



PHOTO: AFP

THIS ONE IS SPECIAL: American Serena Williams holds aloft the Wimbledon women's singles trophy after defeating Russian Vera Zvonareva in the final at the All England Tennis Club in London yesterday.

Serena keeps her crown

AFP, London

Defending champion Serena Williams won her fourth women's singles title at Wimbledon with a crushing 6-3, 6-2 victory over Russian 21st seed Vera Zvonareva in the final on Saturday. Williams displayed all her trademark power and poise to overwhelm Zvonareva on Centre Court and clinch the 13th Grand Slam crown of her career. The 28-year-old's triumph means the Venus Rosewater Dish awarded to the women's champion was held aloft by a Williams for the ninth time in 11 years, sister Venus accounting for the others. Serena, who pocketed one million pounds (1.5 million dollars) in prize money, has been by far the most impressive performer in the women's event this year and is now just one Wimbledon title behind Venus. Not one of Serena's seven opponents here ever seriously threatened to upset her and it would be no surprise if the world number one was back to collect another title in 12

months time. Although Zvonareva was unable to make any impact in her first Grand Slam final, the Russian can at least take consolation from seeing her ranking rise into the top 10 in the world. Zvonareva, the second lowest ranked player ever to appear in the women's final, has been dogged by doubts about her temperament for years after crumbling under pressure in big matches. But the 25-year-old's talent has never been in doubt and she has been a more confident, mature player over the last fortnight. She knocked out three seeds on her way to the final, with fourth seed Jelena Jankovic and US Open champion Kim Clijsters among her scalps. Taking on Serena in a final was another matter entirely though. Serena's three previous titles here were all clinched with final victories over Venus, but her sister had suffered a quarterfinal exit against Tsvetana Pironkova this year. Watched by a cavalcade of former Wimbledon champions,

including Evonne Goolagong-Cawley, Billie Jean King, Martina Navratilova and Jana Novotna, Serena showed why she deserved to be mentioned in the same breath as the tournament's all-time greats. The top seed hadn't dropped a set en route to the final but even that impressive statistic paled in comparison to her record total of 80 aces. She increased that total on the second point of the match as she took the opening game to love. That was quite a statement of intent. Zvonareva made a brave effort to respond with some clever groundstrokes, but the pressure of facing such constant controlled aggression gradually began to reveal cracks in her game. After keeping Williams at bay for the first seven games, Zvonareva found it impossible to stem the tide any longer. Serena couldn't take her first break point in the fifth game. But she made no mistake when another came her way at 4-3 and drilled a forehand winner before celebrating the break on one knee. That gave Serena the chance to serve for the set and she did just that with ruthless efficiency. Zvonareva had competed well to that point but the prospect of coming from behind to win in three sets must have seemed like only the faintest of possibilities as she slumped in her chair at the break.

Abahani make it 7 out of 7

SPORTS REPORTER

Abahani took the top spot in the Green Delta Insurance Premier Hockey League after their 7-1 win over Ajax Sporting Club at the Maulana Bhasani Hockey Stadium yesterday. The Sky Blues' Pakistani recruit Sohel Abbas struck three goals while Puskar Khisa slammed two goals. Jamil Bin Talib and Hasan Jubair scored one goal each while Rubel Hossain of Ajax knocked in their consolation goal in the 68th minute. This was Abahani's seventh win out of as many encounters. In today's matches, Mohammedan Sporting Club take on Sonali Bank while Azad Sporting Club face Police AC.

Fakirerpool come from behind

SPORTS REPORTER

Youngmen's Fakirerpool Club beat Badda Jagarani in the lone match of the Basundhara Senior Division Football League at the Birshreshtha Sepoy Mustafa Kamal stadium yesterday. But it was the Badda outfit who opened the scoring in the 30th minute through Milon and held the lead till the break. But it all changed when Piru made it 1-1 at the hour mark before Khadiul gave Fakirerpool the advantage in the 76th minute.

Tigers in disarray

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh got off to a really bad start to their one-day tour with a terrible performance against Sussex yesterday. The Tigers went down by a whopping 149 runs at the county ground in Hove after Sussex made 253 from 47.5 overs. Rokibul Hasan made 23 while Jahurul Islam, opening with Tamim Iqbal, made 19. For the home side, James Anyon and England discard Monty Panesar took three wickets each. When the Tigers bowled, captain Mashrafe Bin Mortaza, Shaiful Islam, Abdur Razzak and Rubel Hossain took two wickets each. Ben Brown made 58 for Sussex while Michael Thornely struck 56. William Adkin, one of four List A debutants for the southern county side, made 30.

