

TEN 1

US Open
Mixed Doubles Final
Live from 10:00pm
Men's Singles Semifinals
Live from 1:00am (Saturday)

STAR SPORTS 2

Bundesliga
Schalke v Bayern Munich
Live from 12:30am (Saturday)

SONY SIX

Primera Liga
Real Sociedad v Espanyol
Live from 12:30am (Saturday)

TEN 3

Sri Lanka v Australia
Second T20
Live from 7:30pm



Kei Nishikori of Japan celebrates his victory over Andy Murray of Great Britain in their US Open men's singles quarterfinals at Flushing Meadows on Wednesday.

PHOTO: AFP

Nishikori stuns Murray

AFP, New York



Kei Nishikori stunned Andy Murray to reach the US Open semi-finals, holding his nerve in a gripping final set to move two wins away from becoming the first Asian man to capture a Grand Slam singles title.

Japanese star Nishikori clinched a dramatic 1-6, 6-4, 4-6, 6-1, 7-5 comeback triumph in a shade under four hours against the Wimbledon and Olympics winner and 2012 US Open champion.

In Friday's semi-final, the 26-year-old will take on Swiss third seed Stan Wawrinka who defeated tearful Juan Martin del Potro, the 2009 champion, 7-6 (7/5), 4-6, 6-3, 6-2.

Wawrinka, who had to save a match point in his third round clash with

Dan Evans, will be playing in a third US Open semi-final in four years.

The other semi-final on Friday will see defending champion Novak Djokovic take on 10th seeded Frenchman Gael Monfils.

In a match which featured 17 breaks of serve, Nishikori prevailed for only his second win in nine matches against world number two Murray.

His win came just three weeks after losing to Murray in the Olympic semi-finals.

Murray looked to be in control at two sets to one ahead and carving out a break point in the third game of the fourth when a loud gong-like sound burst from the malfunctioning public address system in Arthur Ashe stadium.

Umpire Marija Cicak ordered the point to be replayed much to the irritation of the Briton who lost his composure and the next five games as an acrobatic Nishikori levelled the tie.

Murray refused to blame his defeat on the incident.

Nishikori broke for 1-0 in the deciding set and backed it up for 2-0 before Murray stopped a seven-game losing streak to hold.

Murray, with his focus suddenly rebooted, broke back for 2-2. But back came Nishikori, stunning his rival to break again for 3-2 before holding for 4-2 as both men thrilled with a series of big hits, subtle touches and exhausting athleticism.

Nishikori surrendered the advantage yet again, giving up a 40-0 lead in the eighth game and missing an easy volley.

The Briton was soon 5-4 up but Nishikori, showing nerves of steel, held and broke again before taking victory when Murray blinked first in the 12th game, burying a backhand in the net.

Del Potro, the world number 142 and bidding to become the lowest ranked man to reach a Grand Slam semi-final in 16 years, was out to a 4-1

lead in the first set against Wawrinka.

The Swiss broke back in the seventh game and although Del Potro, whose career was almost derailed by a series of wrist injuries, saved two set points in the tiebreaker, a rare forehand error gave up the set.

The Argentine's bruising recent schedule had seen him claim an Olympic silver medal last month and he used that experience to claim the only break for a 4-3 lead in the second set.

But the Swiss was looking the fresher as the clock ticked towards and then past 1 a.m. He took the third set 6-3, hitting twice as many muscular winners.

Del Potro was a spent force and gave up a double break in the fourth set on his way to defeat but leaving him at least with the compensation of being back in the top 65 after being ranked as low as 1,045 in February.

