

Verstappen lays down marker as young guns lead the way
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THE BIG ONE
ICC CRICKET WORLD CUP
SRI LANKA vs WEST INDIES

Cup Talk

India's Orange-Blue gear stumps Sunny!

AJAY NAIDU
BIRMINGHAM

WHILE there was a lot of song and dance about Team India wearing the Orange-Blue coloured clothing for the World Cup game against England, nobody actually knows where the use of the colour Orange was forced upon the team management.

And nobody even knows who took the call to have a second jersey, apart from the customary Blue, whether it was the COA or top BCCI officials? Then again, while almost everyone seems to have an opinion about the team colours, former India captain turned commentator Sunil Gavaskar has an altogether different take on the subject.

"I would like to know, whether it was the ICC that asked the Indian team to wear a different colour because England too wear Blue or whether the BCCI ordered for a change in colours on its own," he said.

"Nobody seemed to have a problem when Bangladesh played South Africa or when Pakistan played South Africa because all these teams wear predominantly Green (dark and light shades). If those teams are allowed to wear the colour of their choice, then why should only the Indians be asked to change colours," he reasoned.

Another thing that left the Indian Test legend stumped on the morning of the match was the scrapping of a function, that too without notice, for which he was especially invited by the BCCI.

"I was not supposed to be here in Birmingham for this game. But I came here because the BCCI had asked me to present here for a small function before the game wherein I was to present the new team jersey to the Indian captain Virat Kohli. But then, when and why that was cancelled at the last minute, I have no idea," said Gavaskar.

Probably all the hue and cry back home over the new Orange coloured clothing gave the BCCI a cold feet forcing it to cancel the programme. That, however, left Gavaskar stumped.

England end India's unbeaten run to revive semi-final hopes

REUTERS
BIRMINGHAM

A spirited England ended India's unbeaten run in the Cricket World Cup with a 31-run victory in a high-scoring group match to boost their semi-final prospects on Sunday.

Jonny Bairstow smashed a belligerent 111, Jason Roy returned from a hamstring injury to make 66 and Ben Stokes (79) provided the late burst in England's commanding 337-7 after electing to bat on an Edgbaston featherbed.

Rohit Sharma smashed his third hundred of the tournament and Virat Kohli his fifth successive half-century but India did not get another significant partnership and finished on 306-5.

England leapfrog Pakistan to fourth place with 10 points from eight games, while India remain second on 11 from seven matches.

"It's been frustrating a little bit for the guys, we know how well we can play," Bairstow said after collecting his man-of-the-match award.

"But today we were pretty good with bat, ball and in the field."

"It was the closest to a complete performance we've had in the competition but we also know we've got three must-win games in this World Cup up next." The hosts missed opener Roy particularly in their back-to-back defeats by Sri Lanka and Australia which had jeopardised their semi-final prospects.

The 28-year-old made an instant impact on his return, forging the tournament's highest opening stand with Bairstow and both survived some torrid moments before tearing into the Indian attack during their 160-run stand.

Bairstow nearly deflected a couple of inside edges on to the stump and Roy got a caught-behind reprieve on 21 when he gloved Hardik Pandya.

The umpire, however, declared it wide and the Indians deliberated for a while before deciding against reviewing the decision in front of an anxious crowd of predominantly Indian fans.

England reached the 150 mark in the 21st over and it took a stunning catch by sub-



England's Eoin Morgan celebrates with Jonny Bairstow and teammates after they beat India in the crucial World Cup group stage match at Edgbaston on Sunday. (REUTERS)

stitute fielder Ravindra Jadeja in the deep to send back Roy.

Bairstow brought up his eighth ODI century off 90 balls, celebrating by dropping his helmet, stretching out his arms and soaking in the applause.

Mohammed Shami (5-69) returned to end Bairstow's 109-ball blitz which included six sixes and 10 boundaries.

India managed to stem the boundary flow in the 30-40 over period, when they conceded only 43 runs while claiming two wickets.

Stokes clobbered three sixes and six boundaries in his blistering knock before Jasprit Bumrah dismissed him in the final over.

India, clad in their away orange-and-blue jerseys, wobbled early in their chase.

