

Sinner beats Alcaraz again

AFP, Umag

Jannik Sinner defeated Spanish teenager Carlos Alcaraz for the second time in four weeks on Sunday to take the Spaniard's Umag clay-court title.

World number 10 Sinner came from a first set deficit to beat the fifth-ranked Alcaraz 6-7 (5/7), 6-1, 6-1 in the final.

Sinner, who now has six career titles but a first on clay, had also defeated the 19-year-old in the fourth round at Wimbledon earlier this month.

"I am obviously very happy," said Sinner who saved all nine break points he faced.

"I have had a tough year until now, I had some unfortunate moments, but we worked every time to play better, to be a better player, to be a better person. So, I'm very happy to be finally lifting a trophy this year, but I know that I still have a lot of things to improve. It's all about the process."

Alcaraz had been seeking his fifth title of 2022 but instead was defeated in a final for the second successive week after losing to another Italian, Lorenzo Musetti in Hamburg.



Emma McKeon competes in one of her events of the 22nd Commonwealth Games at the Sandwell Aquatics Centre in Birmingham on Sunday. The 28-year-old Australian became the most successful Commonwealth Games athlete of all-time, leading an Australian sweep of the women's 50 metre freestyle to claim a record 11th gold medal.

PHOTO: AFP

Dottin quits int'l cricket

REUTERS

All-rounder Deandra Dottin, whose 38-ball century against South Africa remains the fastest hundred in women's T20 Internationals, has retired from the West Indies side citing negative team environment.

The 31-year-old all-rounder announced the decision on Twitter adding she looked forward to "...playing domestic cricket around the world."

"... the current climate and team environment has been non-conducive to my ability to thrive and reignite my passion," said Dottin, who made her West Indies debut in a 2008 ODI against Ireland.

"With much sadness but without regret, I realize that I am no longer able to adhere to team culture and team environment as it has undermined my ability to perform excellently."

Dottin is the most capped West Indies' women cricketer having played 124 Twenty20 and 143 one-day internationals for them.

She became the first woman to smash a century in T20 Internationals following her unbeaten 112 off 45 balls in a 2010 World Cup match against South Africa in St Kitts. She has scored close to 6500 international runs and claimed 134 wickets with her medium pace.



MAHMUDULLAH hired for third T20I!

ABDULLAH AL MEHDI

T20I skipper for just a series, Nurul Hasan Sohan's injury triggered chaos and exposed the lack of clarity in the decision-making of the Bangladesh national team's think tank once again.

Mosaddek Hossain, who got a fiver on Sunday during the second T20I against Zimbabwe, was named the captain for the third T20I and surprisingly, Mahmudullah Riyad, who had been replaced as captain by Sohan, returned to the squad for the third T20I today despite Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) previously insisting that youngsters would be tried for the Zimbabwe series.

Riyad's form with the bat had been a major concern ahead of the series. And the team management decided to rest the 36-year-old while the board worked out a new direction for the T20 side. If Riyad's form was a concern, why has the BCB now included him without any evidence of his form improving? Was it just to mitigate a disaster?

If this was about taking the T20I side to a new direction, what was the point of bringing in a player who has been part of the leadership?

It was learned that Riyad, who is in Zimbabwe with the ODI squad, was not initially onboard with the idea of him being included in the side. The BCB felt that Riyad's inclusion would help the side greatly in the final T20I which is a series-decider.



Given there was a dearth of middle-order batters in the squad, Riyad eventually decided to harken to the BCB's call. While giving an opportunity to uncapped Parvez Hossain Emon would have been in line with BCB's aim to take things in a new direction with youngsters, it appears that calling back Riyad just as a player was done to relay a message to everyone – that he has been hired in times of crisis.

Asked about the team management's plans going forward with a new group, team director Khaled Mahmud Sujon said that they still feel that a new batch of

cricketers would have to make up the T20I outfit.

"This T20 World Cup should not be in our immediate focus if we are thinking of a long-term plan to build a team in the next two years. The way we are playing T20s, there is not much we can hope to gain from the previous generation. When we talked about fearless cricket, that fearless approach has to come from every player in the side," Mahmud told The Daily Star yesterday.

When the question of why Riyad was sought out as a replacement was asked, a portion of the blame was shifted to the selectors.

"Unfortunately, there are five openers in the team announced. There was no contingency plan for the middle-order and that's why Riyad wasn't prepared. To overcome the crisis, Riyad later agreed to our proposal for the greater interest of the team," Mahmud said.

"On the other hand, we haven't excluded Riyad completely as a player. Still, he has a chance to continue with the team. Regarding his captaincy, it is no secret that we are thinking of a new captain."

The BCB previously skirted around the question of who was going to be the permanent skipper in T20Is, having appointed Nurul as captain for just a series. The air regarding Riyad's captaincy had not cleared even after Nurul was made captain but with Riyad now returning without the responsibility, it appears that his stint as captain has unceremoniously ended.

