



Serena seeks equality

AFP, London

Top seed and defending champion Serena Williams breezed into the Wimbledon fourth round but vowed to keep fighting for equal rights under the bright lights of the All England Club.

World number one she may be, but the 31-year-old American was slated as the last match on Court One on Saturday.

With two marathon men's matches before her, she saw her third round clash with 42-year-old Kimiko Date-Krumm suddenly shifted to Centre Court under the roof and the lights.

Her match did not start until around 1930GMT much to her annoyance.

"Well, it's their policy. I've talked about that time and time again, how I'm always fighting for the ladies," said Williams.

"Maybe one day we'll get two matches and the men will get one match, and maybe they'll be able to switch back and forth hopefully."

"But it's definitely something we have to still work on."

Williams was reluctant to get into a slugging match with All England Club schedulers despite her status as a five-time champion and 16-time Grand Slam singles trophy winner. "I was a little surprised that I was playing third on after two men. But I wasn't annoyed. I'm able to deal with any circumstance," she said.

Her 6-2, 6-0 win over Date-Krumm gave her a Monday match-up with German 23rd seed Sabine Lisicki for a place in the quarter-finals.

Novak timing it right

AFP, London

Novak Djokovic believes he is peaking at just the right time as the world number one prepares to step up his bid for a second Wimbledon title.

Djokovic took the express route into the fourth round on Saturday as the world number one thrashed French 28th seed Jeremy Chardy 6-3, 6-2, 6-2.

The Serb, who faces German 13th seed Tommy Haas for a place in the quarter-finals, played a flawless first two sets without a single unforced error, and eventually hit 38 winners and served eight aces in one hour and 26 minutes of total dominance on Centre Court.

While several of Djokovic's title rivals, including Rafael Nadal and Roger Federer, have fallen foul of the shock defeats and injury withdrawals that have rocked Wimbledon, the 26-year-old has progressed serenely into the last 16 without dropping a set.

"My results are getting better and better, so this is very encouraging going into the second week," Djokovic said.

"Now every match I'm going to play, every opponent I'm going to face is going to be more difficult. I'm going to expect a tough challenge in front of me. I'm ready for it."

"It was a fantastic match (against Chardy). I felt great from the start till the end. I had that super focus."

"I saw the stats that I won 100 percent of first serves. That was incredible for me. I'm striking the ball really well. Hopefully I can maintain that rhythm for the next opponent."

While Florian Mayer, Bobby Reynolds and Chardy have been contemptuously swatted aside by Djokovic, he acknowledges Haas is likely to provide far more resistance.



Italy captain and goalkeeper Gianluigi Buffon stops the shot taken by Uruguay forward Diego Forlan (not in picture) during the penalty shoot-out in their Confederations Cup third-place decider at the Fonte Nova Arena in Salvador yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

Buffon saves 3 as Italy finish 3rd

AFP, Salvador de Bahia

Italy took third place at the Confederations Cup on Sunday after beating Uruguay 3-2 on penalties, the pair having been locked at 2-2 following extra time in Salvador.

Although the eyes of 200 million Brazilians were fixed on an evening final between the hosts and world champions Spain, Italian and Uruguayan fans converged on the northern city for the bronze medal which Italy carried off after skipper Gianluigi Buffon saved spot-kicks from Diego Forlan, Martin Caceres and Walter Gargano.

Despite the early afternoon heat both sides turned in an entertaining contest as the Italians, edged out in the semifinals by Spain - also on penalties - came past rivals who had bowed to the Brazilians in their semi.

Alessandro Diamanti looked to have won the game in normal time at the Arena Fonte Nova when he swept in a curling free-kick just inside Uruguay keeper Fernando Muslera's left-hand post in the 73rd minute.

But Edinson Cavani crashed in a stunning free-kick of his own with 12 minutes remaining of normal time to level at 2-2 as the South Americans fought to end a poor run of six losses in seven bronze medal matches at World Cup, Copa America and Confederations Cup tournaments.

