

What to WATCH

DAY'S EVENT

STAR Sports1  
Australia v England  
Fourth ODI  
Live from 9:20am  
STAR Sports 4  
Australian Open

Semifinal  
Live from 10:30am  
FA Cup  
Arsenal v Coventry  
Live from 1:45am (Saturday)  
STAR Sports HD1

Primera Liga  
Celta de Vigo v Real Betis  
Live from 2:00am (Saturday)  
NEO Prime  
Bundesliga  
Borussia M'gladbach v Bayern Munich

Premier League  
Ctg Abahani v Soccer Club, Feni

Time: 3:30pm  
Uttar Baridhara v Brothers Union

Time: 5:30pm  
Venue: BNS

# Wawrinka in dreamland

AFP, Melbourne



Switzerland's Stanislas Wawrinka reached his first Grand Slam final after edging out Tomas Berdych in four tight sets at the Australian Open on Thursday.

The eighth seed beat the Czech 6-3, 6-7 (1/7), 7-6 (7/3), 7-6 (7/4) in three hours 31 minutes and will play either Rafael Nadal or fellow Swiss Roger Federer in Sunday's final.

Wawrinka, who upset three-time defending champion Novak Djokovic in the quarterfinals, supplants Federer as the Swiss number one by making the final. Federer has held the top Swiss ranking since 2001.

"I'm speechless, it's amazing. I am so happy to win that match to make my first final here," Wawrinka said.

"I am working every day to try and win matches. I didn't expect to make a final in a Grand Slam and tonight it's happened, so tonight I'm really happy."

## MATCH STATS

Tomas Berdych (CZE x7) bt Stanislas Wawrinka

(SUI x8) 6-3, 6-7 (1/7), 7-6 (7/3), 7-6 (7/4)

Time: 3hr 31min

Berdych		Wawrinka
21	Aces	18
7	Double Faults	4
60	Winners	57
49	Unforced Errors	49
0/1	Break Point Conversions	1/4

Wawrinka didn't lose serve and only had one break point against him as big-serving Berdych dished up seven double faults, four of them, crucially, in the third and fourth set



Stanislas Wawrinka of Switzerland celebrates his semifinal victory over Tomas Berdych of the Czech Republic at the Australian Open in Melbourne yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

## Mata close to MU deal

AFP, Manchester

Manchester United manager David Moyes has refused to answer questions about British media reports that his side are close to completing a club-record move for out-of-favour Chelsea midfielder Juan Mata.

Several media outlets, including the BBC, claimed that Chelsea have accepted an offer worth around £37 million (\$61.3 million, 45.3 million euros), which would exceed the £30.75 million that United paid Tottenham Hotspur for Dimitar Berbatov in 2008.

Mata, 25, was voted Chelsea's player of the year in his first two seasons at Stamford Bridge, but he has fallen down the pecking order following Jose Mourinho's return to the club as manager last year.

After United lost on penalties to Sunderland in the League Cup semifinals at Old Trafford on Wednesday, the club's press officer warned journalists that Moyes would only answer questions on the match.

Pressed for an update on the situation as he left the press conference room, Moyes replied: "She just said, no questions."

Reports suggested that Mata has agreed a four-and-a-half-year contract at United and will undergo a medical examination on Thursday.

Chelsea have not acknowledged reports of United's offer, but Mata is believed to have missed a scheduled training session with the London club on Wednesday.

## Forlan heads to Japan

REUTERS, Montevideo

Uruguay's Diego Forlan, voted best player at the 2010 World Cup, signed for J-League side Cerezo Osaka until the end of the year on Wednesday, the striker said on Twitter.

The 34-year-old has been at Internacional of Brazil since mid-2012 on a three-year contract but had seen little action in recent months and sought a move for regular football leading up to the World Cup finals in Brazil.

"Signing with Cerezo Osaka until Dec. 2014," Forlan wrote in Spanish, English and Japanese on his twitter account, posting a photo of himself putting

# Fed aims to end drought

AFP, Melbourne



A rejuvenated Roger Federer may get his best chance to end his Grand Slam torment against Rafael Nadal at the Australian Open with the top seed plagued by a blister on his hand.

The Swiss all-time Grand Slam champion has not beaten Nadal in five Slam encounters since his 2007 Wimbledon final triumph, in a period of dominance by the Spanish world number one.