Chris Woakes began with

SCOREBOARD

ENGLAND		INDIA	
J. Roy c sub (Jadeja) b Yadav	66	R. Rahul c and b Woakes	0
J. Bairstow c Pant b Shami	111	R. Sharma c Buttler b Woakes	102
J. Root c Pandya b Shami	44	V. Kohli c sub (Vince) b Plunkett	66
E. Morgan c Jadeja b Shami	1	R. Pant c Wood b Plunkett	32
B. Stokes c sub (Jadeja) b Bumrah	79	H. Pandya c sub (Vince) b Plunkett	45
J. Buttler c and b Shami	20	MS Dhoni not out	42
C. Woakes c Sharma b Shami	7	K. Jadeja not out	7
L. Plunkett not out	1	E. Ashes (R/L, w/l)	12
I. Archer not out	0	TOTAL: For 5 wickets, 50 overs	337
Extras (D2, B2, W4)	33	INDIA: For 7 wickets, 50 overs	306
Dropped: (For 7 wickets, 50 overs)	337	Did not bat: Ash (R/L), Mank Wood	
Did not bat: Ash (R/L), Mank Wood		Fall of wickets: 1-60 (Roy), 2-205 (Bairstow), 3-207 (Morgan), 4-277 (Root), 5-310 (Buttler), 6-319 (Woakes), 7-336 (Stokes)	
Bowling: Sharma 10-2-49-5 (1w), Bumrah 10-1-14-1 (1w), Chahal 10-0-88-0 (2w), Pandya 10-0-60-0 (1w), Yadav 10-0-72-1		Result: England won by 31 runs	

three maiden overs, catching the scoreless KL Rahul off his own bowling in his second.

India could have been in a deeper crisis but Root, who made 44 with the slip off Kohli, then on four, at slip off

half-century but once again fell short of a hundred, slicing Liam Plunkett (3-55) to backward point.

Kohli could not be denied his 35th ODI century but he fell to Woakes after making 102 which included 15 boundaries.

Rishabh Pant made 32 in his World Cup debut and Hardik Pandya chipped in with a 45-run cameo but Mahendra Singh Dhoni, who made 42 not out, failed to do justice to his reputation as a 'finisher'.

"Every team has lost a game or two here and there. No-one likes to lose but we have to take it in our stride," Kohli said.

"We have to accept it. We are still playing good cricket. The mood is the same in the changing room. We will learn

STANDINGS

TEAM	P	W	L	NRR	PTS
AUSTRALIA	8	7	1	+1,000	14
INDIA	7	5	1	+0,854	11
NEW ZEALAND	8	5	2	+0,572	11
ENGLAND	8	5	3	+1,000	10
PAKISTAN	8	4	3	-0,792	9
BANGLADESH	7	3	3	-0,133	7
SRI LANKA	7	2	3	-1,186	6
SOUTH AFRICA	8	1	5	-0,080	3
WEST INDIES	7	1	5	-0,320	3
AFGHANISTAN	8	0	8	-1,418	0

Note: Top four teams qualify for semi-finals.

from it and move forward." Asked about their slow finish with Dhoni and Kedar Jadhav in the middle, Kohli said, "It was just not coming off. England were bowling good areas. It was not easy get to boundaries. We will have to sit down and assess."

WIMBLEDON: THE CHAMPIONSHIPS

Teenager Cori Gauff set for 'dream' debut against idol Venus Williams

REUTERS
LONDON

OF all the matches spread across the All England Club when Wimbledon begins on Monday none is more intriguing than the one scheduled for late afternoon on Court One between five-times champion Venus Williams and Cori Gauff.

Williams, at 39, is the oldest woman in the singles while fellow American Gauff, at 15, is the youngest ever to come through the qualifying tournament.

Gauff describes the draw as "a dream" and she might well wake up on Monday morning pinching herself, as this time last week she had no

idea she would receive a wildcard into the qualifying tournament and was preoccupied with schoolwork.

After winning her third qualifying match to book her place in the draw, she revealed that her first memory of watching tennis on television was of Serena and Venus Williams who had won 10 Grand Slam titles before she was born.

Now 'Coco' as she is known will play against her idol in front of a packed show-crowd in a clash of the generations.

The level-headed teenager was taking it all in her stride though and if there were nerves as she practised at the weekend, she was hiding them well. "I kind of fell like I was



Cori Gauff of the US gestures as she arrives for a practice session at the All England Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club in London. (REUTERS)

going to play one of them," Gauff said.

"Many people have been like 'do you like your draw?'"

Old & New

Venus Williams, at 39, is the oldest woman in the singles while fellow American Cori Gauff, at 15, is the youngest ever to come through the qualifying tournament.

"I love my draw. Playing one of the greatest players of all time is a dream - I'm excited to see how I do." Even 23-time Grand Slam champion Serena, who usually gets too nervous watching sister Venus, is intrigued.

"She's so cool. She's a great girl. I love her dad. They're just really cool people," Williams said on Saturday.

"It's a great moment for her and for Venus. She's playing against a player that actually reminds me of Venus. I think I might, might watch. I always get nervous watching Venus."

Swiss great Roger Federer, whose management company Team 8 also looks after Gauff, is excited.

"I'm super happy for her. I saw the last couple of games when she qualified. Obviously everybody was waiting to see what the draw was going to be like. I think that's fascinating, that she plays Venus now," he said.

