



Serena Williams of the United States plays a forehand against Severine Bremond of France in the fourth round of the US Open at Flushing Meadows on Monday.

Serena sets up sister clash

US OPEN
AFP, New York

Serena Williams will face sister Venus at the US Open for the fourth time after bringing Severine Bremond's wild card run to a halt with a 6-2, 6-2 victory on Monday.

Serena and Venus have met 16 times previously with both winning eight matches, but this will be the first time they have met in the quarterfinals of a Grand Slam tournament.

Seventh-seeded Venus, who eliminated Polish ninth seed Agnieszka Radwanska 6-1, 6-3, said life on the court would be easier if she didn't have a superstar sister.

But says she won't hold back against eight-time Grand Slam winner Serena.

"If I had a sister who wasn't good then it would be easier because I would just beat her. But obviously she is very good," said Venus, who like Serena has two US Open titles.

"We have to meet in the quarters but this would be a huge milestone for me to win this championship. That's how I see it, as trying to win

the tournament."

Said fourth seed Serena. "It's my career and her career. I know she can definitely bury it. So I can do the same thing."

In the other women's fourth-round matches Monday, Russian sixth seed Dinara Safina beat Anna-Lena Groenefeld 7-5, 6-0 and Flavia Pennetta of Italy trounced France's Amelie Mauresmo 6-3, 6-0.

Serena needed just 60 minutes to bounce France's Bremond and Venus not much longer to send Radwanska packing as neither sister has dropped a set so far.

Venus and Serena have met twice in the US Open final with the older Venus winning in 2001 before losing to Serena the following year.

Wednesday's match will be a repeat of this year's Wimbledon final, which Venus won 7-5, 6-4.

And this is only the third time since 1998 they have met before the semifinals of a tournament. They have not been shy about expressing their disappointment at this year's draw.

"It sucks," Serena said. "That's how I feel. Even the semis would be better than the quarters. At least one of us will make it to semis."

They only have themselves to blame for their being in the same

quarter of the draw as neither has played a full tour schedule in the past year.

There is more on the line than just sibling bragging rights for Serena. If the 26-year-old Serena makes it to the finals she could regain the No. 1 spot she held for the first time in July 2002.

"It is not about getting there for me," Serena said. "It is about keeping it."

Serena won 90 per cent of her first-serve points and hammered 24 winners to 121st-ranked Bremond's 10 winners.

Venus, who won back-to-back US Open titles in 2000 and 2001, avenged a loss to Radwanska in their only other career meeting two years ago in Luxembourg.

Venus hammered four aces, won 77 per cent of her first-serve points and converted five of 14 break-point chances in the 84-minute match at Arthur Ashe Stadium.

She came out with plenty of fire, winning the first set in just 32 minutes before clinching the victory on her second match point when the ever-prone Radwanska sailed a forehand into the net.

Venus never let Radwanska into the match, jumping on her serve

and attacking the net. Venus broke Radwanska in the second and fourth games of the opening set and then held serve to take a 5-0 lead.

She smacked a 121-mph ace to win the fifth game and hit a total of 33 winners.

Safina is trying to follow in the footsteps of brother Marat Safin and win her first Grand Slam at the US Open.

Safina has won three titles and was runner-up at the French Open earlier this year, giving credence to the argument she is the most in form of all the WTA Tour.

Elder brother Marat won his initial Grand Slam at the US Open in 2000 and Safina, the Beijing Olympics silver medalist, is hoping to do the same.

Against qualifier Groenefeld, Safina won 71 per cent of her first serve points and made just 17 unforced errors to the German's 28 unforced errors.

Pennetta, who competed for Italy in last month's Beijing Games, says she will have to step up her play against Safina.

"She's in good shape," Pennetta said of the Russian. "I have to serve. My first serve is going to be important, also the return."

Malik denies coup

PTI, Karachi

Pakistan captain Shoaib Malik has dismissed reports about a move by some senior players to oust him from the skipper's job.

Referring to reports that senior players like Mohammad Yousuf, Younis Khan, Shahid Afridi and even vice-captain Misbahul Haq were interested in becoming captain, Malik said he didn't see any threat to his captaincy.

