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What to WATCH

STAR SPORTS SELECT 1 & 2
US Open
Quarterfinals
Live from 10:00pm

Zaniolo tears ACL again

REUTERS

Italy midfielder Nicolo Zaniolo will undergo surgery to repair a torn anterior cruciate ligament in his left knee just weeks after recovering from a similar injury in his right knee, his club AS Roma said on Tuesday.

The 21-year-old limped out of Monday's Nations League match against the Netherlands in obvious pain after what looked like an innocuous tackle.

"Nicolo Zaniolo will undergo surgery on Wednesday after MRI scans today confirmed the player has suffered a complete tear to the anterior cruciate ligament of his left knee," Roma said in a statement.

Zaniolo was previously out of action for the first six months of this year after the first injury, which he suffered during a 2-1 defeat to Juventus in January.

He returned to action against Napoli on July 5

and scored arguably one of the best goals of the Serie A season in a 6-1 win at SPAL with a run from the halfway line which left several defenders in his wake.

He was making his seventh appearance for Italy on Monday.

Zaniolo was with Fiorentina as a youth before joining Serie B side Virtus Entella in 2016, where he spent one season and made his professional debut.

He was signed by Inter Milan for the 2017-18 season but played only for their youth team and then joined AS Roma where his talent began to flourish.

(L) Italy's diminutive midfielder Nicolo Barella rose above Virgil van Dijk and Nathan Ake -- two towering defenders of Netherlands – to power home the decisive goal during their Nations League fixture in Amsterdam on Monday. PHOTO: TWITTER

Mancini pleased with dominance

Haaland hits brace in Northern Ireland rout

AFP, *Paris*

Nicolo Barella extended Italy's two-year unbeaten run as he scored the winner in Monday's 1-0 victory away to the Netherlands in the Nations League while Erling Haaland netted twice for Norway in a 5-1 thrashing of Northern Ireland.

Roberto Mancini's Italy saw their record 11-match winning streak end with last week's draw against Bosnia and Herzegovina but got the best of the Netherlands in Amsterdam courtesy of Inter Milan midfielder Barella's header in first-half stoppage time.

Barella's header on a Ciro Immobile cross made the difference in Amsterdam, but all the statistics went in their favour too. The Azzurri had 57 per cent possession, completed 528 passes to 339, and recovered 44 balls to 36.

Mancini pointed out 'it's not easy to dominate the Netherlands on their home turf' after their 1-0 victory.

"The whole team played well, because it's not easy to dominate the Netherlands on their home turf. We could also have won by a bigger margin," said the coach in his press conference.

"Naturally, in the last few minutes we felt tired and they kept putting long balls forward, with Virgil van Dijk a defender going upfront. Overall, Gigio Donnarumma only made one real save in the 90 minutes."

Italy move top of League A, Group 1 while Poland registered their first points after a 2-1 win over Bosnia in Zeneca despite the continued absence of rested striker Robert Lewandowski.

Haris Hajradinovic put Bosnia ahead on 24 minutes with a penalty but Kamil Glik's powerful header pulled Poland level at the break before Kamil Grosicki nodded home the winner.

Romania came out on top against Austria in Klagenfurt, with Denis Alibec, Dragos Grigore and Alexandru Maxim on target in a 3-2 victory.

Christoph Baumgartner had equalised for the hosts and Karim Onisiwo struck a late consolation as Austria ceded top place in League B, Group 1 to their opponents.

Norway shook off their opening loss to Austria as Borussia Dortmund striker Haaland helped tear apart Northern Ireland in Belfast.

Paddy McNair cancelled out Mohamed Elyounoussi's fine finish but Haaland, who struck his first international goal in Friday's defeat, thumped in from the edge of the area to restore Norway's lead.

Alexander Sorloth scored twice, the second via an assist from Haaland who completed the scoring on the hour with another superb finish.

Scotland scraped past an inexperienced Czech Republic 2-1 in Olomouc to go top of League B, Group 2.

The Czechs on Sunday announced a squad comprising 21 newcomers for the Scotland encounter after two backroom staff tested positive for Covid-19.

Saif and Lee test positive for Covid-19

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh opener Saif Hassan and Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) Head of Physical Performance Nick Lee tested positive for coronavirus, the board said through a press release yesterday. They displayed no symptoms leading up to the sample collection, the press release added.

The BCB's medical team has advised them to go into isolation immediately, in accordance with Covid-19 management protocols, until they undergo another test.

The BCB collected samples on Monday from 24 individuals, including 17 players in Dhaka, the results of which came yesterday.

21-year-old Saif made his Test debut against Pakistan in February this year and has played two Tests for Bangladesh.

Lee had reported positive on August 14 in Dubai and negative on August 23 after 10 days in isolation. He also completed a 14-day quarantine on arrival to Dhaka prior to yesterday's test.

"Our consultant for Covid-19 is reviewing Lee's case to determine whether it is a new or previous infection before advising on the management plan," said BCB's chief physician Debashish Chowdhury.

According to chief selector Minhajul Abedin, 37 cricketers -- including members of the preliminary Test squad and High Performance squad who are scheduled to tour Sri Lanka -- will undergo tests.

The 13 remaining players had their samples collected for testing yesterday and the results are expected today. BCB had earlier halted individual training to enhance safety measures and the individual training is expected to resume from today.

The board is planning a week-long residential camp ahead of the tour of Sri Lanka.

The camp is set to begin on September 21. The BCB will conduct Covid-19 Tests in four phases. The three remaining phases are scheduled on September 18, 21 and 24. The final test will be held 72 hours before the Tigers board their flight to Sri Lanka.

