



Serena Williams is upset after her loss to Ekaterina Makarova in their fourth round match of the Australian Open in Melbourne yesterday.

Serena sent packing

Numbers told the surprising story for Serena Williams in her fourth-round loss at the Australian Open on Monday.

Seven double-faults, including four in one game; 37 unforced errors, and a first-serve percentage of just over 50 per cent that had her convinced "maybe I should have started serving lefty."

Some other numbers indicated why her 6-2, 6-3 loss to Russia's Ekaterina Makarova on what she admitted was a still-sore left ankle was more of a shock, particularly at this stage of the year's first major.

She has played 43 singles matches at Melbourne Park since she won the first of her five Australian Open titles in 2003, and Monday's loss was just her third. She's 54-7 since playing here for the first time in 1998, and she hasn't gone out this early here since 2006.

"I'm not physically 100 per cent, so I can't be so angry at myself, even though I'm very unhappy," Williams said. "I know that I can play a hundred times better than I did this whole tournament."

Without Williams, who injured her left ankle in Brisbane two weeks ago, the only major winners still in contention were Maria Sharapova, defending champion Kim Clijsters and Wimbledon winner Petra Kvitova.

Sharapova earned the right to play Makarova in the quarterfinal when she beat Germany's Sabine Lisicki 3-6, 6-2, 6-3 in a night match. The 2008 champion blew a 3-0 lead in the opening set, needed three set points to win the second and advanced on her second match point despite making 47 unforced errors and eight double-faults.

"A lot of ups and downs today --

fortunately I finished on a high note," she said. "Even though I didn't play my best tennis I fought to the end and sometimes that's what gets you through."

Top-seeded Caroline Wozniacki, still in search of her first Grand Slam title, played Clijsters in a quarterfinal on Tuesday. The Belgian advanced to the quarterfinals with a comeback win over Li Na on Sunday in a rematch of the 2011 decider, while Kvitova had some trouble late before beating former top-ranked Ana Ivanovic 6-2, 7-6 (2) Monday.

Kvitova will next play Sara Errani of Italy, who beat 2008 semifinalist Zheng Jie 6-2, 6-1.

Defending men's champion Novak Djokovic will try to advance to the quarterfinals and keep alive his chance of winning his third straight Grand Slam when he plays Lleyton Hewitt in Rod Laver Arena after the Lisicki-Sharapova match. The Djokovic-Hewitt winner will play fifth-seeded David Ferrer, a 6-4, 6-4, 6-1 winner over Richard Gasquet, in the quarterfinals.

Earlier, two-time runner-up Andy Murray was leading 6-1, 6-1, 1-0 when Mikhail Kukushkin retired from their fourth-round match with a left hip injury, giving Murray an easy path into the quarters.

"It's obviously good for me, I get to conserve some energy," Murray said. "Tough for him, first time in the fourth-round of a Slam."

Murray will next play Kei Nishikori, who had a 2-6, 6-2, 6-1, 3-6, 6-3 win over sixth-seeded Jo-Wilfried Tsonga, the 2008 finalist.

The 22-year-old Nishikori became the first Japanese man in the last eight at the Australian Open in 80 years, and only the second man from his country to reach a Grand Slam quarterfinal since the Open Era started in 1968. Shuzo Matsuoka reached the 1995 Wimbledon quarterfinals.

"Is feeling unbelievable. My first quarterfinal and beating Tsonga, makes me really happy," Nishikori said. "I hope it's big in Japan. A lot of people messaged me a couple of days ago about the round of 16 and now the quarterfinals. It's really exciting."

Makarova, a 23-year-old Russian left-hander, was equally thrilled about her win over Williams. And considering she'd lost in the first round of the last six tournaments she'd played, in awe over who she beat.

"Yeah, I'm surprised because she's a great player and it's really tough to play against her. But, I don't know, I just feeling so good and so focus. So I played my game, and that's it. I won against Serena. That's amazing."

Makarova overcame plenty of Williams crowd support, many of whom weren't that familiar with the Russian. Oracene Price, Williams's mother, was in the players' box with her sunglasses on and a wide-brimmed hat.

In the fourth game of the second set with Makarova serving, Williams netted an easy forehand return. She made an angry sound, and there was a bit of laughter in the crowd. Price just turned away, shaking her head.

After Williams's fourth double-fault in the fifth game of the second set, which gave Makarova the game and a 3-2 lead -- Williams shouted "Oh my god." She looked ready to smash her racket, but in the end bounced it on the court and caught it on the rebound.

The 13-time Grand Slam winner had only played two competitive matches since losing the US Open final to Sam Stosur in September, and her light preparation was curtailed when she badly twisted her ankle as she won her second-round match at Brisbane earlier this month.

For that reason, Williams wasn't about to beat herself up over Monday's loss.

Good day for Sania

PTI, Melbourne

Sania Mirza had a productive day at the Australian Open on Monday as the Indian ace reached the quarterfinals of both the women's doubles and the mixed doubles events with Elena Vesnina and Mahesh Bhupathi respectively.

