

What to WATCH

GTV, MAASRANGA, STAR SPORTS 1
Champions Trophy
 England v Australia
 Live from 3:30pm
STAR SPORTS SELECT HD1
French Open
 Women's Final
 Ostapenko v Halep

Live from 7:00pm
SONY ESPN
World Cup Qualifiers
 Norway v Czech Republic
 Live from 12:45am (Sunday)
TEN 1HD
World Cup Qualifiers
 Scotland v England

Live from 10:00pm
 Germany v San Marino
 Live from 12:45am (Sunday)

MOYES PAYS THE PRICE

Former Sunderland manager David Moyes was fined 30,000 pounds by the Football Association yesterday for telling a reporter that she "might get a slap". Moyes, who made the comments to the BBC's Vicki Sparks after Sunderland's goalless Premier League draw against Burnley in March, apologised for his remarks but was still judged by the FA to have brought "the game into disrepute". "You were just getting a wee bit naughty at the end there, so just watch yourself. You still might get a slap even though you're a woman," the Scot was filmed telling Sparks over questions she asked in an interview. The BBC said at the time that Moyes and Sparks had spoken about the exchange and resolved the issue between themselves. "David Moyes has been fined £30,000 in relation to comments he made," the FA said in a statement. "It was alleged his remarks were improper and/or threatening and/or brought the game into disrepute." —REUTERS



Switzerland's Stanislas Wawrinka celebrates his victory against Britain's Andy Murray during their French Open semifinal in Paris yesterday.

Nadal sets up titanic final with Wawrinka

AFP, Paris



Nine-time champion Rafael Nadal powered into a record 10th French Open final on Friday and will face 2015 winner Stan Wawrinka for the title after the Swiss outdueled Andy Murray in a five-set epic.

Nadal demolished Austrian pretender and sixth seed Dominic Thiem 6-3, 6-4, 6-0 to return to the final at Roland Garros for the first time since the last of his nine titles in 2014.

Wawrinka became the oldest finalist in Paris in 44 years with a thrilling 6-7 (6/8), 6-3, 5-7, 7-6 (7/3), 6-1 win over world number one Murray.

Nadal is bidding to become the first man to win 10 titles at a single Grand Slam and leads the head-to-head with Wawrinka 15-3.

"I always say the same but it's true. Nine or 10, it's only 10 percent more. It's true 10 is a beautiful number, nine is my favourite, but if I win it will become 10."

However, he will be mindful of another upset after the Swiss stunned an injury-hit Nadal three years ago to claim the Australian Open crown.

"I have been playing a great event. But Stan is playing unbelievable," said Nadal, who despite his imposing record has split the past six meetings with Wawrinka.

"It will be a super hard final and I will need to

play at my very best."

Nadal withstood a shaky start before reeling off four games in succession to subdue Thiem, who was looking to be just the second Austrian finalist at a Slam after 1995 French Open winner Thomas Muster.

Thiem is the only player to defeat Nadal on clay this season, but the fourth seed barely gave his rival a sniff and conceded just nine points in a chastening final set.

US Open champion Wawrinka, 32, triumphed in a pulsating four hour 34 minute battle of shotmaking and endurance and will target a fourth Slam title this weekend.

For Murray, his wait to become Britain's first men's champion in Paris since Fred Perry in 1935 goes on.

"It's incredible to be in another Roland Garros final," said Wawrinka, the oldest finalist since 33-year-old Niki Pilic was runner-up in 1973.

His win avenged defeat to Murray at the same stage in 2016 and the Swiss suggested the Briton was nowhere near that form on Friday.

But Wawrinka is in no doubt as to the nature of the obstacle that stands in his way of a second Roland Garros triumph.

"I think to play Rafa on clay in French Open in a final is probably the biggest challenge you can have in tennis. He's the best player ever on clay."

Saudis apologise over snub

AFP, Sydney

Saudi Arabia football chiefs apologised Friday after the national team was accused of "a disgraceful lack of respect" for failing to observe a minute's silence in Australia in honour of victims of the London terror attack.

