

'Spaghetti' man Alcaraz 'hungry for more'

AFP, New York

Carlos Alcaraz said Sunday he was "hungry for more" after claiming a maiden Grand Slam triumph at the US Open and a place in the record books as the youngest world number one in the history of men's tennis.

The 19-year-old Spaniard defeated Norway's Casper Ruud 6-4, 2-6, 7-6 (7/1), 6-3 in the final to become the youngest Grand Slam men's champion since Rafael Nadal at the 2005 French Open.

"Right now I'm enjoying the moment. I'm enjoying have the trophy in my hands but of course, I'm hungry for more," said Alcaraz, the first teenager to be number one in the rankings.

"I want to be in the top for many, many weeks and I hope many years. I'm going to work hard again after this week, these amazing two weeks. I'm going to fight for have more of this."

Sunday's victory comes in a breakthrough year for Alcaraz.

His US Open title followed Masters wins in Miami and Madrid – where he defeated Nadal and Novak Djokovic back-to-back – Rio and Barcelona.

"Since I won Miami, I thought I was able to have a Grand Slam in my hands. But before Miami, I was thinking that I have to still grow up," he said.

However, that optimism faded with a last-16 exit at Wimbledon, a first-up loss at the Montreal Masters and a



quarter-final defeat in Cincinnati.

"In Montreal and in Cincinnati I lost the joy a little bit. I felt the pressure. I couldn't smile on court which I'm doing in every match, every tournament," he explained.

"I came here just to enjoy, to smile on court, to enjoy playing tennis. If I have fun, I saw my best level, my best tennis."

Alcaraz's coach Juan Carlos Ferrero said the champion was "born to play these tournaments" and that there was much more to come from his compatriot.

"I think he's on 60% of his game. He can improve a lot of things. He knows and I know that we have to keep working," said Ferrero.

"Once to get to the No. 1, it's not done and you go. You have to keep working, keep playing at a huge level on that tournaments to keep winning."

"He knows that and I know that. I'm going to be very close from him to remember him."

Ferrero was French Open champion in 2003, the year that Alcaraz was born.

He has been guiding the new US Open champion since he was 15 when he was nowhere near the finished product.

"When he arrived to the academy when he was 15, he was like a spaghetti, very thin. We had to work," recalled Ferrero.

"Obviously we saw that he had very fast hands, very fast legs, but no muscles at all, not in the back, not in the legs. We had to work a lot. But obviously we saw something very special on him."

Alcaraz, however, was quick to point out on Sunday that he still only has one Slam title – 21 behind Nadal's men's record.

"But I'm on the road," he admitted.



(Clockwise from L) Sri Lankan fans celebrate in Colombo on Sunday night following their team's victory against Pakistan in the Asia Cup final. Sri Lanka captain Dasun Shanaka and teammates with the winners' trophy inside the dressing room. Player-of-the-tournament Wanindu Hasaranga kisses the trophy.

PHOTO: AFP/TWITTER

Sriram zones in on specific areas

SPORTS REPORTER

There was a sense of seriousness and clarity during the first day of Bangladesh's three-day training camp under the keen supervision of new technical consultant Sridharan Sriram at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

Since this was Sriram's first opportunity to work closely with the players, the match-scenario training session at the centre wicket in Mirpur was more akin to an eleventh-hour observation before the squad could be finalised for the ICC T20 World Cup next month and the preceding tri-nation series in New Zealand.

Although rain played foul throughout the day, Sriram and team director Khaled Mahmud Sujon were busy preparing the players according to different match-scenarios.

"We tried to challenge both batters and bowlers. We explained what we wanted from the batters in the first six overs, how they should bat and how the bowlers should bowl. It takes thirty minutes to complete six overs but we are taking 45 minutes. The coach [Sriram] spoke with each and every bowler about what we want and whether we are being able to execute it. Our main problem in the bowling department is that we are making mistakes despite doing things alright in the training," Mahmud told the media yesterday.

"We also worked on what to do in the death overs and what the field settings should be. Today we asked the batsmen to score 50 runs from six overs and allowed them to lose two wickets. Meanwhile, the bowlers' target was to concede less than 45 runs in the first six overs."



There was also fresh discussion about the future of former T20 captain Mahmudullah Riyad after the cricketer was seen batting in the both the Powerplay overs and slog overs during the match-scenarios.

With the cut-off date for announcing the World Cup squad set for September 15, Mahmud informed that the management was yet to make the final call on Mahmudullah's future.

"It is too early to say since Riyad is in the camp. Riyad has always been an important part of the team in white-ball cricket. We are yet to take a decision. We will finalise whether Riyad will be in the team or if we need him or not before forming the squad. All I can say is that Riyad is important for us, but it's good to have the discussion about whether he will be in the team or not. You can't say that Riyad is not an automatic choice and we need to keep everything in mind and work."

"At the end of the day, we will do whatever is needed for Bangladesh cricket. Riyad is as important as Yasir Ali in the team. In fact, everyone in the team is equally important. Riyad has the interest and dedication to continue playing, but we did not get what we expected from him. He may have made small contributions such as the run-a-ball 27 and a few 20-odd knocks, but Riyad is a match-winner and we need to keep that in mind," Sujon said.