The extra half hour could not separate the sides and so the 12-yard test decided the contest.

Forlan -- who also missed in the semi against Brazil -- fluffed the first kick and



though Cavani and Luis Suarez netted it was not enough as Alberto Aquilani, Stephan El Shaarawy and Emanuele Giaccherini found the net.

In a contest between countries who shared out the first four World Cups Italy, who have since netted two more, drew first blood on 24 minutes when Davide Astori poked in from point blank range after Muslera had deflected another dangerous Diamanti free-kick onto the woodwork.

But Uruguay were level just before the hour mark with a neat Cavani strike on the run, the Napoli forward stroking a left-footer low past Buffon.

Cavani had already by that stage seen a firm header chalked off for offside.

Italy coach Cesare Prandelli, having lost

striker Mario Balotelli to injury earlier in the tournament, was able to field Alberto Gilardino despite his picking up a knock against Spain, the Bologna man starting in a two-pronged attack alongside exciting Milan star El Shaarawy.

Uruguay, who led their series with the Azzurri 3-2 with three draws coming into Sunday's game, are struggling to find their form in Latin American qualifying for next year's World Cup, though they had managed to recapture some at this event.

In the final half hour, Muslera denied Aquilani before the Italians suffered a blow in the 110th minute with a second yellow card for Riccardo Montolivo.

Uruguay forced the pace in the closing minutes, Cavani twice and Suarez firing off target and Buffon saved bravely from Inter Milan midfielder Gargano as the clock ran down on the extra half hour to force the spot-kick denouement.

Record viewers

REUTERS, Rio de Janeiro

Television audiences around the world have been watching the Confederations Cup in record numbers this month despite anti-government protests which has formed a violent background to the competition, FIFA said on Saturday.

With two matches to play, the tournament has also produced a record number of goals, mainly because of the participation of amateur Oceania champions Tahiti, while attendances are already the second highest since the competition began as a four-team tournament in 1992.

Although the complete figures will not be known until after the final between world champions Spain and World Cup hosts Brazil and the third-

place playoff between Italy and Uruguay, this week's semifinals both set viewing records.

Wednesday's semifinal between Brazil and Uruguay drew an audience of more than 53.5 million across nine global TV markets according to figures released by the world governing body on Saturday, a record for the tournament.

Spain's penalty shootout win over Italy in Thursday's semifinal drew the biggest Italian television audience for a sporting event since Spain beat Italy in last year's European Championship final.

According to FIFA an average of 12.5 million watched Rai Uno's coverage, higher than the figures for the World Cup semifinals in 2010 and the third most popular programme on Italian TV this year.

It was also the third biggest audience in Spain for a sports programme

this year with 10.4 million watching on Telecino with record figures recorded for both Germany and England, whose teams are not competing.

In all 31.2 million Brazilians watched the semi against Uruguay on TV Globo (29.7 million) and Bandeirantes TV (1.5 million) with a higher viewership expected for Sunday's final.

With two matches to play, 61 goals have been scored, five more than the previous record of 56 in Germany in 2005. However, 24 of them were scored against Tahiti with Nigeria putting six past them, Uruguay eight and Spain 10.

The attendances for the 14 matches so far stand at 687,746 with an average of just over 49,100 a match, second only to the record high of 970,000 at Mexico in 1999 which produced average attendances of 60,625.

Neymar-struck

Internet



Neymarmania has reached new heights as the mere sight of the 21-year-old is making fans pass out from overexcitement outside Brazil's hotel.

Neymar has surpassed the impossibly high expectations for him at the Confederations Cup -- scoring in all three of Brazil's group-stage matches and setting up both goals in their semifinal win against Uruguay to earn a place on the Golden Ball shortlist.

And with that success, the squeals of fans young and old have only gotten louder. At least, from those who can maintain consciousness upon seeing him in person.

