

SPORT



Roger Federer was masterful yesterday as he brushed aside a spirited Tomas Berdych in straight sets in the semifinal for a chance to win a record eighth Wimbledon crown, but he will have to get through Marin Cilic (INSET), who resisted Sam Querrey to book his first final.

PHOTOS: AFP/ REUTERS



Roger sets date with history

To face Cilic in the final for a record eighth title

AFP, London



Seven-time champion Roger Federer reached his 11th Wimbledon final on Friday, downing 2010 runner-up Tomas Berdych of the Czech Republic 7-6 (7/4), 7-6 (7/4), 6-4.

The 35-year-old, bidding to win a record eighth title and become the oldest champion at the All England Club in the Open era, will face Croatia's Marin Cilic in Sunday's final.

Seventh-seeded Cilic reached his first Wimbledon title match at the 11th attempt with a 6-7 (6/8), 6-4, 7-6 (7/3), 7-5 win over America's Sam Querrey.

"I feel very privileged to be in another final and get the pleasure to play on Centre Court another time," said Federer who was playing in his 42nd Grand Slam semi-final.

He is the second oldest man to make the Wimbledon final after 39-year-old Ken Rosewall finished runner-up in 1974.

With Andy Murray and Novak Djokovic suffering injury-hit exits in the quarter-finals and Rafael Nadal losing in the last 16, Federer will be the favourite to become Wimbledon's oldest champion, succeeding Arthur Ashe who was almost 32 when he won in 1975.

But despite leading Cilic 6-1 in career meetings, Federer will be wary of a man who was two sets to love up on him in the quarter-finals last year and

held match points.

Federer had defeated 2010 runner-up Berdych 18 times in 24 matches before Friday and he was quickly in the ascendancy, breaking for 3-2.

But an uncharacteristic double fault handed the break back in the eighth game before the 18-time major winner played a more composed tiebreak.

He pocketed the opener when Berdych mis-hit and ballooned the ball wide.

Berdych kept pressing but had to fend off more break points in the fourth game of the second set before Federer again swept through the breaker on the back of a 5/1 lead.

The big Czech would have to win from two sets down at the Slams for the first time in 38 matches if he were to return to the final.

Berdych, who had the face of his vanquished quarter-final opponent Djokovic painted on the tongues of his tennis shoes, saved a break point in the fifth game of the third set.

Federer then saved two to go to 3-3, made the Czech pay with a break for 4-3 and raced through a 50-second service game for 5-3.

Victory was his in the 10th game when Berdych netted a weary forehead.

Cilic, the 2014 US Open winner, fired 25 aces and 70 winners past world number 28 Querrey, the man who ended Murray's reign as Wimbledon champion in the quarter-finals.

Arjuna wants probe into 2011 WC final

AFP, Colombo

Former Sri Lanka skipper Arjuna Ranatunga on Friday demanded an investigation into the country's 2011 World Cup final defeat by India amid allegations of match fixing.

Ranatunga, in a video posted on Facebook, said he was shocked by Sri Lanka's six-wicket defeat in the final at the Wankhede Stadium in Mumbai.

"I was also in India giving commentaries at the time. When we lost, I was distressed and I had a doubt," Ranatunga said. "We must investigate what happened to Sri Lanka at the 2011 World Cup final."

"I cannot reveal everything now, but one day I will. There must be an inquiry."

Without giving names, Ranatunga said players could not hide the "dirt" with their clean white cricket clothing.

Sri Lanka, batting first, scored 274-6 off 50 overs and appeared in a commanding position when Indian superstar Sachin Tendulkar was caught for 18. India turned the game dramatically thanks partly to poor fielding and bowling by Sri Lanka.

Local media have also raised suspicions of Sri Lankans throwing the match.

Philander steadies SA

AFP, Nottingham



Vernon Philander's unbeaten fifty revived South Africa, after Stuart Broad sparked a collapse that saw the Proteas lose four wickets in the last session of a see-saw first day of the second Test at Trent Bridge on Friday.

South Africa were 309 for six at stumps after returning captain Faf du Plessis won the toss.

Philander was 54 not out and recalled all-rounder Chris Morris, one of three changes to the side that lost the first of a four-Test campaign by 211 runs at Lord's last week, 23 not out.

South Africa had been 179 for two at tea, but they soon slumped to 235 for six.

The previously well set Quinton de Kock (68) and Hashim Amla (78) both

fell to Broad as the fast bowler, who led England's attack with three wickets for 47 runs in 19 overs, struck on his Nottinghamshire home ground.

To the very first ball after tea, left-hander de Kock chased a wide Broad delivery and edged to former England captain Alastair Cook at first slip.

Amla eventually paid the price for repeatedly mis-hooking when such a shot off Broad found Mark Wood at long leg.

All-rounder Ben Stokes then took two for four in 11 balls.

Du Plessis (19) was well-caught left-handed down the legside by diving wicket-keeper Jonny Bairstow off a thin glove.

SCORES IN BRIEF

SOUTH AFRICA: First innings 309 for 6 (Amla 78 not out, De Kock 68, Philander 54 not out; Broad 1-26, Stokes 2-77)



England fast bowler Stuart Broad (L) stopped South Africa's momentum with a three-wicket haul on the first day of the second Test in Nottingham yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

BCB wants to respect Tamim's wishes

SPORTS REPORTER



Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) president Nazmul Hassan said that they were showing respect to Tamim Iqbal's sentiment regarding the reported incident behind his premature departure from England, but they will protest in full force if the player decides to lodge a complaint.