"It's a great story. Coco is

a nice girl, works really hard. I think she's got a wonderful future ahead of her." Gauff, who won the French Open junior title aged 14, is coached by her father Corey who once played college basketball for Georgia State. Her mother Candi was a college gymnast.

"I feel blessed because my parents never put limitations on my goals," Gauff said at Roehampton this week.

"My parents always told me to shoot as high as I wanted to." Venus could be excused for feeling her age a little as she walks out to face a player 24 years her junior but Gauff does not regard her as old.

"I don't think of Venus as old - she's still killing the game right now," she said.

Football fans flock to Qatar 2022 exhibition in Sao Paulo

SC.QA
DOHA

THOUSANDS of people visited the Qatar @roadto2022 Exhibition in Sao Paulo to find out more about the next FIFA World Cup host nation. The installation, at JK Iguatemi Mall, was organised by the Supreme Committee for Delivery & Legacy (SC) and Qatar Football Association (QFA) – and coincided with Qatar's participation in the Copa America for the first time. Almost 10,000 people visited the exhibition, which featured FIFA World Cup™ memorabilia, crowdsourced photographs, models of the eight Qatar 2022 stadiums and details about Qatar's Asian Cup victory. In addition, the SC announced Brazilian legend Cafu as its latest ambassador during the exhibition run. Twice a FIFA World Cup winner, Cafu



Fans at the Qatar @roadto2022 Exhibition at the JK Iguatemi Mall in Sao Paulo, Brazil.

joins Xavi Hernandez, Samuel Eto'o and Mohamed Sadek as an SC ambassador. The SC also launched Spanish social media accounts on Facebook (Road to 2022 Espanol) and Instagram (@roadto2022es) during the exhibition. The accounts are proving

very popular and have attracted more than 125,000 followers in just two weeks. Nasser al Khater, FIFA World Cup Qatar LLC Chief Executive Officer, said: "Qatar's participation in the Copa America provided the perfect opportunity for us to engage with

people who will be interested in traveling to our country for the World Cup in 2022. "It was a delight to meet so many passionate football fans and give them a glimpse of what our tournament will be like in just over three years' time. We hope many of them will travel



to Qatar and enjoy our famous hospitality when we host the first World Cup in our region." Mansoor al Ansari, QFA General Secretary, said: "We were delighted to collaborate with this project and share details of the next FIFA World Cup host nation with

a new set of fans. We are sure many of them will feel inspired to visit our country when we proudly host the biggest football event in the world in 2022." The exhibition was supported by eight volunteers who live in Sao Paulo. All the volunteers had signed up to support

the SC's Volunteer Programme, which attracted more than 250,000 expressions of interest last year, including 148 people based in Brazil. One of the volunteers, Bas-san Hamoudi Assani, said he was delighted to support the delivery of the exhibition, which ran from 14-24 June. "It's been very interesting to learn about the World Cup, along with the story and history of Qatar," said Assani. "I'm sure they will host a fantastic tournament in 2022." Al Khater thanked the volunteers for their hard work during the exhibition. "The volunteers did an outstanding job. They were all hard working and enthusiastic – and it was a joy for our team to work alongside them. We're very proud that our worldwide callout for volunteers last year helped the delivery of this event."

Verstappen lays down marker as young guns lead the way



Austrian GP

Dutch Formula One driver Max Verstappen of Aston Martin Red Bull Racing lifts the trophy after winning the 2019 Austrian Formula One GP at the Red Bull Ring circuit in Spielberg, Austria on Sunday. (EPA-EFE)

AFP
SPIELBERG, AUSTRIA
MAX Verstappen laid down a marker for the future on Sunday and sparked a new controversy when he pushed Charles Leclerc aside to win 'the battle of the young guns' at the Austrian Grand Prix. The two 21-year-olds had started from the front of the grid, Verstappen for Red Bull and Leclerc for Ferrari, forming the youngest front row in Formula One history. Monegasque driver Leclerc converted his pole position into a comfortable lead, but his tyre degradation in the closing laps of the race left him vulnerable to a late attack from his Dutch rival. It climaxed on lap 69 when Verstappen swooped to pass on the inside of Leclerc at Turn Three and forced him wide and off the track as took the lead – a move that was called into question immediately as the stewards launched an investigation. The hearing to decide the outcome of the investigation and the result of the race did not begin until 6:00pm local time, around 90 minutes after the race finished. Verstappen, who had de-

