



Caroline Wozniacki of Denmark plays a backhand against Virginie Razzano of France during the Pilot Pen quarterfinals at the Connecticut Tennis Center in New Haven on Thursday.

Top seeds tumble

Tennis

AFP, New Haven

Russian top seeds Nikolay Davydenko and Svetlana Kuznetsova tumbled out of the quarterfinals of the last US Open tuneup on Thursday.

France's Amelie Mauresmo, seeded eighth, won a 20-point first-set tiebreaker en route to a 7-6 (11/9), 2-6, 6-3 victory over Kuznetsova and reach the women's semifinals at the Pilot Pen men's and women's hardcourt tournament.

Kuznetsova got off to a quick start, winning the first three games of the match, but Mauresmo rallied to hand the reigning French Open champion the defeat.

"I gave her chances to come back," Kuznetsova said. "She started to play very well."

After Kuznetsova easily won the second set, Mauresmo took a 4-2 lead in the third.

"I was just going for it, trying to be aggressive," Mauresmo said. "Not too much panicking."

She said the start of the US Open, last Grand Slam of the year, on Monday was inspiring.

"Just before the Open, I start to really play better, feel good physically, try to find a few things in my game," she said.

American Sam Querrey beat men's top seed

Davydenko 6-3, 3-6, 6-4 to book a Friday semifinal berth against Argentina's Jose Acasuso, a 7-5, 6-4 winner over France's Florent Serra.

The defeat gave Davydenko the weekend off before the start of the US Open, where he will be the eighth seed and face a qualifier in the first round.

"I have no chance because (of his) first serve," said Davydenko, who had a trainer work on his right wrist during the match after it became sore from the force of Querrey's serves.

Russian seventh seed Igor Andreev also advanced, defeating Argentina's Leonardo Mayer 6-4, 6-7 (4/7), 6-3. Andreev earned a shot at second-seeded Spaniard Fernando Verdasco, who made quick work of Austria's Jurgen Melzer 6-3, 6-1.

Mauresmo will face another Russian, Elena Vesnina, who beat Anna Chakvetadze 6-1, 7-5 in an all-Russian affair.

Defending women's champion Caroline Wozniacki, the second seed beat France's Virginie Razzano 6-4, 6-3 to book a semifinal clash with third-seeded Italian Flavia Pennetta.

Pennetta beat Slovakian qualifier Magdalena Rybarikova 6-2, 6-2 and said every match was good preparation for the Open.

"I just look to be prepared for the Open," she said. "This is my first important thing for me is to just get there and be prepared for a fight."

Wisden to go digital

ANI, London

Wisden Cricketers' Almanack, the cricket bible which was first published in 1878, is soon going to join the digital age, as the 2009 Wisden Cricketers' Almanack would be available in e-book format by November, with several other Wisden titles.

Bloomsbury, which bought the publication last November, also announced that a new edition of Wisden on The Ashes was being rushed to press for the Christmas market after England's victory over Australia.

Following the rise in the e-book market, the company has been preparing for digital publishing of the Almanack and all other titles on its list.

Nigel Newton, chief executive of Bloomsbury, said that the decision was taken with the American and UK e-book market in sight, which is worth US\$60 million dollars.

"There is every indication that this will grow and that it will be a good thing for both publishers and readers," The Australian quoted Newton, as saying.

Foreigners

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Seven players who jointly shared the third position are: GM Rakib and FM Parag, GM Neelotpal Das, GM Tejas Bakre, Bitan Banerjee and Praveen Kumar, and Anuar Ismagambetov.