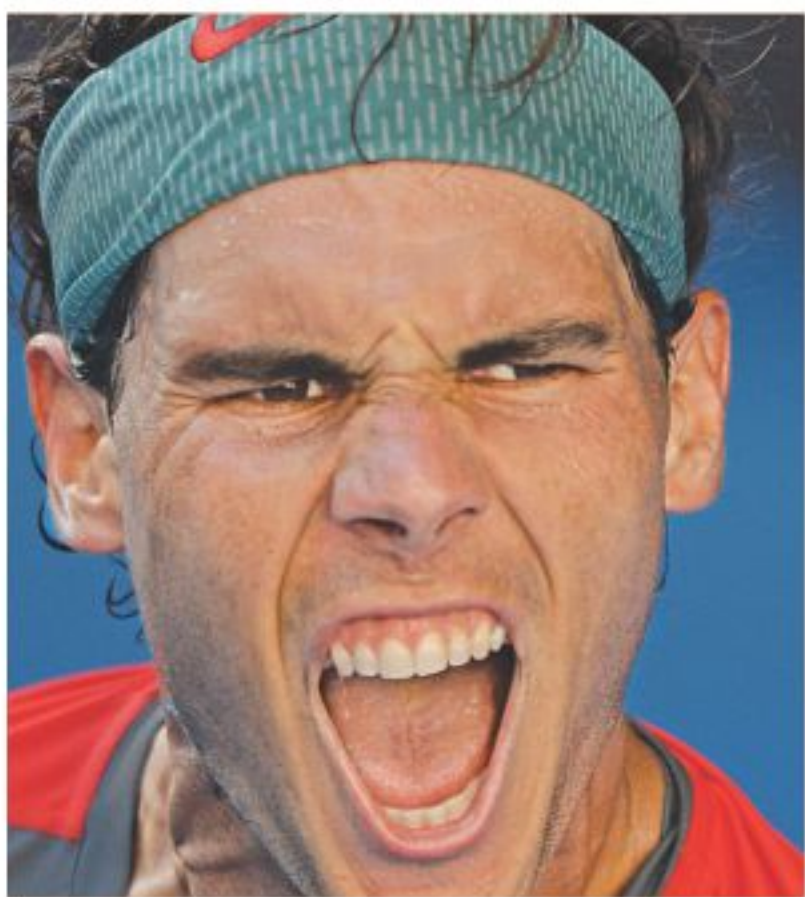
But a combination of Federer's resurgence under Swedish mentor Stefan Edberg, and Nadal's blister-induced weakened serve, has thrown open the outcome of Friday's blockbuster semifinal.

Nadal was clearly discomfited by the ugly blister in the palm of his serving hand as he spluttered with seven double-faults, two on break points, in his battling four-set win over Grigor Dimitrov in the quarterfinals.

The 13-time Grand Slam champion, 27, complained that a lack of confidence in his weakened serve made him vulnerable against the rising Bulgarian star.

"I served slower. I served bad," said Nadal, who is on a 10-match winning run. "I felt my biggest problem was the serve because serving like this gives me a problem with everything else," he added.

"When you lose confidence with one important shot like the serve, then



RAFAEL NADAL

you are not able to play the rest of the shots with confidence."

"So I'm going to try to improve that, because I'll need it in the semifinal if I'm going to have the chance to be in the final."

With the defeat of three-time defending champion Novak Djokovic on the other side of the men's draw, and Federer's four-set defeat of triple runner-up Andy Murray, only the Swiss great now stands in the way of a third Australian Open final appearance for Nadal.

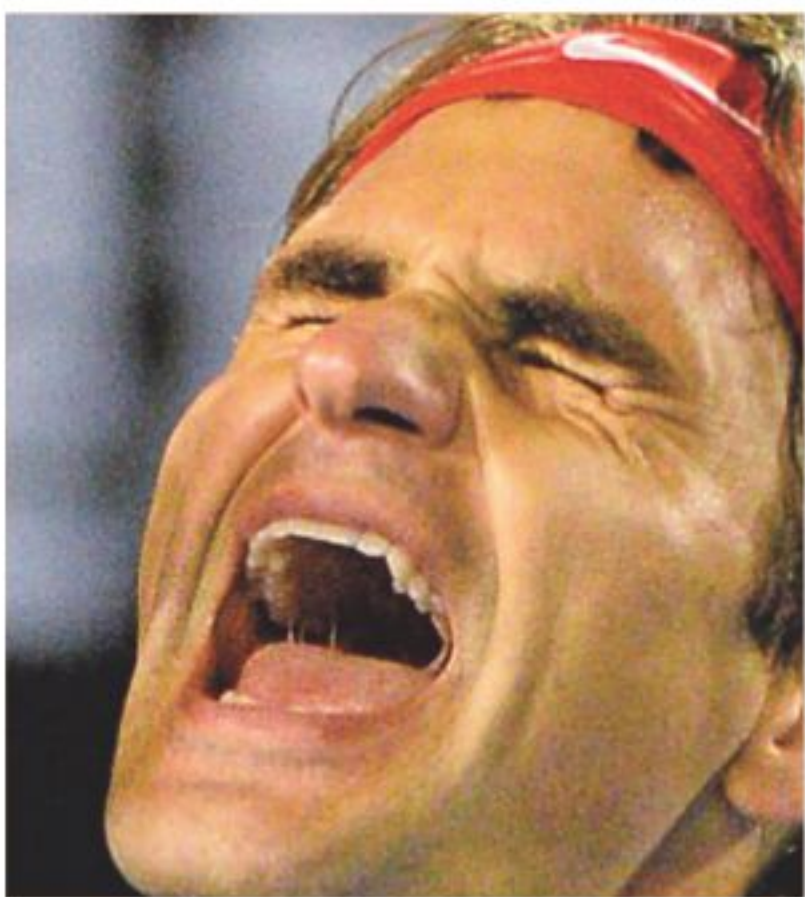
Former world number one Federer, now ranked sixth, is trying to prolong his fabulous career and show he is still capable of winning an 18th Grand Slam title, with his last coming at Wimbledon 2012.