"I think if there is any such move, it will die down with time. Because I never asked for the captaincy. I only accepted it as a challenge and for the national team," he said.

Media reports have said that with changes expected in the cricket board after the resignation of Chairman Nasim Ashraf, some senior players were lobbying to get Malik removed as captain.

Afridi has denied any such move but confirmed there were problems with Malik's captaincy and the existing culture in the dressing room.

But Malik made it clear he had never expressed the desire to become Pakistan captain.

"When they offered me the captaincy I accepted it as a challenge and even now I consider the performance of the team more important than my individual performances," he said.

Nadal battles

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set but the important thing was I played my best in the tie-breaker," Nadal said.

Querrey, who won his first ATP title last March at Las Vegas, was down 4-2 when he forced seven break chances in the seventh game. But Nadal yanked each back from the brink, tension growing with every rescue until two errant Querrey forehands allowed Nadal to hold for 5-2 and he held again to end it.

"If I could have battled through that game and got back on serve, you never know," Querrey said. "The longer the match went on the more free I was on my forehand. It was feeling good, especially in the fourth set."

If Fish has anything to say about it, another battle awaits Nadal.

Hick to quit cricket

CRICINFO, undated

The former England batsman, Graeme Hick, has announced that he will retire at the end of the summer.

Hick, 42, said in April that he was "just going to see how things go, and make a decision later in the season." Although he has been in good form with the bat, his season has been blighted by a long-standing elbow injury, and he has decided the time is right to end a career with Worcestershire which started in 1984.

In July Hick became the most prolific run-scorer in all cricket (first-class and limited-overs combined), with more than 70,000 runs to his name, and his tally of 136 hundreds places him eighth on the all-time list. In total, he has made 294 scores of 50-plus in first-class cricket.

Despite his exceptional form at county level, Hick was never quite able to reproduce that at international level. In 65 Tests he averaged only 31.32, although he was more successful in his 120 ODI appearances.

In 1991-92 he helped England reach the final of the World Cup at

Melbourne, where they went on to lose to Pakistan, and in Australia seven years later he scored three hundreds and an unbeaten 66 in four consecutive innings of the VB Series.

Born in Zimbabwe (then Rhodesia), Hick was selected as a teenager for Zimbabwe's 1983 World Cup squad, but soon decided that his future lay with England. After arriving at New Road, he swiftly took on the status of England's Great White Hope, and in 1988, he set pulses racing when he surged to 1000 runs before the end of May, a tally that was achieved largely thanks to two of his most totemic innings.

Against Somerset at Taunton on May 5 and 6, Hick carved his name into the record-books with his career-best 405 not out (the next best score in the innings was Steve Rhodes's 56). Then, three weeks later, the formidable West Indians came to visit, with Hick still requiring 153 in the match to reach his milestone.

He responded with an unbeaten 172 against an attack including Patrick Patterson, Curtly Ambrose,

Courtney Walsh and Ian Bishop.

Those same bowlers, however, exacted their revenge three years later when Hick finally became eligible to play for England. He was thrust in for his debut Test against West Indies at Headingley where Ambrose, in particular, tormented him. He was dismissed for 6 and 6, and made only 73 runs at 10.71 before being dropped for the fifth Test of the series at The Oval.

It would be another 18 months before Hick finally recorded his maiden Test hundred -- an emphatic 178 against India at Bombay -- but that proved to be a false dawn. He managed only five more centuries in his ten-year Test career, although his equilibrium was not aided by England's erratic selection policy of the mid-1990s. He was picked and dropped ten times in his career, and became a favoured scapegoat of the chairman of selectors, Ray Illingworth.

Ultimately, Hick was at his most content away from the limelight, at his beloved Worcester, where he has scored 31,149 of his first-class runs, as well as 106 of his hundreds.

Mott in line for NZ job

CRICINFO, undated

Matthew Mott, the New South Wales coach, has made the initial cut for John Bracewell's New Zealand job and will be interviewed over the next couple of weeks. Mott was asked to apply for the post, which becomes available in April, and has made a list that is believed to include Graham Ford, formerly of South Africa but now at Kent.

