AFP, Rio De Janeiro

Tim Cahill's spectacular volley for Australia against the Netherlands is the goal of the World Cup so far, Brazilian legend Ronaldo said Saturday.

While many critics have picked James Rodriguez's sublime chest and volley against Uruguay as the goal of the tournament, Ronaldo said he preferred the Australia striker's spectacular effort.

"It was the best goal of the World Cup and it's going to go down in history as one of the most beautiful World Cup goals," Ronaldo said at a

FIFA press conference. Cahill's wonder-strike occurred during Australia's 3-2 defeat to the Dutch in Group B on June 18.

A test worthy

FROM PAGE S1 Neymar corner. But Brazil's insurance to the semifinal was a beauty from David Luiz. With a misfiring Neymar deliberately deciding to stay away from taking a free-kick from about 30 yards, on strode Luiz. And the impact was devastating the ball flew over the Colombia wall and took enough bend to elude the outstretched hands of David Ospina and crashed into the upper right-hand corner. Colombia's 22-year-old prodigy James Rodriguez was understandably heavily marked. Still, he struck his

head held high. The immediate concern for Brazil is who will replace Neymar and Silva against Germany. At the moment, Dante is the preferred choice in place of Silva while it could be anybody in place of the irrepressible Naymar. Brazil had never been in such a dire situation before. But it also provides the ideal stage for others to play for Neymar against

Germany and beyond.

sixth goal, a strong case for

winning the golden boot,

before bowing out of the

ultimate stage with his

AFP, London



Petra Kvitova stormed to her second Wimbledon title in the shortest women's final since 1983 as the Czech sixth seed crushed Canada's Eugenie Bouchard 6-3, 6-0 on

Saturday. Kvitova, who first won Wimbledon in 2011, took just 55 minutes to end her three-

year wait for a second Grand Slam crown, leaving shell-shocked world number 13 Bouchard helpless to repel a brutal barrage of 28 winners and four aces on Centre Court. Playing in her first Grand Slam final since her maiden triumph at Wimbledon, the 24-

year-old Kvitova produced a brilliant display of power-hitting to secure the 12th career title. Fittingly, Kvitova's breathtaking performance came in front of her childhood hero Martina Navratilova, whose 54-minute win

against Andrea Jaeger 31 years ago was the last Wimbledon final to take less time than this ruthless demolition. "I had great tactics from my coach, he always

knows how I need to play," Kvitova said. "All my team helped me a lot throughout the years to come back here and win the trophy again.

"I can't say it's more special but after three years to be back here with the trophy is so

After struggling to cope with the fame and increased expectations that came with her first Wimbledon triumph, Kvitova has finally recaptured the thrilling form that brought her that breakthrough success.

The left-hander dropped just one set in her seven matches en route to lifting the Venus Rosewater dish for the second time and will rise to fourth in the world rankings next week.

While Kvitova celebrated, Bouchard, the youngest finalist at a major since Caroline Wozniacki in 2009, was left to lick her wounds after a chastening defeat in her first Grand Slam final.

The photogenic and fiercely competitive Bouchard, named after Princess Eugenie by her royalty-obsessed mother, has been widely compared to Maria Sharapova and this was supposed to be her coronation as the queen of Wimbledon.

watching from the Royal Box, the 20-year-old was swept away and now shares with Sharapova the unwanted distinction of being thrashed by Kvitova in a Wimbledon final.

"It was really tough for me today but I am proud of how I have played for these two weeks," Bouchard said.

"I feel like it's a step in the right direction. I'm not sure I deserve all your love today but I certainly appreciate it."

Kvitova was unloading some searing groundstrokes and Bouchard, no slouch in the power stakes herself, was unable to respond as a flashing forehand winner from the Czech secured the first break in the third game.

Bouchard, bidding to become the youngest Grand Slam winner since Sharapova in 2006 at the US Open, responded by adding even more bite to her returns, but Kvitova had the answer to everything the youngster could throw at her.

The Canadian, playing in only her sixth Grand Slam tournament, was wilting under the relentless barrage and the Czech, hitting with an unstoppable combination of aggression and accuracy, broke again for a 5-2 lead.

Kvitova's onslaught left the bewildered Bouchard, who had grown used to bullying opponents into submission herself over the last fortnight, shaking her head in frustration.

The Canadian briefly stemmed the tide with a break of her own in the next game, but But instead, with her regal namesake Kvitova answered emphatically with another sequence of sledgehammer winners to break again and seal the set.

There was no sign of Kvitova letting up in the second set and a crushing overhead left Bouchard almost ducking for cover as it fizzed over her head.