Sania and Bhupathi, the 2009 mixed doubles champions, came from behind to beat Czech Iveta Benesova and Austria's Jurgen Melzer 3-6, 6-4, 12-10 in the second-round match.

Fed Cup gets new

FROM PAGE 16 Muktijoddha twice, they are definitely a strong side and I think the final will be a game any side can win. The team making the least mistakes will come out as the winner," said Titu.

Sheikh Jamal will be handicapped by the suspension of their top-scorer Nigerian Assogba Allen (4 goals) especially since they have found goals hard to come by this season scoring

Mashrafe

FROM PAGE 16 will be his first game after the game against Australia in April 13 last year. Mashrafe took 3-80 from nine overs in that outing at the same venue.

only seven in total. They will also be without defender Raihan Hossain who could have played an important role in curbing BJMC's potent offence; one that has scored 14 goals in seven games.

Talha out of Eng series

AFP, Abu Dhabi

Pakistan's fast rising pace-man Mohammad Talha was Monday ruled out of the remaining two Tests against England after developing spinal disc problems.

U-19s take

FROM PAGE 16 fell in the 40th over, caught behind off paceman Naeem Islam Jr, the chase fell apart due to the high asking run-rate at that stage.

Pacer Dewan Sabbir picked up two wickets while Naeem, Asif and Mosaddek Hossain took one each.

The third match of the series will be held today.

Local snippets

FROM PAGE 16 upazilas to move into the district phase of the National School Football Islami Bank tournament yesterday.

England looking for a way out of Aj-maul

Cricket

AFP, Abu Dhabi

England need a quick solution to their frailties against off-spinner Saeed Ajmal when they face Pakistan in the second Test at the Abu Dhabi Stadium starting on Wednesday.

Andrew Strauss's men, who are in danger of losing their first Test series after being unbeaten in the last nine, were mauled by the 34-year-old spinner in the first match in Dubai, where they lost by 10 wickets inside three days.

Ajmal took a career-best 7-55 to demolish England for 192 in the first innings, before half-centuries from Mohammad Hafeez, Taufiq Umar, Adnan Akmal and Misbah-ul Haq gave Pakistan a lead of 146.

Paceman Umar Gul, who took four early wickets, then combined with Ajmal and left-arm spinner Abdul Rehman to wreck England a second time for 160 before the openers knocked off the 15 runs needed to go one up in the three-Test series.

England can take solace from the

fact that Abu Dhabi's pitch offers very slow turn and both the Tests played here ended in draws, the latest in October last year when Pakistan let off Sri Lanka by dropping seven second innings catches.

Despite the slowness of the pitch, Ajmal will again be a big threat but the England skipper was confident his players could stage a fightback.

"I don't think it is a huge challenge, there will be a huge feeling that we haven't given a good account of ourselves and that will be a good motivation for us to come back stronger," said Strauss, whose England side last lost a Test series 2009, in the West Indies.

The double capitulation in Dubai prompted questions about the tourists' approach to Ajmal, and Strauss admitted his batsmen had made mistakes against the spinner.

"I think couple of us contributed and allowed him to put even more pressure on the batsmen coming in the first innings. The ball wasn't turning a huge amount," he said of the Dubai pitch where England's Graeme Swann managed 4-107.

England, currently the number one

ranked side in the world, have not lost two Tests in a row since 2008 and Strauss said the team was determined to bounce back in Abu Dhabi.

Left-arm spinner Monty Panesar missed out in Dubai, and England look likely to go with the same combination in Abu Dhabi of three pacemen and lone spinner Swann.

Pakistan may consider replacing batsman Asad Shafiq with the more aggressive Umar Akmal.

Pakistan captain Misbahul Haq played down a row around Ajmal's bowling action, triggered by former England paceman Bob Willis. Ajmal's action was reported in 2009 before it was cleared by the International Cricket Council (ICC).

"He is cleared by the ICC and he is now playing for almost four-five years in international cricket," said Misbah, whose side are the "home" team in the series, which is being played in the United Arab Emirates over security fears in Pakistan.

The third and final Test will be played in Dubai from February 3-7. The Tests will be followed by four one-day and three Twenty20 internationals.

Jayawardene replaces Dilshan

CRICINFO, Colombo

Hours after Tillakaratne Dilshan resigned as Sri Lanka captain, the country's new selection panel appointed former captain Mahela Jayawardene in his place to lead the ODI squad to Australia for the tri-series in February involving the hosts and India. Angelo Mathews was named vice-captain of the 15-member squad which also included Dilshan.

Farveez Maharoor, the bowling all-rounder, and Chanaka Welegedara, the fast bowler, were recalled after having last played an ODI for Sri Lanka back in June 2010. The duo was the only changes from the squad for the recent ODI series in South Africa, in place of Kosala Kulasekara and Dilhara Fernando. Thilan Samaraweera, who was ignored for the South Africa ODIs, was put on stand-by.

SQUAD
Mahela Jayawardene (captain), Angelo Mathews, Upul Tharanga, Tillakaratne Dilshan, Kumar Sangakkara, Dinesh Chandimal, Lahiru Thirimanne, Thisara Perera, Farveez Maharoor, Rangana Herath, Sachithra Senanayake, Lasith Malinga, Nuwan Kulasekera, Chanaka Welegedara, Dhammika Prasad.