SEMIFINAL H2H

DJOKOVIC (1) V MONFILS (10)

Head to Head (Overall) Played: 12

12 0

Head to Head on Hard Courts Played: 10

10 0

US OPEN 2016 STATS

10 Sets Played 15

1 Sets Lost 0

20 Return Games Won 25

16 Aces 49

82 Winners 154

6h Hours on court 9h

26m 56m

SEMIFINAL H2H

WAWRINKA (3) V NISHIKORI (13)

Head to Head (Overall) Played: 5

3 2

Head to Head on Hard Courts Played: 4

2 2

US OPEN 2016 STATS

19 Sets Played 20

4 Sets Lost 5

22 Return Games Won 30

42 Aces 26

247 Winners 211

14h Hours on court 13h

37m 02m

FIFA confirms transfer bans on Real, Atletico

AFP, Zurich

FIFA on Thursday dismissed appeals by Real Madrid and Atletico Madrid against a ban on registering new players in the next two transfer windows for irregularities in the signing of foreign players under 18.

Real, who called the ruling "profoundly unfair", and Atletico were also fined 360,000 and 900,000 Swiss Francs respectively.

However, the two Spanish giants -- last season's Champions League finalists -- have announced they will launch a final appeal to the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS).

"The FIFA Appeal Committee has decided to reject the appeals lodged by Spanish clubs Atletico de Madrid and Real Madrid and to confirm in their entirety the decisions rendered by the FIFA Disciplinary Committee in the respective cases relating to the protection of minors," FIFA said in a statement.

Both clubs were sanctioned in January, but by appealing had temporarily held off the ban during the transfer window which closed last month.

They will now not be able to register any new players in either of the next two windows, in January 2017 and July-August 2017, before being able to do so once again in January 2018.

Barcelona served a similar ban in 2015, with an appeal to CAS proving unsuccessful in their case.

European champions Real responded by saying they will now go to the CAS in an

attempt to have the decision overturned "as quickly as possible".

"The club regrets the decision on the ground that it is profoundly unfair and contrary to the most elementary principles of penal law," read a statement posted on their website.

"The club will begin the appropriate appeals procedure before the Court of Arbitration for Sport, requesting that the decision be completely overturned, with absolute confidence that said organisation will come to an entirely favourable decision.

"Real Madrid will request that the procedure be undertaken in an urgent manner in order to obtain a decision from the CAS as quickly as possible."

Under international football rules, players under 18 cannot be transferred to another country, except in limited circumstances, and all transfers need the approval of a special FIFA committee.

Atletico insisted they had such clearance from FIFA for the players under investigation.

"Our club does not agree with the ruling and therefore has decided to appeal before the Court of Arbitration for Sport," Atletico said in a statement.

"Our organisation wishes to state that one hundred percent of the licenses of our players who are part of this investigation and continue at the club have been regularised by FIFA itself, receiving authorisation from the sub-committee to process the license and compete in different (under-age) categories."

Atletico used the close-season window to make several new signings, while Real had an uncharacteristically quiet window.

Serena fends off Halep

AFP, New York

World number one Serena Williams fended off Simona Halep on Wednesday, downing the fifth-seeded Romanian 6-2, 4-6, 6-3 to reach the US Open semifinals.

Williams, seeking a record seventh US Open title and 23rd Grand Slam crown, fired 18 aces en route to the triumph, which set up a Thursday match with Karolina Pliskova.

But she made her task against Halep harder with 43 unforced errors and Halep, firing on all cylinders from the baseline took advantage.

The Romanian became the first player in the tournament to break Williams's serve, and the first to take a set off the top seed.

"I'm glad I got tested," said Williams.

"I think her level really picked up in the second, but I had some opportunities that I didn't take.

"So what I gather from that is I really could have played better in that second set and maybe had an opportunity to win in straight.

"If anything, that's the biggest silver lining I take."

"I feel OK," Williams said. "I'm not at 100 percent, but I'm OK."

Lochte gets 10-month suspension

REUTERS, Los Angeles

American swimmer Ryan Lochte has been suspended for 10 months, US media reported on Wednesday, following a scandal involving the US Olympic athlete and three other swimmers at the Rio Games.