"I was flattered to get asked and the thought of an international job is very exciting," Mott said. "There's a fair bit to think about before the job becomes available. I've got to fulfil a contract here at New South Wales -- it ends at the end of the season -- and that's my first priority."

The whittling down of a group of candidates, the New Zealand Cricket chief executive, said included up to 20 serious candidates has only just begun, but if they were to go with Mott it would result

in a significantly different outlook to the 50-year-old Bracewell. Currently 34, Mott would be the same age as some of the players.

The issue has not created concerns at New South Wales and he steered the side to the Pura Cup in his first season in the head job. "I've found it a good thing," he said. "At New South Wales I hadn't played with the guys so it was a new playing group. Being around their age I could relate to them and understand how things worked with the contract system and the structures." Despite his empathy, he maintains he is capable of making unpopular decisions.

Mott was appointed to the Blues in 2007 when Trevor Bayliss left to take up the Sri Lanka position and he was due to be an assistant with the Australia team on their tour to Pakistan earlier this year. When the trip was cancelled he joined John Buchanan, a former mentor at Queensland, at the Kolkata Knight Riders, where he linked up with the New Zealand wicketkeeper

Brendon McCullum.

"It's an exciting time for New Zealand," Mott said. "They've got a good bunch of senior players as well as younger guys coming through."

A steady top-order batsman, Mott started his career in Queensland before switching to Victoria, playing a total of 66 first-class games and scoring 3723 runs. He retired early and one of his first coaching jobs was as an assistant with the Australia Under-19 World Cup squad. He also spent a season as player-coach of the New South Wales 2nd XI under the eye of Bayliss.

Another of Mott's former bosses is Ford and the pair worked together when Mott travelled to Kent for an off-season. Now the men are expected to be pushing for the same role. "Graham was an outstanding operator," Mott said, "and a fantastic coach." Bracewell will return to Gloucestershire, the team he left in 2003 to take up the New Zealand role, when his contract expires.

'KP confidence rubs off'

BBC ONLINE, undated

Andrew Flintoff claims captain Kevin Pietersen can take the credit for England's one-day resurgence after yet another victory over South Africa.

The all-rounder took three wickets and scored 31 in Sunday's superb display as England won by seven wickets to take a 4-0 series lead with one to play.

But despite Pietersen's claims that "it has nothing to do with me", Flintoff said: "Kevin's being modest, I think."

"The dressing room is different. KP is confident and that rubs off us all."

The 30-year-old added: "We had some great times with (previous captain) Michael (Vaughan), but this dressing room is slightly different."

"As long as we keep working hard, I'm sure we can be a successful team."

However, Pietersen was keen to play down his role as captain, despite the win extending England's run to five matches played, five matches won under the 28-year-old.

"The captaincy is not about me, it's about the players -- the really good players that turn up and perform day in day out," he said.

"At the moment we have guys clicking in every single department, we have a few guys playing exceptional cricket and I'm just fortunate enough to be tossing my hands around in the air occasionally."

"I don't want to put pressure on anybody, I just want to say to the guys 'these are the roles we want you to play, now go and play them for six months, nine months, 12 months'. If you give people security and confidence, they will turn up for you."

"The guys aren't talking about their talent -- they are chucking their talent around on the cricket field."

Should England now wrap up a 5-0 series win with victory in Cardiff on Wednesday, they would leapfrog South Africa into second in the world one-day rankings.

And Pietersen added: "It would be a huge deal to do that, but we'll cross that bridge when we come to it. Hopefully, that will be at around 2230 BST on Wednesday."

KGC given golf carts

SPORTS REPORTER

Citycell has donated five state-of-the-art imported golf carts to Kurmitola Golf Club (KGC) on August 31.

CEO Michael Seymour handed over the carts to KGC vice-president Maj Gen Md. Shafiqul Islam at a program organized at the club premises.

A mini tournament was arranged to mark the arrival of the golf carts.

The golf carts were imported by Unicorn and exclusively branded by Citycell's high speed wireless internet service Zoom.