When the stadium announcer in Adelaide called for silence before their World Cup qualifier against the Soccerros on Thursday evening, the Australian team lined up at the centre circle with arms on their teammates' shoulders.

But most of the Saudis milled around and spread out to various parts of the field, with team officials claiming the tradition of stopping to honour the dead was "not in keeping with Saudi culture".

It left fans and politicians in Australia fuming. Two Australians were among the eight killed last weekend on London Bridge.

"The Saudi Arabian Football Federation deeply regrets and unreservedly apologises for any offence caused by the failure... to formally observe the one minute's silence," federation president Adil Ezzat said in a rare statement.

Halep, Ostapenko eye maiden slam

AFP, Paris



Simona Halep is targeting the world number one ranking in Saturday's French Open final but fast-rising Latvian upstart Jelena Ostapenko threatens to crash the Romanian's party as a first-time major champion will be crowned.

Halep marked herself out as a favourite for the title at Roland Garros after winning in Madrid and finishing runner-up in Rome, but a tumble in the Italian Open final left her with ankle ligament damage and cast doubt over whether she would play in Paris.

The 25-year-old has since dismissed concerns over her fitness and finds herself one win away from a memorable maiden Slam title triumph that would also see her supplant Angelique Kerber at the top.

"It's a big challenge, a big chance. I think I have the game. I have the mentality to win, but it's going to be tough," said Halep, who lost to Maria Sharapova in three sets in the 2014 French Open final.

"I learned many things during the years, not just after that final. Also semifinals in Wimbledon. Then US Open against (Flavia) Pennetta before that match.

"My game is stronger, and it's different. I think more about the game, and I play smarter, in my opinion, and also physically. I'm much better, stronger. Attitude better. I think I'm different player, and I'm

SEMIFINAL H2H



SIMONA HALEP (3) V JELENA OSTAPENKO (3)

Head to Head (Overall) Played: 0

FRENCH OPEN 2017 STATS
14 Sets Played **16**

2 Sets Lost **4**

33 Return Games Won **39**

5 Aces **18**

118 Winners **245**

08h Hours on court **10h**

53m **23m**

much stronger than 2014."

Third seed Halep stormed into the quarterfinals without dropping a set, but she faced match point against Elena Svitolina before pulling off a miraculous recovery from 3-6, 1-5 down to reach the last four.

Halep then beat Karolina Pliskova, who would have replaced Kerber as the new number one had she made the

final, for the fifth time in six meetings to set up an intriguing clash with unseeded Ostapenko.

"I never played against her. I don't know what to expect from her," said Halep, bidding to become just the fifth player to win both the girls' and women's singles titles at Roland Garros.

"She's much younger than me. Of course she has nothing to lose.

"But I can feel that I'm in the same position. I played once before here, and I was very close to winning it. If it happens this time, it's going to be great. If not, I will have many years ahead to work and to play some more finals."

Ostapenko's run is all the more remarkable given her third-round exit at this year's Australian Open represented her best previous Grand Slam performance.

She is the first Latvian to reach a Slam final, going one step further than Ernests Gulbis in 2014 when a young Ostapenko was in his players' box as he beat Roger Federer in the quarterfinals in Paris.

"When I came here, of course I didn't expect I would be in the final," said Ostapenko, who celebrated her 20th birthday on Thursday by overpowering Timea Bacsinszky in the semifinals.

"But then, like, first match was a tough match, as well, and I won it. I think it kind of gave me confidence. Then every match I was playing better and better and I got my confidence, and I think it works pretty well."

Brothers sack Subrata

SPORTS REPORTER



Brothers Union sacked coach Subrata Bhattacharya Jr, less than a month after his appointment as the club was not happy with his coaching style during the Federation Cup, confirmed a club official yesterday.

The Gopibagh outfit had appointed the Indian coach on May 9, four days before the start of the Federation Cup after failing to retain their former coach Syed Nayeemuddin, who was poached by Mohammedan Sporting Club.

Brothers Union director and football team manager Amer Khan said they parted ways with the 52-year-old Indian due to his approach to games.

