



RAFAEL NADAL

GRAND SLAM TITLES (21)

Australian Open (2009, 2022); French Open (2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020); Wimbledon (2008, 2010); U.S. Open (2010, 2013, 2017, 2019)

MATCH STATISTICS

Time: 5hr 24min
Medvedev-Nadal
23 Aces 3
5 Double Faults 5
76 Winners 69
52 Unforced Errors 68
6/22 Break Point
Conversions 7/22
189 Total Points Won 182



You raised your level after two sets for the 21st Grand Slam. I thought you were going to get tired, and maybe you did a little, but you still won the match. You are an amazing champion.

- Daniil Medvedev about Rafael Nadal

'That guy is super human'

AGENCIES

If it went to five sets, Rafael Nadal was no chance -- or at least that is what they said. But everyone should have known better, after all Nadal was not supposed to be here in the first place, not back in a final in his first Grand Slam since a six-month injury layoff.

Add an additional bout with Covid-19 and even Nadal himself admitted he was stunned to be in this position -- he was just grateful to still be on the court.

"This has been one of the most emotional matches of my career," Nadal said. "It's just amazing. I didn't know a few months back if I would even be playing again on the tour and I am back on this court before you all today. You don't know how much I fought to be here.

"The huge support I have received in the three weeks here is going to stay in my heart for the rest of my life."

You simply cannot question greatness and in a five-set war of attrition, it was Nadal who outlasted Daniil Medvedev 2-6, 6-7, 6-4, 6-4, 7-5.

Nadal came out on top to move ahead of era rivals Novak Djokovic and Roger Federer on the all-time list of men's major winners.

Djokovic missed his chance

to improve on his nine Australian Open wins when he was deported over vaccination issues on the eve of the tournament, while Federer is injured.

It was one of the 35-year-old Spanish warrior's greatest title victories in his 29th Grand Slam final as he won his second Australian Open, 13



years after his first in 2009.

Medvedev was seemingly on the brink after being broken in the fifth set but the Russian, down 30-0 at 4-5 down, roared back to break Nadal and put himself back in the frame.

But there was another twist to come as Nadal broke right back with a second chance to serve for the match -- and he did just that to complete his remarkable six-month comeback.

"It is 21 for Rafa and he stands alone at the summit," Todd Woodbridge said in commentary for Channel Nine.

four Grand Slams twice and the third oldest man in the Open Era (since 1970) to win a Grand Slam title, behind Ken Rosewall and Federer.

It is the fourth time in his storied career that Nadal had clawed back to win from two sets down, but the first time in a Slam final.

It was the second time Nadal had denied Medvedev in a Grand Slam final, winning a five-set epic at the 2019 US Open. Nadal holds a 4-1 lead over Medvedev in their five matches to date.

It crowned an extraordinary effort from Nadal at the year's opening major, having to modify his game to compensate for a degenerative bone disease in his left foot that ended his 2021 season last August.

Medvedev had wrecked Djokovic's calendar Grand Slam push and bid for a 21st title in New York four months ago and was aiming to do the same to Nadal in Melbourne.

Medvedev lost his second consecutive Australian Open final after falling in straight sets to Djokovic in last year's final.

"It's tough to talk after five hours 30 and losing but I want to congratulate Rafa because what you did today, I was amazed," Medvedev said.

"A remarkable match, a remarkable comeback and a remarkable champion."

"How do you frame it?" Jim Courier added.

"That guy is super human." Nadal also became only the fourth man to win each of the

Miraz's quandary sparks controversy

SPORTS REPORTER FROM CHATTOGRAM

Yesterday was a break day in the fixtures of the ongoing Bangladesh Premier League. But still, drama had unfolded as all-rounder Mehedi Hasan Miraz was on the verge of leaving his Chattogram Challengers outfit.

Miraz was adamant to depart for Dhaka from Chattogram just a day after the 24-year-old was stripped of the franchise's captaincy. And with his flight scheduled to depart for Dhaka at 5:30pm, Miraz had walked out of the team hotel and almost made it into his car before Chattogram Challengers' logistics manager convinced him into staying.

Although Miraz decided to stay at the team hotel, the cricketer had issued a strong warning.



"If he [Chattogram Challengers' COO Yasir Alam] stays with the team then I will leave," said Miraz, making it clear that he had a fall out with the franchise's management.