In the ninth round matches, Mechedlishvili drew with Rausis, Dibyendu drew with Neelotpal, Refat beat Enamul Hossain Razib, Khushnudinov beat Atanu Lahiri, Anuar beat Abu Sufian Shakil, Aminul Islam drew with Vinoth Kumar, Vishal Sareen drew with Sahaj Grover, Taibur Rahman beat Keshav Shrestha, Debaraj Chatterjee beat Syed Mahfuzur Rahman Emon, Hasan Emam beat Karma Pandya, Sk. Nsir Ahmed drew with Mohammad Javed, Jamal Uddin beat Badrillah Nepali, Hamal Manish beat Abdullah Al-Saif, Ikramul Haque Siam beat Naveen Tandukar and Shrestha Bilam Lal beat Golam Moshataf Bhuiyan. Minhazuddin Ahmed got walk-over against Aminul Islam Polash.

Commerce Minister Faruk Khan is expected to distribute prizes among the winners as chief guest.

Aussies ride

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The match is Australia's warm-up for the forthcoming Twenty20 matches and seven one-day internationals against England.

Scotland had begun the game well when Dewald Nel removed David Warner for a duck in the first over, the opener feathering a catch through to wicketkeeper Marc Petrie.

The tourists also lost stand-in captain Michael Clarke for 16 when he misjudged a Goudie slower ball and was bowled attempting a swipe to leg.

But despite the early wickets Watson was content to play his shots and raced to his half-century from just 30 balls.

He took 16 from Richie Berrington's first over, but departed soon after when he flicked Nel to Ryan Watson at deep square leg.

Reckless strokeplay was all that was threatening to keep Australia's score under 300, with Cameron White needlessly skying a catch to Goudie at deep mid-off when he had reached 19.

That brought Hussey and Voges together with the score on 143 for four after 24 overs.

Voges was happy to play second fiddle, adding just 29 in their century stand, although Hussey rode his luck when Gordon Drummond athletically held a catch only to jump over the mid-on boundary in doingsso.

Hussey did depart next over when Neil McCullum held on inches in front of the ropes to end an innings that included 10 fours and five sixes.

Voges took up where Hussey left off, thrashing four sixes to reach 60, as Haq's miserable day worsened when he dropped a simple return chance.

Drummond eventually removed Voges caught in the deep before Australia's second debutant of the day, Tim Paine, continued the run fest with an unbeaten 29.

The tourists might have then expected to post a score of over 350, but the late hitting never materialised as Goudie claimed the final four wickets for 22 runs.

Federer, Nadal final possible

AFP, New York



Williams and her sister Venus Williams cannot, according to the US Open draws revealed Thursday.

The draws had Federer and Spanish star Nadal on opposite sides of the bracket, something not assured for the first time since 2005 in Slams where both men played because Britain's Andy Murray is ranked second.

Swiss world number one Federer seeks an unprecedented sixth US Open title in a row after winning a record 15th career Slam title last month at Wimbledon.

"I'm still motivated," Federer said. "I'm still excited about playing."

Nadal, who is fighting off a knee injury, is in the same half of the draw as Murray for the year's final Grand Slam event which starts Monday. Nadal and Federer had been 1-2 in the rankings for the past four years until this month.

Serena Williams is ranked second to Russia's Dinara Safina even though the

US star has 11 Grand Slam titles to none for Safina. Williams has won three of the past four Slams but could face her sister in an emotional Open semifinal.

"Obviously I'm going to have a tough tournament coming up," Serena Williams said. "Venus and I are going to play the doubles. So I'm going to do the best I can do and just try to relax when I'm out there."

American Devin Britton, the US college champion, will be the first foe for Federer on the Flushing Meadows hardcourts.

Serbian Novak Djokovic and American Andy Roddick, who could meet in a quarterfinal, are in Federer's half of the draw.

Roddick pushed Federer to 16-14 in the fifth set of last month's Wimbledon final before falling as the Swiss star claimed his record-setting 15th career Grand Slam title.

"I think he believes again he can win big tournaments," Federer said. "He was so close at Wimbledon. It has changed him. I think he has improved as a player in the past year or two. I also see him going deep into the tournament again at the Open."

On the opposite side of the bracket, Murray and Nadal could meet in the

semifinals. Murray could face Argentina's Juan Martin Del Potro in the quarterfinals.