Brothers were eliminated from the quarterfinal stage of the season's curtain raiser after a 1-2 defeat against the eventual champions Abahani.

"We suffered a lot in the Federation Cup due to his [Subrata] overly defensive approach," Amer said.

"He opted for a defensive approach quite unnecessarily during the group phase matches against Team BJMC and Rahmatganj MFS while against Abahani he took an attacking approach which only helped the opposition take a two-goal lead. We had appointed Subrata for the whole season, but his coaching style didn't impress us," Amer added.

With the Bangladesh Premier League set to start in the last week of July, Amer said they would get enough time to appoint a new coach.

"After the deferral of the league, we will get time to look his [Subrata] replacement. In the meantime, our assistant coach [Ariful Islam] Pannu will look after the team as interim coach."

MUMBAI MAYOR'S CUP Zia, Razib in second spot

SPORTS REPORTER

Grandmasters Ziaur Rahman and Enamul Hossain Razib shared the second position along with eight other players with six points each after the eighth round of the 10th Mumbai Mayor's Cup International Chess Tournament in Mumbai, India yesterday.

GM Abdullah Al Rakib, GM Niaz Murshed and FM Fahad Rahman were in third position with 5.5 points each, said a press release from the Bangladesh Chess Federation.

In the eighth round, Zia beat IM DP Singh of India, Razib drew against GM Sahaj Grover of India.

Otamendi injures Jesus

AGENCIES, London

Gabriel Jesus had to be stretchered off the pitch in Brazil's friendly clash with Argentina yesterday after taking a blow to the head from Manchester City teammate Nicolas Otamendi.

Otamendi caught the Brazil forward in the face with his elbow as he attempted to clear his lines, and Jesus quickly fell to the ground clutching his face.

Argentina edge Brazil in Superclasico

AFP, Melbourne



Argentina gained a confidence-boosting 1-0 win over Brazil in their Superclasico in Melbourne Friday ahead of their make-or-break World Cup qualifiers later in the year.

A goal from Sevilla defender Gabriel Mercado right on half-time proved the eventual winner as Argentina matched the world's number one ranked Brazilians before 95,000 fans at the Melbourne Cricket Ground.

The two-time world champions and second ranked team are struggling outside the automatic qualifying positions in fifth spot in the South American group with four games left while Brazil have already qualified for Russia next year.

Argentina have a friendly in Singapore next week ahead of their crucial next qualifier against Uruguay in Montevideo on August 31.

In manager Jorge Sampaoli's first game in charge Argentina weathered a second-half fightback from Brazil with Gabriel Jesus and Willian hitting either posts in one flurry on goal.

Argentina's superstar and skipper Lionel Messi was largely contained by the Brazilian defence, but thrilled the crowd with his touches, flicks and darting runs in his much-anticipated appearance in Australia.

Mercado put Argentina ahead just on half-time with a tap in after Nicolas Otamendi's header came off the upright into his path.

The Argentines had more of the play with Paris Saint-Germain's Angel Di Maria a constant threat on the left.

Brazil's best chance came midway through the opening half when Chelsea's Willian was set free and he found Liverpool's lively Philippe Coutinho in Argentina's penalty area.

Coutinho checked inside and lined up a shot but a diving tackle by Otamendi smothered the scoring chance.

Juventus midfielder Paulo Dybala linked up well with Messi behind striker Gonzalo Higuain and fired just wide moments before Mercado's goal.

Brazil had several chances to score in the second half with Manchester City's Jesus and Willian both hitting either post in a flurry in Argentina's goal-mouth in the 62nd minute.

Willian was a constant threat with his searing pace and one of his pinpoint crosses almost led to another goal chance for Jesus.

Messi was sent tumbling by Rafinha late in the game which earned the Brazilian substitute a yellow card.

Jesus failed to finish the match when he was carried off after collecting an elbow in the face in a challenge in the final minutes.



Argentina defender Gabriel Mercado (L) is the toast of his teammates after scoring the all-important goal against Brazil during their Superclasico encounter in Melbourne yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS