

## 'I've been dreaming of this'

*Andreescu says after stunning Serena in final*

REUTERS, New York

Teenager Bianca Andreescu said Saturday's US Open final triumph felt all the more rewarding after a 2018 qualifying defeat left her feeling particularly low and languishing outside the world's top 200.

This time last year a despondent Andreescu was sat at home nursing an injury and coming to terms with a second successive failed attempt at making the main draw in New York.

"It's definitely a process of life. You're never going to have ups all the time. So I think in those moments, you just have to deal with it the best that you can, which is to just keep fighting for your dreams and just stay as persistent and persevere as much as you can," Andreescu said.

"I know in those moments you feel like you can't. But if you believe that there are good times ahead, then those tough moments are definitely worth it. I think it builds you as a character. I think everyone should go through it because it just makes you stronger."

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Twelve months on and the 19-year-old was hoisting aloft the US Open trophy as Canada's first Grand Slam singles champion, and the youngest major winner since Svetlana Kuznetsova here in 2004.

She stalled Serena Williams's bid for a record-tying 24th Grand Slam title with a 6-3, 7-5 win,

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**Bianca Andreescu**

withstanding a rousing second-set recovery from the American to become the seventh first-time major champion in the past 11 events.

"This wasn't the only time I visualized playing in the finals actually against Serena Williams. It's so crazy, man," said an emotional Andreescu, briefly pausing to collect her thoughts.

"I've been dreaming of this moment for the longest time. Like I said after I won the Orange Bowl (in 2015), a couple months after, I really believed that I could be at this stage."

"Since then, honestly I've been visualizing it almost every single day. For it to become a reality is just so crazy. I guess these visualizations really, really work."

Andreescu will break into the top five Monday after her remarkable breakthrough run at Flushing Meadows, where she scooped a winner's check for an eye-watering \$3.85 million, taking her 2019 earnings to over \$6 million. She started the year with career

winnings of just \$215,888.

Andreescu, just the second Canadian woman to play in a Grand Slam final after 2014 Wimbledon runner-up Eugenie Bouchard, reiterated her commitment to serving as an inspiration for aspiring athletes back home.

"I've said this many, many times before. I'm going to say it again. It's been a goal of mine to inspire many people, especially Canadian athletes," Andreescu said, born in Toronto to Romanian parents.

"I think that this win will hopefully do that, not only this win but just what I've accomplished this past year because so many Canadian athletes have paved the way for me when I was young. Hopefully I can be that person to them."

Andreescu credited Carling Bassett, who had been the last Canadian woman to reach the US Open semi-finals in 1984, and basketball great Steve Nash, a two-time NBA Most Valuable Player, as motivating her as a young athlete.



**Bianca Andreescu became the first Canadian to win a Grand Slam final, defeating local favourite Serena Williams 6-3, 7-5 in the US Open final on Saturday, denying the 37-year-old a record-equaling 24th Grand Slam title.**

PHOTO: AFP

## Age-group swimming from tomorrow

SPORTS REPORTER

The swimmers, who were picked through a talent hunt programme named 'Bangladesh in search of best swimmers' and have been in long-term training under the supervision of Bangladesh Swimming Federation (BSF), will be in focus when the Saif Powertec 33rd National Age-Group Swimming and Diving Championships get underway at

the Syed Nazrul Islam Swimming Complex in Mirpur on Tuesday.

Former Korean coach Park Tae Gun picked 60 talented swimmers from across the country through a six-month programme and later those swimmers were brought under long-term training with the hope of building some quality swimmers for the South Asian Games. However, the Korean coach left Bangladesh almost a year ago, leaving the job of nursing those swimmers upon

four local coaches.

Out of the 60 swimmers, 18 have already been expelled for different reasons. Among the remaining 48 swimmers in the training camp, 20 have already been in the camp for the upcoming SA Games, which will be held in Nepal in December.

SA Games gold-winning swimmer-turned-coach Shahjahan Ali Rony is optimistic about the swimmers' chances to produce good results in the championships,

which was last held in 2017.

