



Former World No. 1 Rafael Nadal of Spain serves to compatriot David Ferrer (not in picture) during their Montreal Masters match in Montreal on Wednesday.

Nadal back with a win

Tennis

AFP, Montreal

Rafael Nadal spent just 36 minutes in his comeback from a two and a half month injury absence as David Ferrer retired hurt while trailing 4-3 in their second round match at the Montreal Masters Wednesday.

The result was an anti-climax for world number two Nadal, who has been resting tendinitis-plagued knees ever since losing on May 31 at the French Open.

"I must be happy, because I didn't play terrible," said the second seed. "In the next round, I have another chance to continue to improve. Every match, every game is important to feel better form."

"My knees felt OK, but I need more days to have real test."

Nadal, the defending champion, drew massive applause as he went onto the court with his fellow Spaniard and showed few outward signs of rust after his long absence.

"It's tough to have to go out and have to leave the court, I'm sorry for David," said the winner. "As for me, it was nice have a victory like this."

"I'm here to improve every day, to enjoy every game, every point. It's hard to move well for me and to feel confident when you are touching the ball. But that's a normal thing."

Ferrer, playing with one knee taped and visited twice by the trainer, started

poorly with a double fault and lost the opening game, setting a tone for Nadal.

Nadal, the four-time French Open champion who had to sit out Wimbledon because of his troublesome knees, faces a Thursday date with German Philipp Petzschner, who upset Spain's Tommy Robredo 7-6 (7/3), 7-6 (7/4).

"I'm very sorry it had to end like this," said Nadal, who saved six break points in the fourth game before losing serve, only to break the fading Ferrer again in the seventh game as the early end came.

"Philipp is a very strong player and I will have to play well to beat him. But I'm here to do that this week."

Ferrer said he came to the court with few expectations after experiencing pain in his left knee even before the match.

"I had problems in my knee and I could not really play. I prefer to relax for these few days and stand by for next week to Cincinnati."

Fifth-seeded Wimbledon finalist Andy Roddick opened against Russian Igor Andreev, with the American carving out a patchy 6-1, 7-6 (7/3) win.

"Not perfect, but, you know, obviously I'll take the win," said the world number five.

Roddick complained that the court in Montreal was even slower than last week in Washington, where he also reached the final.

And the constant varying of tennis ball brands from event to event has him annoyed.

"It's a slow center court, and the ball is not really moving too much," he said. "I

didn't think Washington was overly fast, and it's pretty slow here."

"I still think that we shouldn't be changing tennis balls midsummer. That's just the height of not using common sense."

Washington champion and sixth seed Juan Martin Del Potro beat Czech Jan Hernych 6-2, 7-5.

Spaniard Juan Carlos Ferrero moved into a third-round showdown with world number three Andy Murray for the third time since June and will hope to reverse his fortunes after two defeats against the Scot.

Ferrero felled French 13th seed Gael Monfils 6-3, 7-6 (9/7) to notch his 30th victory of the season.

But the Spaniard lost to Murray at Queen's Club and a fortnight later in the Wimbledon quarter-finals.

"Playing Murray means that I'm playing well," said Ferrero. "It's going to be very tough, but I want this win."

The fate of Murray's run towards the number two ATP ranking could be in the hands of the veteran.

Murray needs to surpass the performance this week of Nadal to take over the second spot behind Switzerland's Roger Federer.

Seeded Swiss Stanislas Wawrinka beat Kazak Andrey Golubev 7-5, 6-4 to reach a second match of the season against fellow Olympic doubles gold medalist Federer. Wawrinka defeated his good friend four months ago on clay in Monte Carlo.

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Farhat to quit

FROM PAGE 17

He regretted joining the ICL, and said he was desperate to play more cricket than the league was organising. "Joining the ICL was a mistake which was realised later on," he said. "But it was realised when I found that playing for the ICL meant one would play just one tournament in a year, which is not enough to satiate the hunger for cricket."

It's not an easy route back to the national team, even after he gets PCB clearance, as Pakistan have several contenders vying for the opening slots. "My performance in the last domestic season was satisfactory and I will do my best to get a place in the national team as soon as possible," he said. Farhat made a century in one of his two games in the Quaid-e-Azam last season.

Several Pakistan players who quit the ICL - including Mohammad Yousuf, Imran Nazir, Navedul Hasan and Abdul Razzaq - are now back with the national team.