Col Syed Anwar Hossain, CEO of KGC, was present as special guest at the handover ceremony.

Tipu Sultan, director, financial control of Citycell and other senior officials of both the organisations were also present at the program.

Return of Watson

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all-rounder Andrew Symonds home for missing a team meeting.

The 27-year-old is set to replace fellow Queenslander James Hopes, who opened the batting on Saturday.

Watson said he would enjoy the opportunity to again open the batting with emerging rookie Shaun Marsh, the pair filling the same role in the recent one-dayers in the West Indies.

"Shaun's a great guy, he's an amazingly talented batsman," Watson said here on Tuesday.

"The first I really saw of him exploding in the seniors, during the IPL (Indian Premier League) I bowled against him in one of the games and it's some of the best batting I've ever bowled to," he said.

"He hits the ball harder than I've probably seen anyone hit the ball just on normal cricket shots," Watson added.

With considerable uncertainty surrounding Symonds's international future, Watson shapes as the logical replacement for his fellow Queenslander in Tests and one-dayers.

However, Watson said he hopes Symonds returns to the Australian fold.

"I don't want this to be the last the Australian public see of Andrew Symonds playing for Australia," he said.

"I personally think that it would be a waste because he's an amazingly talented player and I love watching him play."

Watson said the Australians expected to comfortably account for Bangladesh.

On the other hand, Bangladesh coach Jamie Siddons admitted his side lacked confidence when playing against the Australians, with their only win inspired by a Mohammad Ashraful century in 2005.

'Captaincy ruined me'

Cricket

INTERNET, undated

As Paul Collingwood stood on the balcony at Lord's on Sunday and applauded England's fourth successive one-day victory over South Africa, he could be forgiven for feeling some regret. It is a month to the day since the player informed the England and Wales Cricket Board of his decision to resign as captain of the side having suffered a "mentally draining" year in the role, but had he known the team were so close to hitting top form perhaps he would have hung on longer.

"No, absolutely not," said Collingwood on Monday. "I was going through a horrible patch in regards to my Test form and felt the captaincy was the main reason for that. It was draining me of the mental energy I needed to play at my best."

It was a tough decision but having been dropped for a Test (the second against South Africa at Headingley), there was no other choice. I've been brought up in a generation where Test cricket is regarded as the ultimate form of the game and I wanted to remain part of that."

If Collingwood's return to the team for the third Test against South Africa at Edgbaston was any guide, his decision to relinquish the captaincy had an instant impact. He went into the match having made up his mind to quit -- the announcement was made four days later -- and made 135 in England's second innings, which was some return to form considering his previous two scores against the tourists were seven and four.

His form since has hardly been

spectacular -- he scored 61 and 25 not out in the final Test at The Oval and 14 in his single one-day innings this summer -- but the player insists he is definitely feeling the benefits of no longer being in charge.

"I'm smiling more and have gone back to being the happy-go-lucky guy I was prior to becoming captain," he said. "My family are certainly seeing a different me, I'm no longer sitting in front of the television muttering about who should and shouldn't be in the team."

"That definitely got to me about the job -- the way it is always there in the back of your mind. I'd been good at switching off but as captain I was always thinking about the game. I couldn't shut cricket out of my mind and that took its toll. You only had to see how Michael Vaughan reacted when announcing he was resigning as [Test] captain to know he felt the same way."

In Collingwood's case, it did not help that results were not going his way either. Having won series against India and Sri Lanka after taking on the role in June 2007, England lost home and away to New Zealand. The Durham man was also handed a four-match ban for the slow over-rate in the penultimate match of the home series against the Kiwis. Criticism followed which, Collingwood concedes, "hurt".

"You're always being judged as captain and as hard as you try not to read or listen to what people say, it eventually gets back to you," he said. "I tried to laugh everything off but it seeps through and hurts."

"But that is what being captain of the England cricket team is about. Along with being manager of the England football team it is the most scrutinised job a sports-

man in this country can have."