The 32-year-old Swiss maestro last month hired six-time Grand Slam champion Stefan Edberg in an advisory coaching role, and said he is feeling good again about his tennis.

"It's an amazing result for me again to be in the semis. This one feels different because of the tougher times I've had in (last year's) Slams, Wimbledon, at the US Open," Federer said.

"I am back physically. I'm explosive out there. I can get to balls. I'm not afraid to go for balls."

Federer said he will draw on



ROGER FEDERER

Edberg's big-match experience to devise his strategy against Nadal, but clearly he is relishing the prospect of playing the Spaniard again on the big stage.

"He's been tough to play against, no doubt. I'm happy I get a chance to play him in a Slam again," said Federer, who lost to Nadal in the 2012 Australian Open semifinals in their last Slam encounter.

"The head-to-head record is in his favour. I'm looking forward to speaking to Stefan, because when we first spoke about my game, we spoke about playing Rafa as well."

"Stefan thought he had some good ideas, so I'm looking forward to what he has to say."

"Clearly with (coach) Severin Luthi, he knows him (Nadal) inside out. I'm looking forward to hear what the boys have to say. I hope I can get a win. We'll see."

Nadal is bidding to become only the third man to win each of the four Grand Slam titles twice should he get

## HEAD-TO-HEAD

Total Matches:32

Nadal	Federer
22 wins	10 wins

# Tello treble puts Barca on brink

AFP, Madrid



Lionel Messi marked his 400th appearance for Barcelona by setting up three goals for Cristian Tello as the Catalans moved towards the Copa del Rey semifinals with a 4-1 win away to Levante on Wednesday.

Nabil El Zhar had fired the hosts into a shock lead midway through the first-half.

However, after an unfortunate Juanfran own goal had levelled matters just after half-time, Tello then sped onto Messi's through ball to fire home on the hour mark.

The two combined once more 10 minutes from time and another lovely Messi pass allowed the 22-year-old to volley home his hattrick five minutes later to leave the second-leg at the Camp Nou next Wednesday a formality.

Barca boss Gerardo Martino had made eight changes to the side that could only manage a 1-1 draw with Levante in La Liga on Sunday with Pedro Rodriguez and Xavi joining Messi as the only three players to retain their place.

And Pedro nearly repaid Martino's faith immediately as he struck the base of the post after only five minutes.

However, just as at the weekend, it was Levante who took the lead from a set-piece as El Zhar prodded home from close range after Jose Manuel Pinto had parried his first effort.

Barca were handed a huge slice of luck to equalise eight minutes after half-time when Loukas Vyntra fired the ball off teammate Juanfran and the ball rebounded past the helpless Javi Jimenez into the net.

Thereafter, though, it was a procession as Tello thundered home his first moments later from Messi's first assist.

The winger then curled home his second of the evening after the defence had again been attracted towards Messi.

And Tello sealed a memorable evening five minutes later with a another thumping finish from Messi's clipped ball over the top.

Barca will most likely face Real Sociedad in the last four after they beat third-tier side Racing Santander 3-1 at home

## Udinese KO Milan

AFP, Milan

Clarence Seedorf's second match in charge of AC Milan ended in a 2-1 home defeat at the hands of Udinese in the Italian Cup quarterfinals on Wednesday.

Mario Balotelli gave Milan a sixth minute lead before they were pegged back by a 41st minute penalty converted by Colombian Luis Muriel.

Udinese dominated the second half and grabbed the winner in the 77th minute through Uruguayan star Nico Lopez.

Udinese will face either Fiorentina or Siena in the semifinals.

The defeat also severed a potential European route for AC Milan who are already 30 points behind leaders Juventus in Serie A.

Their last hope of playing in Europe next season will depend on their progress in this season's Champions League where they face Atletico Madrid in the last-16 next month.