"This is a very sensitive issue and its significance is very high. If something like that happened it is important to report it and take the matter to law enforcement. In fact, I guess something or the other happened. It's not as serious as we are thinking or has appeared in the media," Hassan told the reporters at his residence yesterday.

"It is really difficult for us. Tamim is such a player -- you may say our best batsman and a very humble guy. Maybe Tamim was not in a state to file a preliminary report or maybe he didn't think it was necessary

"When we don't want to disclose the reason behind any incident we generally say it's a personal issue, like someone cites personal reasons when he steps down. Tamim wanted to end this by saying it's a

personal issue. Whatever happened, when a player like Tamim doesn't want to talk about it we should respect it. But Bangladesh Cricket Board will raise an uproar if he decides to complain to us," Hassan told reporters at his residence yesterday.

Hassan however suggested that: "Security must be ensured for every player and you know in the cricket world it is taken seriously. I am not talking about this incident. But I would request all of my players to report to us if something happens. We will take appropriate action."

For the last few days, Tamim was the centre of discussion following news that he cut short his Essex stint after playing only one match.

Although the batsman cited personal reasons it was learnt from a source close to the BCB that Tamim, who was in England with his wife and one-year-old son for an eight-match commitment to county side Essex Eagles for the Natwest T20 Blast, had cut his stay short after one match because of an attempted hate crime the previous night in Stratford.

The alleged hate crime against Tamim and his family in Stratford also caught the attention of the world media where some condemned and lamented the attack.



AUSTRALIA PAY DISPUTE

Agreement on the horizon?

AAP, Brisbane



Australian cricket's warring parties edged closer on Friday to a new pay deal, attempting to chip away at the revenue-sharing deadlock.

Cricket Australia (CA) and the Australian Cricketers' Association (ACA) have been preaching for months about how desperate they are to thrash out an agreement.

Recently, there have been actions to back up the words, especially since CA chief executive James Sutherland's move to involve himself in talks.

Progress this week included a marathon session on Friday that dragged on beyond close of business. There is the prospect of further talks on the weekend.

An in-principle agreement could be reached soon. However, the complexities of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) can't be understated.

Revenue sharing, the salary model used for 20 years since the first MoU to deliver players a set percentage of the revenue they generate, is simple in

theory.

In reality, it involves divvying up billions of dollars from varied sources to hundreds of players on different pay scales.

CA remains adamant the existing model is untenable but has shown a willingness to share surpluses. The ACA has indicated it is flexible over aspects of the model.

Slicing up the pie is tricky for any sport but cricket has unique challenges because annual revenue differs drastically, spiking for example when England or India tour.

"Revenue sharing gets very complicated," Dr Ross Booth, one of Australia's eminent sports economists, told AAP.

"There are different sorts of revenue-sharing arrangements. You've got a problem of which revenue streams are included and you've got to have a lot of rules for unexpected revenue.

"The basic argument for revenue sharing is the players have an incentive to grow the game and increase revenue."

Booth, a senior lecturer at Monash University, has no ties with CA or the ACA. He played cricket alongside

Sutherland when they were students.

He disagreed with CA's assertion that revenue sharing must be scrapped to ensure more funds were directed to grassroots.

"It's a lame argument there isn't enough money," Booth said.

"It's a bit of a red herring."

"Cricket Australia rake in revenue and make decisions on what to spend it on. For example, whether or not to expand the Big Bash, which has been a great innovation and helped grow revenue."

ACA player liaison manager Simon Katich noted players understood the need to modernise the revenue-sharing model.

"To not only include the female players for the first time but also to ensure the growth of the game," former Test opener Katich told AAP.

"Cricket has not only survived by giving players a percentage of revenue but thrived in the process."

"The benefit of having a structure that rises and falls with the money available is it ensures the players never take more than the game can afford."



Craig Ervine hit an unbeaten 151 as Zimbabwe recovered from a shaky start to reach 344 for eight at stumps on the first day of the one-off Test against Sri Lanka in Colombo yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

Ervine ton rescues Zim

AFP, Colombo



Craig Ervine hit an unbeaten 151 to pull Zimbabwe out of trouble on the opening day of their one-off Test against Sri Lanka on Friday.

Ervine's career-best effort lifted Zimbabwe from a precarious 70-4 to 344-8 at stumps. Sri Lanka spinner Rangana Herath took four wickets.

The left-handed batsman held on with Donald Tiripano (24 not out) at the end of play, putting on a frustrating 62-run stand for the ninth wicket.

Ervine, who surpassed his previous Test best of 146, built crucial partnerships including a 84-run fifth-wicket stand with Sikandar Raza (36).

It was the 31-year-old's second Test ton in the 12th match of his seven-year-old international career.

Herath, 39, who returned figures of 4-

106, provided early delight for Sri Lanka's new Test captain Dinesh Chandimal after he lost the toss.

Herath sent back openers Regis Chakabva for 12 and Hamilton Masakadza for 19 to rattle the Zimbabwe top-order at the R Premadasa Stadium in Colombo.

Paceman Lahiru Kumara got debutant batsman Tarisai Musakanda caught behind for six as Zimbabwe suffered regular losses in the first two sessions.

Herath took Raza and then Malcolm Waller (36) but Ervine stood firm from one end to thwart Sri Lanka's bowlers.

Medium-pace bowler Asela Gunaratne claimed two wickets while off-spinner Dilruwan Perera and Kumara took a wicket each.

SCORES IN BRIEF

ZIMBABWE: First innings 344 for 8 (Masakadza 19, Ervine 151 not out, Williams 22, Raza 36, Waller 36, Tiripano 24 not out; Herath 4-106, Gunaratne 2-28)