That is something Kevin Pietersen will no doubt discover. The 28-year-old has enjoyed a blistering start to his reign and has not surprised Collingwood in the manner he has led the side -- "He's a typical South African" were among the ways he described Pietersen -- but the real challenges lie ahead, starting with November's series in India.

"That is always difficult because of the heat and conditions. India is an intense place and will test not just the side but also Kevin as captain," said Collingwood. "We drew 1-1 in 2006 but if we keep the momentum we've got going, anything can happen this year."

Prior to India, England also take part in the Stanford Super Series. The one-off contest against a Caribbean select XI has been described as a "farce" by the West Indies legend Michael Holding but those involved are clearly taking it seriously. Collingwood was one of eight players pulled out of county duty by the ECB on Monday so that the squad can stay fresh for the matches ahead, and considering there is close to £500,000 on offer to each winning player in the Caribbean it was no surprise they made little fuss about the decision.

"None of us have experienced playing for that type of money before, it's certainly going to pay for a couple of things," said Collingwood. "I don't know what I'd spend the money on, probably school fees."

Win or lose, he will undoubtedly play the match in upbeat mood. "I feel as fit as ever and definitely see myself playing in the Ashes next year," said the 32-year-old. "I am not even thinking about retiring. Cricket is my life and I couldn't imagine doing anything else."

Pietersen backs Shah

Cricket

CRICINFO, undated

The various pieces of England's one-day jigsaw have slotted into place seamlessly over the last couple of weeks against South Africa. Kevin Pietersen's desire to have Steve Harmison back in the attack, Andrew Flintoff at No. 5 and Samit Patel as the spin-bowling all-rounder has worked like a dream. The only plan that hadn't quite come off, at least until Sunday at Lord's, was Owais Shah's promotion to No. 3.

He made 12 in the opening match at Headingley and 23 at The Oval but on his home ground Shah guided England's run chase of 137 off 20 overs with 44 off 40 balls as they took a 4-0 lead in the series. He didn't panic after a slow start and soon unleashed an array of shots against the struggling South Africa bowlers. It was getting increasingly dark, but

Shah didn't have any problems picking up the ball, swinging one six over the Tavern boundary.

Pietersen has had the utmost faith in his players so far and had no doubts that Shah would show his true value higher up the order after an extended run at No. 6. "He got a top edge at Headingley and a good ball from [Jacques] Kallis at The Oval," said Pietersen. "I had no doubt he would come off. He knew I had the confidence in him, and so did the players and his county stats prove he's a great player in first-class cricket."

"He deserved a go at three. He's played some fantastic shots, and the way he was talking when I was batting with him was a really good sign of things to come."

Shah's stand of 74 with Pietersen broke the back of South Africa's defence after England had struggled to find the boundary during the Powerplays. Andrew Flintoff came in and finished the match in a blaze of boundaries, but

was quick to give credit to the hard work of his teammate. "I came in and did what I did and probably took the glory -- but the work had been done beforehand," he said.

Flintoff added that Shah had the talent to make the most of his promotion to No. 3. The pair played together in age-group cricket for England and, at 29, it was now time for Shah to push for a lengthy international career.

"I've played a lot of cricket with Owais since he was about 14," said Flintoff. "He's always been a special player -- I think there's a hell of a lot more to come from him."

Unlike Flintoff and Pietersen, Shah will be back on county duty after the final ODI against South Africa, at Cardiff, on Wednesday after being one of the players released for the remainder of the season. It will be a chance for Shah to end the season in good form before looking ahead to the Stanford Super Series and a tour of India.



Citycell CEO Michael Seymour (2nd from L) poses for a photograph with Kurmitola Golf Club officials during a hand-over ceremony of golf carts at the club premises on August 31.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

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CRYPTOQUIP

QPX NE XEH VPFZT VPU MEET

BFJPV QUUGG WU MEZDFMVUN

IZN RUCDU VFBU? WUMIHURU

PU' R IZ UJJ WUIVUC.

Saturday's Cryptquip: BECAUSE I DON'T HAVE ENOUGH MONEY TO BUY MY FAVORITE NUTS, I GUESS I'M STRAPPED FOR CASHIERS.

Today's Cryptquip Clue: E equals O