As statements of intent go, it was a resounding success and Bouchard, rapidly losing her stomach for the fight, tamely surrendered her serve in the second game.

Cahill's goal best: Ronaldo | Kvitova powers to second title Lots to prove for familiar toes

AFP, London



Roger Federer targets a record eighth Wimbledon title Sunday against Novak Djokovic who is desperate to end a stretch of Grand Slam finals defeats which are threatening to shatter his

Federer, 32, won the first of his 17 majors at Wimbledon in 2003 and the most recent in 2012 but his failure to return to a Grand Slam final since has had his critics penning his career obituary. Six-time Grand Slam champion Djokovic, the 2011 Wimbledon winner, will

be playing in his third All England Club final in four years, but the 27-year-old has lost seven of his 13 finals at the majors, including five of the last six. The pair will be playing for the 35th time in their eight-year rivalry while

Sunday's final will be their 11th meeting at the Grand Slam level. Only once have they met at Wimbledon when Federer won their 2012

semi-final in four sets and only once before have they clashed in a Grand Slam final -- at the 2007 US Open where Djokovic, making his first appearance in a final at the majors, lost in straight sets as the Swiss captured a fourth successive title in New York.

Federer appreciates that Djokovic has matured as a player and a person since then and their relationship, which was once fairly cool, has warmed to the extent that the two even exchange tips these days on fatherhood.

"He has a wonderful way of either redirecting or taking the ball early, taking pace from the opponent, even generating some of his own," said Federer.

"So I think that's what makes him so hard to play. There's not really a safe place you can play into. Like back in the day there was many guys where you just knew, Oh, this guy is a bit dodgey on the backhand. Let me play that and then build up the point from that.

"Novak can hurt you down the line or cross-court on both sides. His forehand, his serve, his movement clearly is what stands out the most. He's really been able to improve that and make it rock solid." Federer, the former world number one whose ranking slipped to a decade-

long low of eight just six months ago, will become the oldest Wimbledon champion of the Open Era if he prevails on Sunday, beating the previous mark of 31-year-old Arthur Ashe in 1975. "It's not so important," he said. "I would know it if it would be really important to me, but it's not."

What is important for the great Swiss is that he never lost faith in his ability to return to a Grand Slam final." I played all the slams, 50 plus now (59 in a row). I think for that you need to be, first of all, healthy physically, but also mentally ready to do it," he said. "You've got to love the game, because if you don't love it, then it's just

going to be too hard. I think that's kept me going quite easily actually, because I know why I'm playing tennis." Djokovic has lost five of his last six Grand Slam finals and all of the last three -- to Andy Murray at Wimbledon in 2013, Rafael Nadal at the 2013 US

Open and to Nadal again at this year's French Open. Unlike Federer and Nadal, he is still without the career Grand Slam which every player craves having lost both his Paris finals to the world

number one Spaniard. "Losing three out of four last Grand Slam finals, it cannot be satisfying. I don't want to sound like I'm not appreciating to play finals of Grand Slams. It's already a huge result. We cannot take that for granted," said Djokovic.

"I know that I can win the title. I should have won a few matches that I lost in finals of Grand Slams in last couple years. But it's an experience. It's a learning process."

Czech Republic's Petra Kvitova poses with the winner's trophy after beating Canada's Eugenie **Bouchard** in the Wimbledon final at the All England Tennis Club in London yesterday.

Euro success

AFP, Rio de Janeiro



France coach Didier Deschamps is confident his side can learn the harsh lessons from World Cup heartache as they target success at the 2016 European Championship on home soil. Les Bleus' promising World Cup adventure

came to a disappointing end with a 1-0 quarter-final defeat to Germany in the Maracana on Friday.

But while Deschamps was dismayed at France's "timid" start to the match which saw Mats Hummels score what proved to be the winner, he leaves Brazil confident that the squad has a bright future.

Deschamps has transformed France's fortunes over the last eight months since the remarkable 3-0 victory against Ukraine that overturned a 2-0 first-leg deficit in the decisive play-off to qualify for the World Cup.

"There is a group that was born when we qualified with the play-off win against Ukraine. I am proud of what the players have done on and off the field," said Deschamps.

"There is work to be done, but the materials are there. We need to maintain the same quality and the same spirit. I prefer to take away the positives that there have been since our arrival in Brazil."

Before crossing the Atlantic, the perception was that reaching the quarter-finals would be a success in the grander scheme of preparing a side capable of winning Euro 2016.

Deschamps' bold decision to omit Samir Nasri from his 23-man squad was also vindicated in Brazil, four years after France's disastrous 2010 campaign.