Soumya Sarkar, who alongside Parvez Hossain Emon is a contender for the opening slot in the World Cup side, was also under the microscope yesterday.

The team management will also be relieved to see stylish batter Liton Das looking comfortable with the bat in the middle although he is still recovering from a hamstring injury.

FIT-AGAIN BUMRAH in India's T20 World Cup squad

REUTERS, New Delhi

India welcomed back Jasprit Bumrah in their Twenty20 World Cup squad on Monday, also recalling a fit-again Harshal Patel to bolster their pace bowling department.

Bumrah, whose unorthodox action and ability to bowl yorkers at will make him an asset particularly in the shortest format, missed the recent Asia Cup with a back injury that has kept him out of action since mid-July. Patel too has recovered from a rib injury to join the 15-member squad as a potent death-overs bowling option alongside veteran Bhuvneshwar Kumar.

Of the two wicketkeepers in the Rohit Sharma-led squad, Rishabh Pant gives India the option of playing the left-handed batsman as a free-moving 'floater', while Dinesh Karthik has a formidable reputation as a 'finisher'.

India, who begin their campaign with an Oct. 23 blockbuster against arch-rivals Pakistan in Melbourne, will miss the injured Ravindra Jadeja but have a like-for-like replacement in spin all-rounder Axar Patel.

Seasoned Ravichandran Ashwin was picked as the second spinner, behind Yuvezendra Chahal.

The seam duo of Mohammed Shami and Deepak Chahar, middle order batter Shreyas Iyer and leg-spinner Ravi Bishnoi have been kept on standby.

India, who could not make the final of the Asia Cup in the United Arab Emirates, will host a three-match Twenty20 series against world champions Australia from Sept. 20. It will be followed by six limited-overs internationals against South Africa at home before they fly to Australia.



Stokes vows no let-up

AFP, London

Ben Stokes vowed England would keep up their bold approach to Test cricket under coach Brendon McCullum after wrapping up a 2-1 series win over South Africa at the Oval on Monday.

The match was shortened to three days after the first day was washed out and the second scrapped following the death of Queen Elizabeth II.

But England still needed less than half an hour to seal victory by nine wickets in front of a sparse crowd in London.

"This game here, with it being shortened, our main aim was it ending in a result," England captain Stokes told Sky Sports.

"We felt we owed it to ourselves, we owed it to the nation who have shown their support throughout this whole summer towards us and we will always continue to play in a way that we feel is going to entertain people and always look for the positive side of cricket."

Bayern wary ahead of Lewandowski reunion

AFP, Berlin

Bayern Munich will welcome Robert Lewandowski's Barcelona to the Allianz Arena on Tuesday, hoping to jolt themselves out of a poor run of Bundesliga form.

Despite Wednesday's impressive 2-0 win at Inter Milan, Bayern have drawn three games in a row and sit in the unfamiliar position of third place after six matches.

While Bayern have not struggled to find the back of the net this season with 31 goals in nine games, they have missed Lewandowski's penetration at crucial moments in recent weeks.

Lewandowski has had a dominant start to life in Spain, scoring six times in five La Liga matches for Barcelona to sit in his usual spot atop the goalscoring charts.

With four wins and a draw, Barcelona are unbeaten in the league and sit second behind Real Madrid.

In the Champions League, Lewandowski opened his account with a hat-trick in Barcelona's 5-1 home win against Viktoria Plzen.

Speaking directly after their 2-2 home draw with Stuttgart on Saturday, Bayern sporting director Hasan Salihamidzic said his team knew better than most the kind of damage Lewandowski could inflict.

"We have been warned," Salihamidzic said about his former striker's form for his new club.



Bayern have a strong recent Champions League record against Barcelona, with two 3-0 wins last season along with an 8-2 quarter-final thumping on the way to winning the 2020 title.

The six-time European champions are however fully aware that this Barcelona side is stronger than some of the recent incarnations.

"Worried? I don't know (about that)," Salihamidzic said on Saturday when asked if his side were fearful ahead of Barca's visit.

"We have to shift up two gears, even three against Barcelona."

"Barcelona have top players, play good football (and 'Lewa' is up front, he uses every opportunity."

Manager Julian Nagelsmann said his side's Bundesliga form will not change the preparation for Tuesday's game.

"I approach the week the way I would have done it if we had won," Nagelsmann said on Saturday.

"We're trying to come up with a good idea for Barcelona, which will be difficult. I would have done the same thing if we had won 4-0 today."

After his side's 2-0 win over Inter, Nagelsmann said his side were "looking forward" to taking on the man who scored 344 goals in 375 Bayern appearances.

"I am looking forward to it (the reunion with Lewandowski). Not so much as an opponent because he's very dangerous, but as a person I will be pleased to see him."

Nagelsmann said he hoped fans would welcome Lewandowski back warmly, despite the acrimonious nature of his departure.

"I hope the fans will honour that too, regardless of how things were with his departure."

Bayern forward Thomas Mueller, who said he was "mad at ourselves for the first time this season" after the draw with Stuttgart, said he was happy for the focus to shift away from his side's domestic problems.

"We're really looking forward to the duel - not just because of Robert," Mueller said.

"It's a meeting at the summit in the group."