"In the last edition, the swimmers from the talent hunt programme won 22 gold medals for different teams. This time I am hoping even better from them. BKSP always dominated age-group swimming by winning maximum gold medals out of 100 events, but the selected swimmers have already reduced the domination of BKSP in age-group championships," said Rony, one of four local coaches taking care

of the swimmers.

Rony also believes that five or six swimmers can secure their place in the final squad of the senior team for the SA Games, but feels that those swimmers will need more time to produce good results at international level.

The participating swimmers will compete in 103 events in five age categories of the championships, informed BSF general secretary MB Saif at a press conference at the BOA headquarters yesterday.

## 'I could have been more Serena'

AFP, New York

us open Serena Williams is wondering when she will start playing like a 23-time Grand Slam champion again in a major final, calling her poor showing in Saturday's US Open final loss "inexcusable."

Williams fell to 19-year-old Canadian Bianca Andreescu 6-3, 7-5 at Arthur Ashe Stadium on the same court where she won her first Grand Slam title 20 years ago, nine months before Andreescu was born.

"I love Bianca. I think she's a great girl. But I think this was the worst match I've played all tournament. It's hard to know that you could do better," Williams said.

"Bianca obviously played well. I think her returns make me play better and put pressure on my serve. At the same time it's inexcusable for me to play at that level."

Williams had 33 unforced errors. She hit nine aces but misfired eight double faults and hit only 44 percent of her



**A dejected Serena Williams takes a seat after her loss to Bianca Andreescu in the US Open final.**

PHOTO: AFP

first serves. She dropped 30 of 43 points on her second serve.

"I believe I could have played better. I believe I could have done more. I believe I could have just been more Serena today," Williams said. "I honestly don't think Serena showed up. I have to kind of figure out how to get her to show up in Grand Slam finals."

Williams, who remains one Slam title shy of matching Margaret Court's all-time record, has lost the past two Wimbledon and US Open finals since returning after having a baby two years ago. And she's struggling to find answers for bad performances in the biggest matches.

"All of it honestly, truly is super frustrating," Williams said. "I'm so close, so close, so close, yet so far away."

"I don't know what to say. I guess I got to keep going if I want to be a professional tennis player. And I just got to just keep fighting through it."

Williams also downplayed the pursuit of Court's record. "I'm not chasing a record. I'm just trying to win Grand Slams," she said. "It's definitely frustrating, but for the most part I just am still here. I'm still doing what I can do."

Williams figures time will heal the pain, but it won't be any time soon. "In 20 years, I definitely will be like, 'Wow, that wasn't so bad,'" she said. "It's very hard right now in the moment to take this and say, 'You did OK,' because I don't believe I did."



**Australia pacer Pat Cummins (2nd from L) celebrates after getting the prized scalp of Ben Stokes -- one of his four victims in a match-winning second-innings effort -- on the final day of the fourth Test yesterday.**

## Australia retain Ashes

AFP, Manchester

Pat Cummins led the way before Josh Hazlewood struck as Australia retained the Ashes with a 185-run win over England in the fourth Test at Old Trafford on Sunday.

England, set a huge target of 383 to win, were bowled out for 197 following some spirited lower-order defiance. Cummins, the world's top-ranked Test bowler, took 4-43 in 24 overs.

The match ended when Craig Overton, who faced 105 balls, was lbw to Hazlewood for 21 after the tailender's review failed to overturn umpire Kumar Dharmasena's decision.

Victory ensured Australia kept hold of the Ashes at 2-1 up with one to play in the five-Test campaign. If Australia avoid defeat at the Oval next week they will have won their first Test series in England for 18 years.

"It feels amazing to know the urn is coming home," former captain Steve Smith, who was named man of the match, said. "I've been here a few times when things haven't gone our way. This was always one to tick off my bucket list. It's extremely satisfying."

Australia captain Tim Paine said he was overcome with emotion.

"The amount of work that's tried to go on in to retain the Ashes has been enormous and I'm really proud of this group and how

we bounced back from Headingley," he said. "We're thrilled. This is what we came here to do, to take the Ashes home. We'll have a bloody good night tonight together and celebrate but we'll be back on deck next week. We want to win the Ashes 3-1."

He also hailed Smith, saying: "Steve is the best player I have ever seen. He showed that again in this Test match. He knows the game so well and reads it so well."