Anwar Pak

FROM PAGE 17

able to contribute a lot to Pakistan cricket," Butts said. As an international player Anwar made his one-day international on New Year's Day 1989, and entered Test cricket two years later. In 55 Tests he scored 4052 runs at 45.52, including 11 hundreds, but he achieved global fame through his exploits in ODIs.

MSC want

FROM PAGE 17

The former general secretary said that the clubs were getting over five weeks as the players' transfer was taking part as originally scheduled and that the clubs should not make a point citing the last date of players transfer.

He said, however, that the committee would take the final decision if such request came to their table.

Meanwhile, Federation Cup champions Mohammedan, B. League champions Abahani and Farashganj Sporting Club out of 13 participating clubs partly completed their players registration formalities till August 14.

Serena, Kim cruise

Tennis

AFP, Cincinnati

Second-seeded Serena Williams cruised into the third round of the two million-dollar WTA Tour event here Wednesday as Belgian Kim Clijsters kept her comeback on track with a straight sets victory.

Reigning US Open, Australian Open and Wimbledon champion Williams needed little more than an hour to dispatch Katerina Bondarenko, 6-3, 6-2, firing 13 aces past the unseeded Ukrainian.

"I've been working really hard on it," Williams said of her serve. "I'm glad it's coming through. I hope I can keep it up for the rest of the tournament and the US Open."

Clijsters, back after a two-year absence from tennis, kept her comeback on course with a 6-2, 7-5 victory over Switzerland's Patty Schnyder.

Clijsters booked a third-round clash with Russia's French Open champion Svetlana Kuznetsova.

Clijsters, who retired in May of 2007 and gave birth to a daughter in February of 2008, had launched her return with a straight sets victory over France's Marion Bartoli on Monday.

The Belgian, who claimed her only Grand Slam title at the 2005 US Open, was never broken by Schnyder, ranked 20th in the world.

"Does it look easy?" Clijsters said. "I started off playing well. It's a really good feeling. I'm moving well. I'm very happy with the way I'm starting. It helps your confidence to get into a rhythm."

If the 26-year-old can get past Kuznetsova she faces a possible quarter-final clash against top-seeded Russian Dinara Safina.

Clijsters has won six of her seven career matches against Kuznetsova.

"I knew coming in that this was a big tournament," said Clijsters, who received a wild card. "I knew it was going to be tough from the start, and I'm glad I'm still going. Patty's a good player. We've had a lot of tough matches, a lot of three-setters, so I'm glad I got out in two."

Fourth-seeded Russian Elena Dementieva, the Olympic singles gold medallist, advanced with a 6-3, 6-4 victory over Belgian qualifier Yanina Wickmayer.

Fifth-seeded Jelena Jankovic of Serbia opened her campaign with a 7-6 (8/6), 6-3 second-round victory over Russian Maria Kirilenko.

"First match for me, it's never easy," Jankovic said. "It takes time to get used to the conditions - to playing matches again."

In other early action, seventh-seeded Russian Vera Zvonareva survived a second-set wobble to get past compatriot Alisa Kleybanova 6-4, 1-6, 7-5.

Ninth-seeded Victoria Azarenka of Belarus downed Russian Anna Chakvetadze 6-4, 6-2. Slovakian Daniela Hantuchova advanced with a 7-5, 1-6, 6-4 victory over Ukraine's Alona Bondarenko, while China's Peng Shuai downed Spain's Maria Jose Martinez Sanchez 5-7, 6-2, 6-1.

Peng set up a third-round clash with Safina, a three-set winner over Italy's Roberta Vinci on Tuesday.

Fourteenth-seeded Italian Flavia Pennetta, who lifted the trophy in Los Angeles last week, defeated Hungary's Agnes Szavay 6-2, 6-4 to advance to a meeting with third-seeded American Venus Williams.

Hungary's Melinda Czink notched the upset of the day, toppling 11th-seeded Serb Ana Ivanovic 7-6 (8/6), 7-5.

bat after winning the toss, lost a wicket off the first ball when Kamran Akmal was bowled by Nuwan Kulasekara after attempting a big heave.

The other opener, Imran Nazir, cracked five fours and a six in his 40 off 28 balls to boost the total as Pakistan moved to 59-3 by the eighth over.

Teenager Umar Akmal, who hit a 20-ball 30, put on 66 for the fourth wicket with Afridi.