Murray opens against Ernests Gulbis of Latvia and could face big-serving Ivo Karlovic in the third round.

Nadal, coming back from a knee injury, is set to open against France's Richard Gasquet.

On the women's side, Serena Williams opens with compatriot Alexa Glatch and could meet Austria's Sybille Bammer in the third round. Her top-seeded rival in the bracket quarter is Russian No. 7 Vera Zvonareva.

Venus Williams could meet Belgian former world number one Kim Clijsters in the fourth round of the same half of the bracket and might have to get past eighth seed Victoria Azarenka of Belarus to reach a potential semifinal sibling showdown.

Clijsters, in only the third event of her comeback after two years off to start a family, opens against Viktoriya Kutuzova of Ukraine.

Safina's half of the bracket is filled with fellow Russians. Sixth seed Svetlana Kuznetsova and potential third-round opponents Maria Sharapova and Elena Dementieva also figure in the top seed's half of the draw.

ECB scraps 50-over format

Cricket

CRICINFO, undated

The England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) is likely to propose that the ICC conduct a formal review of the future of the 50-over format after the 2011 World Cup to protect the ODI structure amid the rise of Twenty20 cricket, with a 40-over format topping the list of suggested alternatives.

The review was discussed informally at a strategy session in London during the ICC conference in June and has come into focus once again after the ECB announced on Thursday that it was switching to a 40-over domestic format from 2010. No formal decision on a format change has been taken at the ICC level but members expect England, which has long been looking at ways to reinvigorate the shorter form, to take the lead in proposing an official review soon. South Africa is the other major nation that does not have a 50-over competition in domestic cricket.

However, any review or proposed change will have to take into consideration the ICC's current commercial and broadcast deals -- primarily with ESPN -- which run until 2015 and include the 50-over World Cup in Australia and New Zealand. But if the ICC board agrees on a revamped ODI structure and gets its partners and sponsors on board, the format change is expected to happen

sooner.

"The ICC has event, commercial and broadcast contracts in place up to and including the ICC Cricket World Cup in 2015," an ICC spokesperson said. "Those contracts, including host agreements with New Zealand and Australia, are all based on the 2015 ICC World Cup taking place as per ODI regulations. If the ECB wishes to table suggested changes to those contracts then that would have to go through due process with the ICC board and also, if there were to be a change of format, with the ICC's commercial and broadcast partners. There is nothing to stop members experimenting with other formats but the ICC is committed to three viable formats of the game -- Tests, ODIs and T20s."

England and England Lions will continue to play 50-over cricket internationally until the ICC review is complete, the ECB said. In fact, a sense of where ODI cricket is headed has been given by the ECB's new domestic competition that will be held mainly on Sunday afternoons. "The Powerplays and fielding restrictions will be the same as per international cricket but the match will be played over 40 overs," the ECB said.

Giles Clarke, the ECB chairman, also pointed to the fact that "the leading one-day team in world cricket -- South Africa -- does not mirror 50 overs at domestic level and, provided Powerplays and fielding restrictions were the same as the international format, the skills required were very similar."

Eng avoid embarrassment

Cricket

AFP, Belfast

England's Ashes celebrations almost came to an embarrassing end when they narrowly avoided defeat against Ireland,

claiming a three-run victory under the Duckworth/Lewis method in Thursday's one-day international in Belfast. Just five days after regaining the famous urn with a 197-run victory over Australia in the final Test at the Oval, England seemed to be suffering a hangover from their champagne celebrations.

They spluttered to 203-9, with Oval hero Jonathan Trott and Ravi Bopara both

dismissed without scoring, and only just managed to hold on as Ireland chased a revised total of 116 in 20 overs after a long rain delay.

Only debutant batsman Joe Denly and Luke Wright impressed after England elected to bat in overcast conditions.

Opener Denly struck 67, while Wright's 36 injected the innings with impetus after England slipped to 135 for six.