Verstappen slams fans

REUTERS

Formula One championship leader Max Verstappen on Sunday slammed fans who burned Lewis Hamilton-branded merchandise, calling their actions disgusting.

"That's of course not acceptable," the Red Bull driver, who beat Mercedes rival Hamilton to last year's title in a controversial season-finale, told reporters after winning the Hungarian Grand Prix.

"These individuals, I definitely don't agree with that because that's just disgusting."

Verstappen, Formula One's youngest race winner and the first Dutch world champion, has a legion of fans dubbed the 'Orange Army' that follow him around the world.

Footage circulating on social media over the Hungarian Grand Prix weekend appeared to show fans burning Hamilton merchandise.

It followed reports of drunken males harassing female fans, homophobic chants and racist abuse at the Austrian Grand Prix earlier this month, Red Bull's home race which was packed with Verstappen supporters.

The next race in Belgium, where Verstappen was born, is another Orange Army stronghold with the Dutch Grand Prix at Zandvoort, the 24-year-old's home race, following the week after.

The incidents in Austria prompted Formula One to launch its 'Drive it Out' anti-abuse initiative on Saturday.



Peaty says he's lost his spark

REUTERS, London

Triple Olympic swimming champion Adam Peaty said he was heartbroken and missing his usual spark after suffering his first 100m breaststroke defeat in eight years at the Commonwealth Games.

Peaty, once-dominant world record holder in the event and Commonwealth Games champion in 2014 and 2018, finished fourth in Sunday's final after leading at the halfway mark.

English team mate James Wilby took gold in a time of 59.25 seconds with Australians Zac Stubbly-Cook and Sam Williamson taking silver and bronze.

Peaty's time of 59.86 seconds compared to his personal best of 56.88. It was his first defeat in the 100m breast since the 2014 British championships. "I'm heartbroken with last night's result," said the 27-year-old Englishman, who broke his foot in the gym last May in the first significant injury of his career and missed June's world championships in Budapest.

The cast on his foot came off only a month ago. "With 25 metres to go I had nothing in the tank. Maybe that's over-exposure on the foot. Sometimes you just have a bad race, I can't pinpoint where I went wrong," said Peaty.

"I've kind of lost that spark, whether it's with my foot, but I'll be looking to find that over the next months and into the next two years."

'I stay confident in front of goal'

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh can confirm a berth in the final of the SAFF U-20 Championship with a win against Nepal in their group final match at the Kalinga Stadium in Bhubaneswar today and underpinning their hopes will be forward Mirajul Islam.

The tournament's top-scorer so far with four goals despite muscular discomfort in his right thigh, Mirajul came off the bench and struck the lone goal against Sri Lanka in Bangladesh's opening match before slotting a sensational hat-trick against Maldives in their third match.

Coupled with a win against India in their second game, Bangladesh are top of the table with nine points, three ahead of Nepal and India although either could catch Bangladesh by winning their respective matches.

To ensure a place in the final, Bangladesh require at least a result better than five-goal loss against Nepal and for India to beat Maldives in the day's second match.

Ahead of their final group match against Nepal, forward Mirajul said that they were fully focused while speaking to The Daily Star over phone from India yesterday.

"I'm not thinking of the pain in muscle. All the players are eager to



complete the group stage with an all-win record and play the final," said the BFF Academy player, who hogged the limelight by scoring 10 goals in 11 Bangladesh Championship League matches before switching to the top-tier for the Bangladesh Premier League's second phase for Mohammedan.

Having explained their philosophy of improving match by match, he added: "I think all the players in the squad are good players and also good in their respective positions. They are motivated to give their best on the field."

"There are 12 players from the BFF Academy so they have good understanding. That helps us perform well. Besides, we have also trained in how to play international matches during a one-month training programme ahead of the SAFF Championship," the grade-10 student from Jhalakathi added.

Although Mirajul could not get any goals for Mohammedan in the three matches when he came on as a substitute, the BKSP student is showed his goal-scoring prowess in the ongoing SAFF Championship. But he attributed that success to his teammates.

"The goals I scored were because of my teammates, who helped me score. Those were outcomes of combined efforts," Mirajul said. "I always remain focused on finishing from inside the box. I also stay confident of scoring if I get space and the chance to muster a shot from inside the box."

The promising striker was also unconcerned with his future, focused only on the task of bringing the trophy home.

"As I am representing Bangladesh for the first time, I want to be a part of a team of champions. I am not thinking of the future because time will settle my destination," the teenage forward concluded.



England's Chloe Kelly channelled Brandi Chastain when she took off her shirt after netting the winner against Germany in the Women's Euros final on Sunday, with the celebration receiving a stamp of approval from the former United States player herself. Kelly scored in the second half of extra time at Wembley Stadium and threw off her shirt in jubilation, 23 years on from when Chastain did the same after converting the decisive penalty in the 1999 World Cup final against China.

PHOTO: AFP