted under Nadal's greater power and variety.

In a subdued opening, Nadal struck first to lead 3-2 but Moya, nine years the champion's senior, levelled straightaway when his opponent unleashed a loose drop shot which the 30-year-old pounced upon with a vicious forehand.

Moya, playing his 12th Roland Garros, then squandered his good work by putting in a sloppy service game to allow Nadal to restore his advantage at 4-3.

Nadal didn't allow his fellow Mallorcan a second opportunity and snatched the opening set after 48 minutes.

A double fault by the error-strewn Moya handed Nadal the first break of the second set in the third game for a 2-1 lead which soon became 3-1 courtesy of a confident Nadal service game.

The champion broke a dispirited and bemused Moya in the ninth game to claim the second set.

Moya was down and almost out. He quickly slipped to 0-4 down before he had to save a match point in the sixth game.

But a double fault, the veteran's third of the tie, gave Nadal another match point which he converted into victory with a big forehand.

Moya, who spends large parts of his free time on tour challenging Nadal at Playstation, said he was disappointed with his straight-sets capitulation.

"I played well in the first set but my level went down after that. I'm a little sad," said the former world number one who was undone in large part by his 38 unforced errors

compared to Nadal's 15.

Nadal's win kept up his record of not having dropped a set at this year's French Open and few will bet against him taking Sunday's final and becoming only the second man in 93 years after Borg (1978-1981) to win three-in-a-row at Roland Garros.

'Shut up, Totti'

INTERNET, undated

The war of words around Francesco Totti's Italy sabbatical continues with Michel Platini insisting he should just "shut up and play."

The Roma captain has caused controversy with his decision to abandon international football after winning the 2006 World Cup, supposedly due to fitness concerns.

Yet despite having a metal plaque in his ankle, he has become Serie A's top scorer with 26 goals and leader in the race for the Golden Shoe for European hitmen.

"The decision is up to Roberto Donadoni," said UEFA President Platini. "I can be certain that if I were the coach, I would have called Totti and told him to shut up and play."

The Italian Federation has always tried to calm the situation by reassuring that Donadoni and Totti agreed to this sabbatical until the player felt he had totally recovered from his fractured ankle.

"Giving up your own national team is a proposal I would never have made as a coach and as a player would not have even taken into consideration," added Le Roi.

"Totti is 30 now and perhaps he cannot play every game, but it is the coach who makes that decision.

"In France if someone is called and does not attend, he is suspended. It is written in the FIFA contract that an international call is obligatory."

As Totti has not technically refused an international call-up, UEFA and the FIGC cannot impose sanctions.

However, if Donadoni chose to disregard their conversation and

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Djokovic continues Serbian onslaught

AFP, Paris



Novak Djokovic continued Serbia's French Open surge on Wednesday when he defeated Igor Andreiev of Russia in straight

sets to reach his first Grand Slam semifinal.

The sixth seed won 6-3, 6-3, 6-3 in two hours 10 minutes to set up a meeting with either two-time defending champion Rafael Nadal or 1998 winner Carlos Moya, who play their all-Spanish quarterfinal later Wednesday.

The 20-year-old, the youngest player left in the men's draw, will be the third Serb to feature in the last four with compatriots Jelena Jankovic and Ana Ivanovic already in the semifinals of the women's singles.

He is also only the second Serbian man to reach a Grand Slam semifinal after Slobodan Zivjonic who made the last four at the 1985 Australian Open and Wimbledon in 1986.

"I played really, really well. I wanted to impose my style of play. It's a sport where things can change

very quickly," explained Djokovic, who also beat the Russian in their only previous meeting on clay at Estoril this year.

"I knew he could be very dangerous. He's a specialist on clay and beat (Andy) Roddick. It was his first quarterfinal and he had nothing to lose."

Andreiev has dropped to 125th in the world after missing six months last season following knee surgery.

But despite defeating number three seed Roddick in the first round he failed to settle into his first Grand Slam quarterfinal.

He converted just one of his six break points with Djokovic converting five of his ten.

Djokovic got off to a tentative start by losing his opening service game as both players fought to hold serve in the first set.

But the Serb hit back immediately with a break and got the upper hand with a second in the eighth game as 23-year-old Andreiev hit long allowing Djokovic wrap it up 6-3 in 44 minutes.

The Russian was broken in the first game of the second set as Djokovic opened up a comfortable 4-2 advantage, taking the set in 41 minutes with a further break in the ninth game.

Djokovic saved a break point in

the opening game of the third set, fooling his opponent with a cross-court backhand which had the Russian scurrying in the wrong direction.