Leaving out the Manchester City player, considered a negative influence on squad morale, helped forge a spirit of unity that remained intact even after the withdrawal of Franck Ribery due to injury.

Now it remains to be seen whether Ribery, who will be 33 come Euro 2016, has a future in blue.

Without him in Brazil, France scored a combined total of eight goals in opening wins against Switzerland and Honduras, with Karim Benzema revelling in the limelight and netting three of that tally.

three outings, one of which was an own-goal in the hardfought last-16 victory over Nigeria. That shows that there is still plenty room for improvement,

but Deschamps has the foundations in place to build towards what will be the first 24-team European Championship.

"We are a young team. It was good to start our journey together in this way and it has given us something to build on," said goalkeeper and captain Hugo Lloris.

"In two years we will be at home and we will do everything to make a good impression," added midfielder Yohan Cabaye, looking ahead.

France target Leaders escape with draw

SPORTS REPORTER



Title aspirants Sheikh Jamal DC came from behind to play out a 1-1 draw against Mohammedan SC in their crucial encounter of the Nitol Tata Bangladesh Premier League at the Bangabandhu National

Stadium yesterday. Towhidul Alam Sabuj provided the Black and Whites a lead in the 23rd minute only to be cancelled by a first-half stoppage-time strike from Nasir Chowdhury.

Their eighth draw in 23 matches put league leaders Sheikh Jamal in pole position of the table with 52 points, 12 clear of nearest rivals Abahani, and they now need only four points from as many matches to regain the coveted title they had clinched in their debut season in 2010-11.

Sheikh Jamal could have gotten closer to the title with a straight victory over Mohammedan; they never lost to them in the history of the professional football

league but the Federation Cup champions were not up to mark in yesterday's match to and were quite fortunate to share points with the Black and Whites, who are now in third position with 38 points from 23 matches.

Mohammedan launched an attack within the first minute and went close to taking a lead but hitman Wahed Ahmed saw his tap-in from close denied by an incredible effort from goalkeeper Mazharul Islam Himel but they did not give up hope and took the deserved lead in the 23rd minute with Sabuj flicking in a low cross from winger Zahid Hossain.

Just before the break, Sheikh Jamal mustered a planned attack to restore parity when Nasir stabbed a diving header on a Shohel Rana cross to beat Mohammedan goalkeeper Titumir Chowdhury in the stoppage time of the first half.

After resumption, Mohammedan maintained their dominance over Shiekh Jamal to come close twice but Wahed squandered one while Sheikh Jamal goalkeeper Himel thwarted another effort from Zahid.

Finch sparkles in field of lengends

AFP, London



Australia's Aaron Finch made a dashing 181 not out as MCC beat the Rest of the World by seven wickets in a one-day match celebrating the bicente-

nary of Lord's Cricket Ground on Saturday. Bangladesh's Tamim Iqbal also featured in the match, playing for Shane Warne's Rest of the World team, but his travails with the bat continued as he was dismissed for 1 by Pakistan off-spinner Saeed Ajmal.

Set 294 to win, MCC finished on 296 for three with 25 balls to spare.

Finch, already in England playing for Yorkshire, was involved in partnerships with three of the best batsmen cricket has known to cap a memorable Lord's debut for the 27year-old Victoria right-hander.

He put on 107 for the first wicket with Indian hero Sachin Tendulkar, cricket's leading run-scorer in both Tests and oneday internationals.

Finch then added 67 and 122 with two contrasting West Indies left-handers in Brian Lara (23) and Shivnarine Result: MCC won by 5 wickets

Chanderpaul (37 not out) respectively.

Earlier, Tendulkar's former India teammate Yuvraj Singh struck a blistering 132 in a total of 293 for seven after MCC had collapsed to 68 for five in the face of Pakistan off-spinner Saeed Ajmal, who finished with figures of four for 45.

But fans looking forward to seeing Rest of the World captain Shane Warne bowl against the likes of Tendulkar and Brian Lara were disappointed when the leg-spinner suffered a broken right hand batting when struck by an accidental beamer from fast bowler Brett Lee, his former Australia team-

Marylebone Cricket Club (MCC) moved to its present site of Lord's in the north-west London suburb of St John's Wood in 1814 with the club itself founded in 1787.

SCORES IN BRIEF

REST OF THE WORLD: 296 for 7 (Yuvraj 132, Collingwood 40, Siddle 33 not out, Gilchrist 29; Ajmal 4-45, Lee 2-55)

MCC: 296 for 3 in 45.5 overs (Finch 181 not out, Tendulkar 44, Chanderpaul 37, Lara 23; Collingwood 2-52)