Australia coach Justin Langer singled out Smith and Cummins for praise. "We've got the best fast bowler in the world (Pat Cummins) and the best batsman in the world," he said.

Meanwhile, England captain Joe Root said he was "bitterly disappointed".

"I'm bitterly disappointed. I thought the way we fought today, the character we showed, every single one of them can be proud of that today. To come so close to taking it to the Oval is hard to take. We've still got to look forward and make sure we level the series."

### SCORES IN BRIEF

**AUSTRALIA:** First Innings 497-8 decl and 186-6 decl (Smith 82, Archer 3-45)

**ENGLAND:** First Innings 301 and 197 all out (Denly 53, Buttler 34; Cummins 4-43, Hazlewood 2-31)

**Result:** Australia won the match by 185 runs and lead the five-match series 2-1.

**Player-of-the-match:** Steve Smith.

## England, Portugal and France fire

AFP, Paris

France and Portugal got their Euro 2020 qualification campaigns back on track with wins over Balkan pair Albania and Serbia that boosted the world and European champions chances of making next summer's tournament.

France moved back top of Group H with a 4-1 thumping of Albania thanks to a Kingsley Coman's first international goals in more than three years and further strikes from Olivier Giroud and substitute Jonathan Ikone at the Stade de France.

Iceland briefly led the standings after beating Moldova 3-0 earlier in the day, but were joined on 12 points by Didier Deschamps side and Turkey, who needed a last minute Ozan Tufan strike to edge Andorra 1-0, with the French on top on goal difference.

"The balance sheet is very positive. We could have won by more," said Deschamps. "We did what we had to do, even if we relaxed a bit at the end."

The easy win was a good end to a night that started off in bizarre fashion, with the match kicking off late after the hosts mistakenly played the Andorran anthem, leading to the bemused Albanian players refusing to play until the right tune was played.

B on five points from three games after they also struck four times in Belgrade, with William Carvalho, Goncalo Guedes, Cristiano Ronaldo and Bernardo Silva giving Fernando Santos' side a 4-2 victory that was their first win of the qualifying campaign.

They are eight points behind leaders Ukraine, who top the group unbeaten

having played five times.

Earlier England maintained their 100 percent record as Harry Kane's hatrick inspired a 4-0 demolition of Bulgaria.

Kane has now scored 25 goals in 40 England appearances after a 25th-minute tap-in and two second half penalties which keep his side top of Group A with nine



**England captain Harry Kane hit a hatrick in a 4-0 demolition of Bulgaria at Wembley in a Euro 2020 qualifier on Saturday, taking his tally for the Three Lions to 25 goals in just 40 games.**

PHOTO: AFP

| RESULTS  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>England</b><br>Kane 24, 50-pen, 74-pen, Sterling 55       | <b>4 - 0 Bulgaria</b>   |
| <b>Kosovo</b><br>Muriqi 20, Vojvoda 67                       | <b>2 - 1 Czech Republic</b><br>Schick 16                                |
| <b>Serbia</b><br>Milenkovic 68, Mitrovic 85                  | <b>2 - 4 Portugal</b><br>Carvalho 42, Guedes 58, Ronaldo 80, B Silva 86 |
| <b>Lithuania</b>   | <b>0 - 3 Ukraine</b><br>Zinchenko 7, Marlos 27, Malinovskyi 62          |
| <b>France</b><br>Coman 8, 68, Giroud 27, Ikone 85            | <b>4 - 2 Albania</b><br>Cikalleshi 90-pen                               |
| <b>Turkey</b><br>Ozan Urfan                                  | <b>1 - 0 Andorra</b>  |
| <b>Iceland</b><br>Sigthorsson 31, Bjarnason 55, Mudrac 77-og | <b>3 - 0 Moldova</b>  |

points from three matches, a point ahead of Kosovo who stunned the Czech Republic with a 2-1 win.

Kane also laid on Raheem Sterling for his strike 10 minutes after the break.

"To be able to study him and the way he works at his game, for the youngsters he's an incredible example. In those moments he has supreme temperament and technique," Southgate said of Kane.

England will have a chance to open up a gap at the top of the group when they host Kosovo at St Mary's stadium in Southampton on Tuesday.

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