An underwhelming start included Trott, whose brilliant hundred on Test debut set up the Oval victory, being trapped lbw by one which nipped back from Australian-raised Trent Johnston.

Bopara, whose wretched

time against the Australians led to his omission for the decisive, final Test, also went without scoring to Johnston, after edging a drive to second slip.

Johnston's opening spell of 6-2-7-2 caused the problems for England and was a perfect way for him to celebrate his 100th appearance for his adopted nation.

Matt Prior, captain Paul Collingwood and Owais Shah all perished to skied catches attempting big shots and when Denly was pinned leg before, attempting to swivel the returning Johnston to the leg-side, England were 135 for six.

Twice he cleared the ropes in a rapid 36, which dominated a stand of 42 with Adil Rashid.

Only a brilliant catch by John Mooney, flinging himself full length on the run from long-off, halted the 26-ball assault.

Persistent rain stopped the Irish beginning their pursuit for three hours but they finally started with a revised target to aim for.

Ireland's chase was propelled along by teenager Paul Stirling's positive intent.

Stirling, an 18-year-old on Middlesex's books, hit four fours and a six in an attacking 30 which left them needing marginally over four runs per over for the final dozen overs.

But the hosts seemed to have blown their chance when they subsided from 64-2 to 89-7.

With nine required from the final two deliveries, Johnston lofted to long-on and England 12th man Eoin Morgan, on for Graeme Swann, prevented it clearing the rope by patting the ball back into play.

Johnston and Kyle McCallan, Ireland's final pair, ran two but the quick thinking by Morgan pre-

vented a famous victory for his compatriots.

Johnston hit the final ball for four but England held on for a narrow victory.

SCOREBOARD

Final scoreboard in the one-day international between Ireland and England at Belfast on Thursday:

ENGLAND

Bopara c Stirling b Johnston	0
Denly lbw b Johnston	67
Trott lbw b Johnston	0
Prior c West b Botha	29
Collingwood c N O'Brien b West	9
Shah c N O'Brien b Cusack	21
Wright c Mooney b Johnston	36
Rashid c K O'Brien b Cusack	7
Swann b Botha	5
Bresnan not out	14
Sidebottom not out	5
Extras: (lb-3, w-7)	10
Total: (For 9 wickets in 50 overs)	203
Fall of wickets: 1-2, 2-6, 3-59, 4-92, 5-128, 6-135, 7-177, 8-183, 9-185.	

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Johnston	10	2	26	4
K O'Brien	6	1	22	0
Cusack	8	0	41	2
Botha	10	0	38	2
West	10	0	33	1
McCallan	6	0	40	0

IRELAND

Porterfield c Collingwood b Bresnan	4
O'Brien c Collingwood b Bresnan	12
Stirling c & b Rashid	30
Botha lbw b Swann	15
O'Brien lbw b Collingwood	4
Mooney st Prior b Shah	9
Johnston not out	21
White run out	1
West c Bresnan b Shah	0
Cusack b Shah	0
McCallan not out	5
Extras: (b-1, lb-8, w-3)	12
Total: (For 9 wickets in 50 overs)	113
Fall of wickets: 1-8, 2-25, 3-64, 4-66, 5-82, 6-86, 7-89, 8-93, 9-94.	

Result: England won by three runs (Ireland set revised target of 116 in 20 overs under D/L method after rain delay)

Fisichella dreams of Ferrari

AFP, Belgium

Italian veteran Giancarlo Fisichella admitted Thursday it would be "a dream come true" for him if he could race for Ferrari in next month's Italian Grand Prix at Monza.

The 36-year-old Force India driver has been heavily tipped to replace fellow-Italian veteran Luca Badoer in the Ferrari team at Monza following the 38-year-old test driver's ignominious struggles at last weekend's European Grand Prix.

Speaking on the eve of this weekend's Belgian Grand Prix, Fisichella said, however, that he has not received any contacts from Ferrari or any indirect approaches for him to switch teams.