When Brazil arrived back at their hotel after training Friday night, a now customary pack of young girls were waiting for them outside. Globoesporte picks up the story from there:

The biggest problem was when Neymar got off the bus. Upon hearing his name, the ace turned, waved to the teenager and entered the hotel. The girl could not stand the excitement and fainted.

This wasn't just a bit of acting like what Neymar himself did against Uruguay. The girl was hyperventilating and down for the count and had to be carried away.



Mercedes' German driver Nico Rosberg (C) celebrates his British F1 Grand Prix victory on the podium at the Silverstone circuit in Silverstone yesterday

PHOTO: AFP

Rosberg wins thriller

AFP, Silverstone



Nico Rosberg survived great late pressure to claim his second win of the season in Sunday's thrilling and dramatic British Grand Prix.

It was the Mercedes team's first victory in Britain since Stirling Moss won in 1955 and Rosberg's second in three races and third of his career and came just three days after he celebrated his 28th birthday.

But the race was overshadowed by a dangerous spate of Pirelli tyre failures, including one that blew home hero Briton Lewis Hamilton's hopes of a home win in the other Mercedes car as he led from pole position.

However, the 2008 world champion produced a remarkable drive to storm from last place - which is where he was when he resumed his race - to finish fourth.

In all, four drivers were hit by tyre blow-outs while championship leading defending triple world champion German Sebastian Vettel was forced to retire his Red

Bull for the first time this year after inheriting the lead.

Hamilton's tyre explosion was followed by others for Brazilian Felipe Massa of Ferrari, Frenchman Jean-Eric Vergne of Toro Rosso and Mexican Sergio Perez of McLaren in a contest that saw two Safety Car interventions.

Australian Mark Webber, who fell to 15th on the opening lap, fought back to finish second for Red Bull ahead of Spain's two-time champion Fernando Alonso in the second Ferrari.

Rosberg, who won earlier in the season in Monaco, said that it was a wonderful moment for him to win a race his father former world champion Keke never won.

"This is a very special day for our team in our home race," he said.

"We are progressing all the time so it's a very special day for me and the team today."

Webber, who had won this race twice, marked his last race at the track before leaving F1 at the end of the season, said he felt happy but also frustrated at just falling short.

Arsenal in chase for Cesar

THE GUARDIAN

Arsenal are to compete with Roma and Fiorentina for the Brazil goalkeeper Julio Cesar, with Queens Park Rangers braced to receive a formal bid for his services in the coming week following the conclusion of the Confederations Cup.

QPR have made no secret that the 33-year-old is effectively available despite his fine form during a traumatic campaign that culminated in relegation from the top flight.

There is a desire at Loftus Road to shift the Brazilian's £70,000-a-week salary from the wage bill and they would only anticipate generating a fee of around £1.5m for a player who joined from Internazionale last summer.

Arsene Wenger is keen to secure an experienced goalkeeper to compete with Wojciech Szczesny and has considered testing Liverpool's resolve to retain Pepe Reina after the arrival of Simon Mignolet. But Julio Cesar, impressive in his only season at QPR and scouted by his prospective employers over the last two weeks, has indicated a desire to remain in London next term and, despite interest from the Italian clubs, his representatives expect to resume talks with Arsenal once his international commitments are complete.

He would be joined in London by Gonzalo Higuain, whose £22m move from Real Madrid should be concluded over the next few days after the Spaniards' new manager, Carlo Ancelotti, sanctioned the transfer.

Six Devils indoor champs

SPORTS REPORTER

The first indoor cricket tournament of Presidency University concluded yesterday with Six Devils emerging champions and team Dream Factory finishing as runners-up. The Six Devils beat Dream Factory by 30 runs in the final held at the Gulshan campus of the university.

Shawon of Civil Engineering Department became man of the match in the final while Gilbert of School of Business became man of the tournament.

Former national cricketer Javed Omar Belim witnessed the final as chief guest and handed over prizes to the champions and runners up teams.