The suspension was handed down by the US Olympic Committee and USA Swimming, USA Today reported, citing an unnamed source. Celebrity gossip website TMZ, citing unnamed sources, also reported the suspension.

No further details were available. Reuters could not independently confirm the reports. Neither the US Olympic Committee nor USA Swimming immediately responded to requests for comment.

Lochte, 32, was dropped by four of his major sponsors after admitting he "overexaggerated" a tale about being robbed and held at gunpoint with the three other swimmers after a party during the Rio Olympics.

Brazilian authorities said the group destroyed a bathroom and urinated in public, and have recommended that Lochte be charged with falsely reporting a crime.

Pep, Jose resume hostilities

AFP, Manchester



Manchester United manager Jose Mourinho and his Manchester City adversary Pep Guardiola rekindle a rivalry 20 years in the making in this weekend's hotly anticipated Manchester derby.

Friends who became foes, Mourinho and Guardiola represent opposite ends of football's ideological spectrum and their ongoing grudge match has shaped the game's recent history.

It is three years since they last shared a touchline and Saturday's clash at Old Trafford marks the resumption of a duel that could determine the outcome of the Premier League title race.

Though renowned for their different demeanours, the pragmatic Mourinho, 53, and the idealistic Guardiola, 45, have both shown a capacity for ruthlessness in their early days in Manchester.

Mourinho has sidelined experienced German midfielder Bastian Schweinsteiger, while Guardiola's benching of Joe Hart forced the popular goalkeeper to leave City for Torino.

Both men have also delivered impressive initial results, leaving their clubs neck-and-neck on nine points -- along with Chelsea.

It is two decades since their paths first crossed at Barcelona in the mid-1990s, when Guardiola was captain and Mourinho worked as an assistant to Bobby Robson and

Louis van Gaal.

The pair became close, but they found themselves in opposition at Camp Nou in 2008 when Barcelona went in search of a successor to Frank Rijkaard as manager.

Despite Mourinho's stellar achievements with Porto and Chelsea, he was overlooked in favour of the inexperienced Guardiola.

The Portuguese exacted sweet revenge two years later when Inter Milan knocked defending champions Barca out of the Champions League.

In an iconic image, Mourinho raced across the Camp Nou pitch in celebration, his right hand provocatively raised in the air.

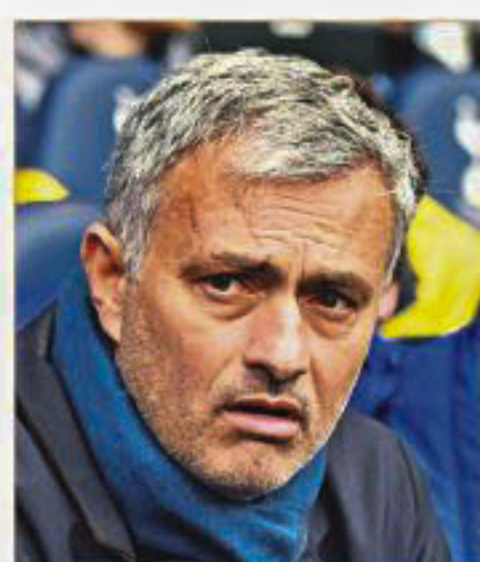
Mourinho's appointment by Real Madrid that year brought him into regular confrontation with Guardiola.

Mourinho's first Clasicos ended in a humiliating 5-0 defeat and during a sequence of four encounters in two weeks later that season, the rivalry between the men turned ugly.

In the build-up to their Champions League semi-final, Mourinho's acerbic comments prompted an angry, foul-mouthed response from the usually placid Guardiola.

That year's Spanish Super Cup witnessed a new low in the relationship between the clubs as Mourinho poked Guardiola's assistant Tito Vilanova in the eye during a touchline shoving match.

They last met in 2013 when Guardiola's Bayern Munich edged Mourinho's Chelsea on penalties in the UEFA Super Cup.



MOURINHO



GUARDIOLA

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