Bangladesh's tour of Sri Lanka, which was originally scheduled for July-August, was postponed due to the pandemic. The Tigers are now expected to travel in late September to take part in the three-Test tour one month before the first Test, expected to begin from October 24.

From clown shoes to quarterfinals

REUTERS, *New York*

Australia's Alex de Minaur once struggled to grow into his body as a tennis player but the tenacious 21-year-old feels himself a snug fit in the U.S. Open quarterfinals.

De Minaur made his first Grand Slam quarterfinal on Monday with a 7-6(6), 6-3, 6-2 win over Canada's Vasek Pospisil, giving Australia a player to rally around in the absence of women's world number one Ash Barty.

"At the end of the day, this is where I want to be, and this is where I truly believe I belong, second weeks of Slams and going deep," De Minaur told reporters after setting up a clash with second seed Dominic Thiem.

The man nicknamed "Demon" has turned heads since 2018 when he made the third round of Wimbledon on his main draw debut and eclipsed tempestuous talent Nick Kyrgios as Australia's number one before turning 20.

His court speed and never-say-die game have also endeared him to fans weary of Kyrgios's lapses in effort.

Behind De Minaur's rise has been plenty of hard work, though, and waiting for his body to catch up with his aspirations.

"As a young kid, I was probably 11 or 12 and already had the same size (11) foot I have right now," he said.

"So it felt like (I was) a little kid with clown shoes on. I didn't have the best footwork, the best movement. So it was just a lot of work, especially in technique of movement from a young age."

At 6 feet tall, De Minaur is the shortest player in the last eight but stands out as an all-court scrapper among baseline like Alexander Zverev and Daniil Medvedev, who are tipped to dominate the game's future with raw power.

Toppling three-time Grand Slam finalist Thiem will be a big ask for De Minaur, who joked he would prefer to "blast people off the court" if he could.

"This running thing gets tiring," he smiled. "I've got to deal with what God gave me. He didn't give me the best physique, I'm not as strong or as tall as other people so I have to find ways to win. That's the way I win.

"I want that to be my brand of tennis. I want people in the locker-room to know that if they're going to beat me, they're going to have to go through me."

Roy, Manik promise long-term planning

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Football Federation presidential candidates Badal Roy and Shafiqul Islam Manik promised proper long-term plans that would revitalise Bangladesh football after submitting nominations for the October 3 polls at the BFF House yesterday.

Roy, the incumbent BFF vice-president, and former national coach Manik said that the sorry state of Bangladesh football had prompted them to contest the elections. They will offer a challenge to incumbent BFF president Kazi Salahuddin, who has been at the helm of the game's local governing body for the past 12 years and is going to contest for another term under banner of Samilito Parishad, which has submitted nominations for all 21 posts.

"Everyone wants a change in football leadership and if leadership is changed, there is no chance it will be worse than what Kazi Salahuddin has made it. He took Bangladesh from 140 to 197 in the FIFA rankings," said Roy. "I am contesting to save football and my main inspiration is that every organiser at the grassroots level has turned into a Baday Roy and they will cast votes in my favour. We need a proper plan to develop football and I want to make a good plan with the grassroots in focus. So if there is a good plan, we will walk towards it."

Roy maintained that his "physical condition was not a problem" but lamented that the polls were being held during the pandemic.

"I think the elections should be deferred by a year. Holding the elections in such a situation is to put many lives at the risk of death. I myself am still recovering from post-Covid-19 problems. I can't even talk smoothly."

Manik, also a former Ducsu sports organiser, said: "The works being done for the development of football is unsatisfactory and the way they have been working also does not seem like the right way to me. Those who have been working in football for the past 12, including Badal Roy and Kazi Salahuddin, are failures.

"That's why I feel that I am a capable one to serve football. I had before worked for myself by coaching the national team and club teams but now I am thinking of delivering for the nation and the BFF president's post is the perfect platform."

"If I am elected BFF president, I want to prepare a long-term masterplan collectively. I also want to revive country-wide national tournaments, which were once popular among spectators, as well as focus on age-group development through clubs," said Manik, who urged candidates to refrain from dragging councillors into unethical practices.

All 49 candidates -- three for president, two for senior vice-president, eight for vice-president and 36 for 15 members -- submitted nominations yesterday.

Djokovic urges 'support' for line judge

AFP, *New York*

Novak Djokovic urged his fans to be "supportive and caring" of the line judge at the centre of his US Open default row after she was attacked by online trolls.

Some critics accused the line judge, who fell to the ground and appeared to have trouble breathing, of exaggerating.

"Please also remember the linesperson that was hit by the ball last night needs our community's support too," the 33-year-old Serb tweeted on Monday.

"She's done nothing wrong at all. I ask you to stay especially supportive and caring to her during this time."

Following the end of a dramatic saga which saw Lionel Messi almost moving away from Barcelona, the Argentine superstar was back in individual training for the second day at his familiar Joan Gamper Training Ground yesterday. PHOTO: FC BARCELONA

Bid to oust Bartomeu gathers pace

REUTERS, *Barcelona*

With Lionel Messi's bid to leave Barcelona still raw, president Josep Maria Bartomeu may be counting his days after 'Mes que una mocio' (More than a motion), announced they were racking up signatures for a vote of no-confidence.

The group, supported by candidates for next year's presidential election, said they had reached 7,500 club member signatures of the required 16,520 by Sept. 17.

If the campaign reaches its target, two-thirds of the club's 150,000 members have to vote against Bartomeu to trigger an imminent election.