What to WATCH

STAR Sports & SuperSport2

Wimbledon Championships
Men's Final
Live from 6:00pm

A tale of two halves & a gift from Ghana

QUAZI ZULQUARNAIN ISLAM

Questions of morality compounded Luis Suarez, questions of hopelessness compounded Asamoah Gyan, questions of glory itched at Wesley Sneijder and questions of what-if's hounded Felipe Melo. The biggest day of the World Cup so far saw events big enough to match the tag, as heavyweights Brazil crashed out in the quarterfinals for the second tournament running. In the end Dunga's Brazil delivered neither style nor substance. It was a pitiful end to a tactical revolution that had seen the Selecao totally reinvent their fabled style of joga bonito. Worse still was that it ended to a team is also trying to reinvent its image. The Dutch have long been the high priests of beautiful football, but under Bert van Marwijk they have cultivated a much more cynical style of play. Gone are the exorbitant waves of Oranje, this is a more subdued and tactical Netherlands.

But there was no clue of things to come at the start. Brazil came out all guns blazing and played the Dutch off the park in the first-half. Wonderful combination moves, an impetuous Robinho and an absolutely unstoppable Maicon proceeded to reduce the Oranje to shades of grey. But football as they say, is a game of two halves. Slight tactical tweaks from Marwijk and a little bit of luck later, it was Brazil chasing the game and shadows for much of the second half. Sneijder was excellent. He set up the first goal and scored the second. Robben arguably was even more important. He terrorized Michel Bastos all afternoon and drew dangerous fouls all through the game. And importantly, he got Felipe Melo sent off. Two things cost Brazil. Discipline and defending set-pieces. The former was a problem in giving away too many free-kicks, and more obviously in Melo's red card. The latter, a hallmark of the 'unBrazilian' thing Dunga's Brazil supposedly did well,

was crucial. And if you concede goals, end up trailing, and play a style of football like this, it's not easy to get back into the game. Brazil's lack of flair has been criticized before the tournament, and will doubtless be criticized after this defeat. We have seen, however, some wonderful moves from Brazil earlier on in this competition the problem is that their attacking flair relies on defense. Brazil's demise was undoubtedly the biggest story of the day, but if anything can match the fall of a giant, it is the drama that unfolded in the 120th minute of the Ghana, Uruguay quarterfinal. Diego Forlan's fantastic free-kick meant that both

sides went into extra-time level at 1-1. But roared on by a partisan crowd and much younger legs, Ghana continued to edge the game as Uruguay held on by the skins of their teeth. But then drama struck. Defending a late corner, Stephen Appiah directed a goalbound header. Luis Suarez, struck out his arm and nonchalantly punched the ball on the line. The only trouble was that he is a striker. Sent off and a penalty to Ghana. Africa held its collective breath but with literally the last kick of the game, Gyan Asamoah plundered his penalty against the bar. After that, defeat was almost inevitable and it came courtesy of Sebastian Abreu's glorious chip in the shoot-out. But the question on everybody's lips was the actions of Suarez. Hero or villain? For this part, the Uruguayan's conscience was clear. And he even had the cheek to state the obvious. "The Hand of God is mine now," said Suarez. The whole of Africa would concur.



Maradona to consider future

AFP, Cape Town

Diego Maradona admitted Saturday he was devastated to be out of the World Cup and indicated that he may quit as Argentina coach, but said that he needed time to think about his future. The former midfield maestro was so dejected after seeing his team crushed 4-0 by Germany in the World Cup quarterfinals that he said in his post-match press-conference that "I may leave tomorrow". Pushed on whether he was quitting, Maradona appeared to backtrack. "We will see what happens. I haven't thought about leaving, I have to check with my family, with the players. There are a number of things I have to consider," said the 49-year-old. Maradona, who retired from playing on

his 37th birthday in 1997, was appointed coach in November 2008 after overcoming cocaine addiction despite having little previous managerial experience. He said the Argentine dressing room was sombre after the Germany game and thanked his players several times for their efforts in South Africa. "In the dressing room I thanked them. I did not talk about the future because this not the moment to do so," he said. "I believe that the best one can do right now with them is to thank them for all the days we spent together. They behaved as true professionals." While Maradona was clearly upset at losing, it was the size of the defeat that was the real surprise. Few expected Germany to take them apart as they did, with Argentina coming into the match having won all their group games

and the round of 16 clash against Mexico. Maradona suggested that the scoreline did not tell the real story, despite Germany controlling the game. "We studied Germany well and defined exactly who was playing where but from the first cross they got a goal and suddenly it was a different match," said Maradona of Thomas Muller's opening goal in the third minute. "We made it easy for them. They had more ideas and better control of the ball. They took advantage of the opportunities they had. "But this does not take away from my belief that the result does not correspond with what happened on the pitch. "Germany won 4-0 and I don't want to justify anything. You have matches that turn out this way and others that turn out another way."