Yasir had told the media on Saturday that it was coach Paul Nixon's decision to replace Miraz as the captain of the side. Miraz,

however, claimed that Nixon had said no such thing.

After a day-long drama, Miraz finally decided to stay back with the franchise.

"There was a lot of miscommunication. But we talked and sorted it out," Chattogram team owner Rifat Uz Zaman said.

Even though Miraz decided not to leave the team, he did mention he would not captain the side if asked again.



Captains vow good show in league

SPORTS REPORTER

All captains of participating clubs vow to put up better shows in the upcoming Bangladesh Premier League beginning on February 3 at four different venues in- and outside Dhaka.

Participating 12 teams have been in good shape so far after playing two tournaments -- Independence Cup and Federation Cup -- and are eager to play the professional football league as they expressed their opinions at the logo unveiling and captain meet programme held at a city hotel yesterday.

Defending champions Bashundhara Kings' Brazilian captain Robson Da Silva said that they missed a cup [Independence Cup] but that they would be trying to win the hat-trick title of Bangladesh Premier League. "We have taken a good preparation for the league and our aim is to win the league title though it is not an easy job but we are hopeful to regain it," said Abahani captain Nabib Newaj Jibon, whose side grabbed back-to-back titles after winning Independence Cup and Federation Cup. Saif SC captain Jamal Bhuiyan said, "Of course we will be trying to win the league title though it is going to be a hard job because some five to seven teams will be fighting for the league title."

Lack of preparation reflected in results

SPORTS REPORTER

Expectations were high for defending champions Bangladesh in the ICC Under-19 World Cup in the West Indies this time around after the Akbar Ali captained the young Tigers to glory in the previous edition of the tournament by beating India in the final.

However, those familiar opponents knocked out Bangladesh in the quarterfinals on Saturday to draw curtains on a disappointing World Cup campaign for the holders.

Rakibul Hasan and Co. put up a decent fight against India despite being bundled out for a paltry 111 but eventually fell to a five-wicket defeat in Antigua.

In terms of preparation, there was a stark contrast between the team that won the World Cup in South Africa in 2020 and the current batch. In the build-up to the mega-event in 2020, the young Tigers had played over 30 matches. This time, a lack of match preparation remained one of the biggest setbacks.

Following the outbreak of Covid-19, the Bangladesh Cricket Board's game development committee was unable to arrange the amount of matches they managed ahead of the triumphant campaign in 2020. Bangladesh played just 12 games, winning just three, before heading to the Caribbean.

Bangladesh were thrashed 5-0 in a series against Sri Lanka in October last year after the selectors included Rakibul, Tanzim Hasan Sakib and Prantik Nawrose, who were part of the

previous World Cup-winning squad.

However, those inclusions raised questions about a lack of clarity and foresight from the selectors in preparing a new lot of cricketers and were seen as sticking to a result-oriented mindset.

Batting also proved a major concern as they began their World Cup campaign on the receiving end of a seven-wicket thrashing from England after being bundled out for just 97 runs. Bangladesh then managed to bounce back and reach the quarterfinal by beating Canada and the UAE by eight and nine wickets respectively.

"Obviously our batting remained disappointing throughout the tournament, which cost us badly. I don't want to make excuses but the pitch in the quarterfinal was not up to the mark. It was an underprepared surface. It was very difficult for the batters to bat on such a pitch and I think the toss proved to be crucial as well," age-level selector Sazzad Ahmed, who accompanied the team, said.

However, according to Sazzad there are some bright prospects for Bangladesh who can go on to represent the Tigers at the senior level in the future.

"Yes, the tournament didn't go well but there are still some positives. We have got a few fast bowlers like Ripon Mondol, who picked up twelve wickets in four games and bowled really well throughout the tournament. The likes of Tanzim and Ashikur Zaman are also very promising fast bowlers and if we can groom them properly they can surely represent Bangladesh at the senior level," he added.



The pictures, defining two opposite emotions, have two years between them. One is of Shoriful Islam's jubilant leap after having India Under-19 batter Ravi Bishnoi run-out on way to ensuring Bangladesh's first-ever World Cup trophy by winning the ICC Under-19 World Cup final in Potchefstroom back in 2020. The other is of Mahfijul Islam walking back with India's Ravi Kumar the one celebrating as India redeemed themselves by beating the young Tigers in the quarterfinal of this edition of the Under-19 World Cup in Antigua on Saturday.