Abdul Razzaq and Misbah-ul Haq added a quickfire 33 as Pakistan plun-

Wanderers gets back Eng game

AFP, Johannesburg

Wanderers Stadium in Johannesburg has been restored as a venue for three matches when England tour South Africa this year, Cricket South Africa announced Wednesday.

The largest and best known cricket venue in the country was stripped of Test, ODI and Twenty20 fixtures after a row between its provincial officials and the national association.

Gauteng Cricket Board were unhappy with aspects of a deal Cricket South Africa struck to stage the Indian Premier League this year after security concerns forced the Twenty20 event to be moved from the sub-continent.

When Gauteng refused to back down, the national body switched the England fixtures to Durban, Bloemfontein and Port Elizabeth.

England begin a three-month tour with a Twenty 20 clash against South Africa at the Wanderers on November 13 and conclude with a Test from January 14 at the same venue.

Ajmal fined

AFP, Colombo

Pakistan's Saeed Ajmal has been fined for gesturing at Sri Lankan captain Kumar Sangakkara during a Twenty20 match, the International Cricket Council (ICC) said on Thursday.

The off-spinner pointed towards the pavilion and spoke aggressively to Sangakkara after bowling him down during Pakistan's 52-run victory in the T20 international here on Wednesday night.

Match referee Alan Hurst of Australia found Ajmal guilty of breaching the ICC's Code of Conduct and fined him 15 percent of his match fee following a post-match hearing.

KKR start it early

CRICINFO, undated

The Kolkata Knight Riders' Bengal players and four of their other Indian players had a training session at the Eden Gardens on Wednesday. Sourav Ganguly, their icon player in the first two seasons, was also present and passed on tips to the practising youngsters.

Ganguly said the camp was particularly useful for the younger members of the side. "Most of these boys get busy for the Ranji Trophy so getting hold of them after the season begins gets difficult," he said. "We want to make them understand certain things which are required so that it will be easier later down the line."

"At present, I am just trying to work with them and making them understand what is required of them," he said. "We have about seven months to go and hopefully, this will help them in the preparation for first-class matches also."

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BCCI seeks legal help on WADA issue

Cricket

CRICINFO, undated

The Indian board has sought the opinion of two top legal authorities in the country to firm up its stand against the contentious 'whereabouts' clause in the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) code. The BCCI confirmed it has requested Goolam Vahanvati, India's attorney general, and AS Anand, a former chief justice, to clarify whether the clause infringes on players' rights and had the potential to be legally challenged.

The ICC, meanwhile, has decided to hold a meeting of its working group on September 5-6 in Dubai to discuss India's objections to the clause, which the BCCI said violates players' privacy and posed a security threat. The decision was taken at a teleconference of the group on Wednesday night.

The ICC has also informed its members that no player in its testing pool will be penalised for missing the August 1 deadline for supplying 'whereabouts' information until the BCCI has had a chance to address its concerns.

All players in the ICC's International Registered Testing Pool (IRTP), except the 11 from India, have agreed to submit to the new code. The code's 'whereabouts' clause requires players in the pool to supply information in advance on their location for an hour each day for the forthcoming quarter (three months) to facilitate test-

ing during and outside competitions. The BCCI has backed its players and their opposition to the clause led the ICC to form a working group to resolve the issue. This group is headed by Tim Kerr, chairman of ICC anti-doping panel, and including ICC chief executive Haroon Lorgat, BCCI secretary N Srinivasan, ICC principal advisor IS Bindra and former India captain Anil Kumble, who sits on WADA's Athletes Committee.

WADA has agreed to assist in the process and David Howman, its director general, said the agency had been involved in discussions with the ICC on the code for the last five years. "We have been engaged with the ICC for five years now," Howman told the Hindu. "The discussions started with the ICC when Malcolm Speed was the CEO. I have had occasions to be engaged at ICC meetings and certainly my answer [whether ICC was involved in the process of revising the code] is yes. The ICC has been part of what we have been trying to do for some time."

The ICC became a WADA signatory in 2006 and adopted the amended code from January 1 this year. The Indian board has suggested that they will push for a cricket-specific code and ask the ICC to negotiate with WADA to amend the testing pool selection method to include only players who are injured or have a history of doping violations. WADA has agreed to a similar amendment for FIFA, the world football body.

Watson enjoying new role