The Serb athletically fought every point and despite going 3-0 up drew whistles from the crowd as he vehemently argued a line call on his serve.

Hopes of a fightback were shortlived when Djokovic netted when serving for 4-1 but minutes later converted when Andreiev hit wide. The Serb became more aggressive sealing the tie with ease on his first match point.

But Djokovic, who has retired from Roland Garros both previous times he played here, faces a tough task if he wants to become the first Serb to reach a Grand Slam final.

He stands 1-3 against potential semifinal opponent Nadal having lost their two meetings on clay including the quarterfinals here last year when he retired with a back injury when trailing the champion 6-4, 6-4.

The Serb stands 1-1 against Moya. Both ties were on clay with the Spaniard winning their most recent meeting in the Hamburg quarterfinals this year.

Davydenko targets Federer

AFP, Paris



Nikolay Davydenko is happy to leave the Russian razzmatazz to Marat Safin and Maria Sharapova if it guarantees

him victory over Roger Federer in the French Open semifinals.

The quiet man of tennis, decidedly low-profile compared to his former world number one and double Grand Slam winning compatriots, cherishes his anonymity which has cloaked his rise to four in the world.

But should he pull off a master-stroke and achieve a first career win over the world number one and reach the Roland Garros final, he'll have to reluctantly emerge from the shadows.

The odds are stacked against

him; eight times he's played Federer and eight times he's come up short.

"The most important thing for me is to enjoy my tennis. If I am enjoying it then I play well," said the 26-year-old.

"You always need to make good results by getting to a Grand Slam final or a semifinal. You are playing on centre court, people know you. On TV, people watch you."

"But what do I most enjoy? Hitting the ball and making winners."

It's not the philosophy which will make the advertising men drool, but it is the kind of single-mindedness that has taken the frail-looking, 70kg Russian into a second French Open semi-final.

Friday's clash will split the Paris sympathy vote.

There will be those willing on Federer to grab the two wins he needs to claim a first French Open title and so become just the third man in history to hold all four Grand Slam

crowns at the same time.

However, there will be others who believe Davydenko was cheated out of a place in the 2005 final when he lost a five-set semifinal marathon to Mariano Puerta, the Argentinian who later failed a drugs test and was banned.

Federer has only played Davydenko once on clay. That was a straight sets win in the Hamburg semifinals in 2005.

But the world number one has the utmost respect for Davydenko whose form now is almost unrecognisable to that of two years ago.

"He's a great player," said the top seed who reached his third successive semifinal with a 7-5, 1-6, 6-1, 6-2 win over Tommy Robredo.

"He's improved over the years. He's become more consistent from the baseline and his serve has improved. He's a great runner, it will be a very physical match."

Frisk criticises Mourinho



Football

AFP, London

Former international referee Anders Frisk has hit out at Chelsea manager Jose Mourinho for creating an unfair aura around the club's games during their failed bid to win the Champions League this season.

Sweden's Frisk retired from the game after receiving several death threats following the Champions League quarterfinal first leg match between Barcelona and Chelsea in 2005 after he sent off Chelsea striker Didier Drogba.

Mourinho stoked the fires by saying he had seen his Barcelona counterpart Frank Rijkaard go into Frisk's dressing room at half-time -- something

strongly denied by both men.

"There are a lot of managers who I can say behave well but there has been a trend in the last three years for some managers to adopt a mentality has not been so good. It's not a good image for football," Frisk told feelfootball.com.

"I suffered from that and a lot of people are still suffering from that. You can see every week that they are creating a conflict before a football match, as if it was a boxing match, and I don't like it."

"I'd like to see that kind of attitude removed from football."

Mourinho has become notorious for working with the media to get into the psyche of rival managers but Frisk, who was speaking on conduct and behaviour in football as part of the Survey on Feel Football this week, believes the Portuguese manager has

pushed things too far.

"He (Mourinho) has to take responsibility for his actions and to think what will happen as a result of his actions," Frisk said.

"He needs to think what would happen if he acted differently because, if he does, I think he will be much more popular than he is at the moment."

Frisk's retirement drew widespread disbelief in the European football community and UEFA slapped Mourinho with a 9,000-pound (18,000 dollars) fine and two-match touchline ban for the "false comments" connected with that Barcelona clash.

Frisk refereed 132 international matches and appeared at three European championship finals (1996, 2000, 2004) and one World Cup finals (2002).



PHOTOS: AFP

(L) Brazilian defender Marcelo jumps over Turkey's Hamit Altintop at the Signal Iduna Park stadium in Dortmund while Argentina wunderkind Lionel Messi (R) goes for the goal against Algeria at Nou Camp in Barcelona during their respective friendly matches on Tuesday.