Turning to 100th walk

Cricket

AFP, Abu Dhabi

Alastair Cook is hoping he and opening partner Andrew Strauss will provide England with a good platform when they walk for a 100th time together in the second Test against Pakistan starting here from Wednesday.

Cook and Strauss will become the fourth opening pair to complete 100 or more innings together in all Tests -- behind West Indian Gordon Greenidge and Desmond Haynes, Sri Lanka's Marvan Atapattu and Sanath Jayasuriya and Australia's Matthew Hayden and Justin Langer.

But Cook and Strauss face a huge challenge from Pakistan bowlers who restricted them to stands of ten and six during their ten wicket annihilation in the first Test in Dubai last week. Pakistan lead the three-Test series 1-0.

Strauss fell to off-spinner Saeed Ajmal for 19 and Cook was dismissed by Mohammad Hafeez for three in the first innings while paceman Umar Gul accounted for England openers in the second innings. Strauss made six and Cook five.

Cook said openers failed to provide the kind of beginning the pair are used to giving in the past.

"It's a great thing to work now, I didn't know that it's our 100th time," Cook said on Monday as England prepare to avoid their first series defeat since going down 1-0 to the West Indies in the Caribbean in 2009.

"He's got a great record and proved that over a number of years, it's our job with top of the order to lay out the platform, we didn't do that in Dubai and that's why we didn't get good totals," said Cook of England's low scores of 192 and 160.

"It's always nice to our stability with Strauss at the top of order. We have had some great moments. We are pretty similar in character and we do enjoy batting together and hopefully on the 100th time we will do something special," said Cook.

Cook, who hit a century in England's two wins in their lead-up games to the series, blamed poor shot selection by the batsmen.

"We made some poor decision making, to score runs you have to make good decisions for long periods of time, we didn't do that," said Cook whose average for the opening wicket with Strauss is 42.90.

"It was just a poor performance. The challenge for us now is to put that right, and hopefully we can do that in the second Test," said Cook, whose team has not lost two Tests in a row since South Africa did that in England in July 2008.

Cook said England have bounced back in the past after losing the first match.

"Of course, when you lose and you lose heavily, naturally it does dent confidence, but if you look up history, when we have produced a poor performance we've managed to bounce back well, hopefully we can do it this time.

"You don't become bad players and a bad team overnight, whatever you read or whatever people say about you. We know we have some world class players in the team, it's about delivering over the next five days," said Cook.

Imrul dazzles

FROM PAGE 16 added 43 off 36 deliveries with the help of four boundaries and a six.

England Lions required 31 runs off the last two over but Alauddin Babu kept his cool, despite conceding two boundaries in the first two balls, to give ten runs in the penultimate over and then left-arm spinner Sohrwardi Shuvo completed the job in the final over.

Imrul Kayes was adjudged man of the match. "I had the confidence in myself and as I said I needed only one good innings to get back my form. It was really a bad experience for me as I had to toil to get a premier division team and it might have also helped me to try my best," said Imrul.

CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS	36 Levin and Gershwin	3 Goof up	22 One of HOMES
1 Perjured oneself	37 Verses	4 Remove a stripe, maybe	23 Reach a peak
5 Start from scratch	38 Huge mistake	5 Hindu royal	24 Carson's predecessor
9 Craze	40 Hawaiian island	6 Greek vowels	26 Corn castoffs
12 Farm fraction	42 Literary collection	7 Web address component	27 Rhyming tribute
13 Fermi's tidbit	43 End	8 Brunch entrees	28 Latch (onto)
14 Salt Lake athlete	48 Performance	9 De-nounce	29 Stitches
15 Sprout	49 Therefore	10 On	31 "Are You — Than a 5th Grader?"
17 De-pressed	50 Two-way	11 Moist in the morn	34 Before
18 Elevator name	51 Witness	16 Where — at	35 Noises
19 Uncomfortable, as a mattress	52 Beams of sunlight	20 Spoon-bender Geller	37 — Beta Kappa
21 Denominations	53 Read cursorily	21 Celebrity	38 Sheepish remarks?
24 "Frasier" actress Gilpin			39 Formerly
25 Verifiable			40 Group revelry
26 Light snowfalls			41 Andy's pal, on old radio
30 Have a bug			44 Historic time
31 Pops			45 Arctic diving bird
32 Hearty brew			46 Mai — (cocktail)
33 Bring to mind			47 Shade provider
35 Pack cargo			

Solution time: 21 mins.

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CRYPTOQUIP

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W C R W E E H O L E K H V V G M N
F K G J Q Z V D V D E G K O . P V ' O
Q I I V K N G S Z E T G Q K R F K E T C S Z O .
Yesterday's Cryptoquip: WHAT IS THE BRAND NAME OF A BREAKFAST CEREAL WHOSE ADS CLAIM TO MAKE PEOPLE SMART? ALL-BRAIN.
Today's Cryptoquip Clue: P equals H