Fan sells

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Wednesday outside the regional airport.

Dhoni has a tight security ring around him when travelling within the country, where top cricketers are treated like show business celebrities in India.

"(My fiancée) was very surprised when she heard about my accomplishment," Saini told PTI agency.

"Both of us are Dhoni fans but the degree of my liking is much more than hers, which prompted her to ask me to go for a test, and the rest you know," he added.

Animesh Kumar, a friend of the Dhoni, said: "We know that this man was staying in Ranchi for quite some time."

"He approached us to meet Dhoni. He fulfilled his dream of meeting Dhoni at the airport."

SL turn the screws

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wicket-keeper Prasanna Jayawardene.

Vettori and Jacob Oram added 43 for the eighth wicket to save their team from the follow-on when off-spinner Dilshan, replacing Muralidaran, struck with the fourth delivery.

Vettori, on 23, played tentatively forward and the ball went off the bat and pad to forward short-leg, where Chamara Kapugedera took the low catch at the second attempt.

Oram went soon after for 24 when he top-edged an ambitious reverse sweep off Herath for Kapugedera to take his second catch in the innings.

SCOREBOARD Scoreboard at stumps on the third day of the second Test between New Zealand and Sri Lanka at the Sinhalese Sports Club on Friday:

SRI LANKA: First innings 416 (Sangakkara 50, Jayawardene 92, Samaraweera 143; Patel 4-78, Vettori 3-104)

NEW ZEALAND: First innings (overnight 159-5) McIntosh lbw b Prasad 5

Guptill c Muralidaran b Thushara 35 Flynn c P Jayawardene b Thushara 13

Taylor c P Jayawardene b Herath 81 Ryder c Paranavilana b Herath 23

Patel c M Jayawardene b Muralidaran 1 McCullum c M Jayawardene b Muralidaran 18

Oram c Kapugedera b Herath 24 Vettori c Kapugedera b Dilshan 23

O'Brien lbw b Muralidaran 4 Martin not out 0

Extras: (lb-3, w-2, nb-2) 7

Total: (All out in 77.4 overs) 234

Fall of wickets: 1-14, 2-49, 3-63, 4-148, 5-149, 6-183, 7-183, 8-226, 9-234, 10-234.

Bowler O M R W

Dilshan 3 0 12 1

Thushara 9 2 37 2

Prasad 6 0 41 1

Herath	34	11	70	3
Muralidaran	25	4	71	3
SRI LANKA: Second innings				
Dilshan c Guptill b Patel	33			
Paranavilana c McCullum b Vettori	34			
Sangakkara not out	64			
M Jayawardene not out	23			
Extras: (w-1, nb-2)	3			
Total: (For 2 wickets in 45.2 overs)	157			
Fall of wickets: 1-56, 2-89.				
Bowler	O	M	R	W
Vettori	14	2	36	1
O'Brien	8	1	41	0
Martin	5	0	13	0
Patel	18	2	67	1

Pakistan

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would not be forced to beg around for money to keep our cricket on track," said Butt,

whose organisation is strapped for cash with no international cricket at home.

Pakistan incurred financial losses to the tune of 30 million dollars after India refused to send its team to Pakistan for a series in January-February this year.

India's refusal came in the wake of last year's attacks on its commercial hub Mumbai, which New Delhi blamed on militants based in Pakistan.

Butt accused India of vetoing Pakistan's request of hosting its World Cup matches on neutral venues, notably in the United Arab Emirates where Pakistan have recently played after teams refused to tour.

"Morgan and incoming ICC President Sharad Pawar had no problems in Pakistan hosting their matches at neutral venues, but the Indian Board refused to accept that," he said.

"England hosted some of the matches in Ireland and Scotland during the 1999 World Cup and when the World Cup was held in South Africa in 2003 some of the matches were held in Zimbabwe and Kenya. It could have happened again."