Nadal ready for it

Final against Berdych today

AFP, London

Rafael Nadal believes a conversation with David Beckham has provided him with the perfect inspiration ahead of his Wimbledon final showdown with Tomas Berdych on Sunday. Nadal had only just finished his ruthless three-set victory over Andy Murray in Friday's semifinal when he was asked if he wanted to meet former England captain Beckham, who watched with his son Brooklyn as the world number one produced a masterclass on Centre Court. While Nadal was drained following his efforts against Murray, the chance to spend a few minutes with Beckham was too good to turn down. The Spaniard is a big fan of Real Madrid and grew to admire Beckham's ferocious work-ethic during the England midfielder's time at the La Liga club. Beckham's refusal to accept that any cause is lost on the pitch struck a chord with Nadal, who adopts the same approach whenever he steps onto a tennis court. "I know him from Madrid few years ago and it is always special meet with great sportsmen like David," Nadal said. "He's a big star outside of the stadium. But for me, what I admire a lot about him is when he's on the pitch, he fights like the best of them and even more than the rest." Nadal will need a Beckham-style lung-

busting effort to subdue the powerful Berdych, who has clinched a surprise final place with hugely impressive victories over Roger Federer and Novak Djokovic. After a gruelling clay-court season culminated in victory at the French Open, Nadal had only 48 hours to rest before travelling to London to begin his preparations for the grass-court season and now, a month later, the strain is starting to tell on his body. He has been suffering with knee problems for much of the Championships and admits he can't guarantee the injury won't flare up again in the final. "I didn't have any problem for the last three matches but it can be there in one moment and I don't have the control of this," he said. "This pain sometimes appears there. I don't know when it starts and when it stops." It is hardly surprising that Nadal has been ready to play through the pain barrier at the All England Club this year. Just 12 months ago he was unable to defend the title he won here in 2008 due to knee tendinitis, but now he stands on the brink of winning the French Open and Wimbledon in the same year for the second time. It would be a remarkable achievement for a player written off when he failed to win a tournament for several months after his return from that knee injury. Nadal might have been expecting to resume his rivalry with Federer in the

final, but Berdych ensured that wouldn't happen with a stunning quarterfinal victory over the defending champion. Berdych proved that was no fluke by dispatching world number three Djokovic in three sets in the semifinal to reach his first grand slam final. For so long an underachiever on the men's tour, Berdych has suddenly blossomed in the last month. He reached the French Open semifinals before his epic run at Wimbledon and Nadal is well aware of the threat posed by the 6ft 5in Czech. "He did amazing tournament," Nadal said. "He is a very aggressive player with a very good serve. "No opponent can be more difficult than Tomas to play in this final." Berdych, 24, has the perfect game for grass. Now he has the confidence to back up his talent and is determined to seize his big chance against Nadal. "It would be bad if I say I'm fear anybody," Berdych said. "I'm playing well, feeling great and I hope I have some energy still left there for the last one." While Nadal is a blur of energy on court, Berdych is a far more undemonstrative character and that laidback attitude will ensure he doesn't lose any sleep fretting over the task in front of him. "The best thing I like before a match is to have a good sleep. I will enjoy that and get really relaxed," he said. "My energy is getting lower and I think sleep is the best thing to get it back a little bit."

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

1 English channel? **34** Hot-dog holder **35** Sprite **4** 50 percent **8** First victim **12** Grazing site **13** Culture medium **14** Corduroy ridge **15** Scull tool **16** Assessment **17** Skedad-dle **18** Deeply wounded **21** Micro-brewery product **22** N.J. neighbor **23** Duel tool **26** Deity **27** Suitable **30** Proof-reader's find **31** Muppeteer Henson **32** Bread spread **33** Nevertheless

DOWN

1 United nations **2** Suitor **3** Wagon **4** Author Robbins **5** Marble type **6** Thin wood strip **7** License **8** Horrible **9** Island near Java **10** A util. **11** Welsh vegetable symbol **19** Poi base **20** Proof abbr. **23** Pigs' digs **24** Zee **25** Make up your mind **26** Card player's call **27** Foreman fighter **28** Apiece **29** Plaything **31** Righteousness **32** Inauguration **34** Greet the villain **35** False front **36** Lieu **37** Celebrations **38** Get by **39** Unattractive **40** Genealogy chart **41** Session with a shrink **42** Mochre **43** Mediocre **44** Physical

Solution time: 27 mins.

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CRYPTOQUIP

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