Balotelli was on target early on Wednesday when he converted a cross from Valter Birsa, preferred in midfield by Seedorf to Brazilian star Robinho.

But Udinese, who are just three points above the relegation zone in Serie A, won a penalty when their Swiss import Silvan Widmer was fouled by Urby Emanuelson leaving Muriel to slot home from the spot.

Milan keeper Christian Abbiati kept out Gabriel Silva and Muriel late on before Lopez hit the winner within a minute of coming off the bench.

The other semifinal will pit Roma, who beat Juventus 1-0, against either Lazio or Napoli who play on January 29.

## PSG to bid

## 70m for Pogba

AFP, Milan

Paris Saint Germain are set to up the ante in a bid to sign Paul Pogba by offering the Serie A champions 70 million euros for the sought-after Juventus midfielder, according to a report Thursday.

Pogba joined the Italian giants at the start of last season on a free transfer from Manchester United and has blossomed into one of the league's most creative and effective midfielders both in attack and defence.

Now PSG, according to a report in Thursday's La Gazzetta dello Sport, have offered Juve 70m euros (\$95m) in a bid to stave off interest from Bayern Munich, Chelsea and Real Madrid.

Pogba has a contract with Juventus until the summer of 2017.

# Bailey ready to lead Aus

## 4th ODI against England today

AFP, Perth



Stand-in Australian captain George Bailey Thursday shrugged off injury fears and declared himself fit to lead the new world number one side in the fourth one-day international against England.

Bailey had been suffering from a hip flexor injury but said he would definitely take over at the match in western Australia on Friday in the absence of rested skipper Michael Clarke.

"I'm 100 percent good to go," Bailey said.

Australia lead 3-0 in the five-match series and surged to the top of the ODI rankings, overtaking India who lost to New Zealand, on Wednesday.

Australia are resting stars Clarke, Brad Haddin, Shane Watson and David Warner, giving England hope of breaking their duck

on the tour Down Under which has already seen the Ashes surrendered 5-0.

"It probably is their best chance (of victory)," Bailey said. "But having said that, I reckon our team is still pretty good."

"I'm not that fussed about what England think or how they're going."

"It's been a hell of a summer and we won't be coming in nonchalant or complacent about what's ahead of us."

Australian middle order batsman Steve Smith, who is back in the 50-over side, said he is playing for a 2015 World place.

The 24-year-old has averaged just 21.1 over his 33 ODIs and is determined to improve on that.

"The World Cup is obviously still a fair way away, but every opportunity you get, you've got to try and impress," Smith said.

England are in danger of matching their worst-ever losing run.

# Black Cats claw Red Devils

AFP, Manchester



Manchester United's desperate season met with fresh degradation on Wednesday as they sensationally lost on

penalties to Sunderland in the League Cup semifinals at Old Trafford.

Trailing 2-1 from the first leg, United levelled the tie through Jonny Evans's 37th-minute header, only for Phil Bardsley to net a dramatic equaliser late in extra time with a low shot that squirmed past David de Gea.

United promptly went straight up to the other end and equalised through Javier Hernandez, for 3-3 on aggregate and sending the tie to penalties, but it was to prove a false dawn.

An appalling shoot-out saw only three of the 10 penalty-takers score, but United full-back Rafael da Silva proved the fall guy, with Vito Mannone saving his spot-

kick to give Sunderland a 2-1 win.

Second from bottom in the Premier League, Gus Poyet's side can now look forward to a clash with Manchester City in the final on March 2, in what will be their first major final since 1992.

For David Moyes, meanwhile, the misery continues, with a first final as United manager snatched from his grasp only days after defeat at Chelsea saw his side fall 14 points off the pace in the league.

United's fans arrived at Old Trafford to reports that their side have made a club-record bid for Chelsea midfielder Juan Mata, and the continued absence of Wayne Rooney and Robin van Persie due to injury underlined the need for reinforcements.

There was an early chance for Hernandez, whose downward header from Adnan Januzaj's free-kick was parried by visiting goalkeeper Mannone, but the hosts initially

struggled to make inroads.

Nine thousand Sunderland fans travelled from the northeast and the hordes of away supporters almost had a memorable goal to cheer when Fabio Borini chested down a raking pass from Adam Johnson and drilled a half-volley inches over the bar from 25 yards.

Moyes reacted by bringing Shinji Kagawa into the centre and moments later the Japan midfielder created the chance that led to the opening goal.

His cross was volleyed against the post by Darren Fletcher, with Mannone blocking Hernandez's follow-up, and from the ensuing corner, Januzaj's cross was flicked goalwards by Danny Welbeck and headed in by Evans.

As Sunderland grew bolder in the second half, Moyes introduced Antonio Valencia in place of Kagawa and the Ecuadorian quickly created a chance for Januzaj, only for the teenager to slice wide.