lighted a vast and raucous 'Orange Army' of Dutch fans, said the incident was merely "hard racing" and that if he were penalised there would be "no point in F1 – and we should all go and stay at home." The Dutchman was lent support from Ferrari's four-time champion Sebastian Vettel, who finished fourth. Leclerc said he would let the stewards decide, but he felt it was "pretty clear". "I was on the outside, just like the lap before, when he left the space for a car width on the exit of the corner, but he didn't on the other lap. "So, we touched and I had to go wide. Obviously, I didn't have any chance to pass back. So, it's a shame." Ferrari team chief Mattia Binotto, whose team lost out after a stewards' investigation into an incident at the Canadian Grand Prix where Vettel was penalised for re-joining the race in a dangerous fashion, said he was confident the stewards would rule for the Italian team. That would give Leclerc his maiden Grand Prix victory, but in the most frustrating of circumstances. "It's been a fantastic fight on the track, but the rules are

clear, at the moment," said Binotto. "The regulation is causing a collision, or forcing a car off track. I think both situations were there and we should all go and stay at home." Red Bull team boss Christian Horner took a different view ahead of the hearing. "Max has got the opportunity – he's fully alongside, fully up the inside and, at that point, Max can't get out of the way. "Leclerc has to concede the corner at some point. It's clean. He's right there. Obviously, he came in aggressively, but what are you supposed to do? "If they take this victory away from Max here, in my view it would be stealing from Formula One," he said. The Dutch man's win brought an end to Mercedes' record unbeaten start to the season and broke the Silver Arrows' stronghold after ten straight wins overall. It also showed that one week on from the dreary procession at the French Grand Prix, Formula One remains a sport that can produce a thrilling spectacle in the right conditions and at the right circuit.



Winner Maverick Vinales (centre), Marc Marquez (left) and Fabio Quartararo after the MotoGP Race on the Assen TT circuit on Sunday. (EPA-EFE)

Vinales wins Dutch MotoGP

AFP
ASSEN, NETHERLANDS
MAVERICK Vinales cruised to his first win of the season at the Dutch MotoGP in Assen on Sunday, comfortably setting off world champion Marc Marquez who extended his lead at the top of the championship table. Yamaha's 24-year-old rider took control at the 'Cathedral of Speed' with a dozen laps to go, soon pulling clear for his sixth career MotoGP win in his 80th race. The mustachioed Vinales, who crossed the line almost five seconds clear of Marquez, told BT Sport: "This is honestly one of the tracks I like most in the calendar. I want to congratulate my team, they did a great job. I'm living my dream, it's been such a long time since my last victory!" Pakistan won the Asian Team Snooker Championship 2019, which concluded in Doha on Saturday, defeating India 3-2 in the final. Babar Masih and Zulfiqar Qadir of Team Pakistan-2 defeated India's Team-4 comprising Pankaj Advani, Lawman Rawat and Aditya Mehta to claim the winners' trophy.

Suarez devastated as shootout miss sees Uruguay crash out of Copa

REUTERS
SALVADOR, BRAZIL
LUIS Suarez broke down in tears after his shootout miss saw Uruguay dumped out of the Copa America by unfancied Peru on Saturday, the 15 times champions losing 5-4 on penalties after having three goals ruled out in a scoreless draw. Suarez spurned the first penalty of the shootout, his effort bouncing off the chest of Peru goalkeeper Pedro Gallese, to complete a frustrating evening for Uruguay's all-time top scorer, who also had a goal ruled out for offside. Every other player converted their spot kicks and Edison Flores sealed Peru's place in the last four by blasting past Fernando Muslera. Suarez, who rushed back to full fitness after undergoing knee surgery in May in order to make it for the Copa, covered his face with his shirt and was consoled by team mates after the shootout defeat. "Luis was very sad, he ended up missing in a decisive moment but that's football and life," Edison Cavani told reporters. "Sometimes you win, sometimes you lose. We have won the Copa before but today we



Uruguay's Luis Suarez (bottom right) whose penalty was stopped by Peru's goalkeeper Pedro Gallese reacts next to teammates Edison Cavani and Giovanni Gonzalez during the penalty shoot-out of their Copa America quarter-final match at the Fonte Nova Arena on Saturday. (AFP)

have to accept that we are out." Peru will face neighbours Chile in the last four, with tournament hosts Brazil meeting arch rivals Argentina in the other semi-final clash. "I am very proud. I am

speechless," said striker Paolo Guerrero after scoring in the shootout. "People said before Uruguay were the favourites but being favourites means nothing in football, especially in South America." Uruguay dominated the play during the game but Cavani, Georgian de Arrascaeta and then Suarez all had goals chalked off for offside which were each verified by VAR checks. They became the third team in this tournament to lose a quarter-final tie on penalties after a goalless draw after Paraguay were beaten by Brazil and Chile beat Colombia on spot-kicks. There is no extra time in Copa America quarter-finals in the event of a draw, although 30 minutes will be added on in the semi-finals and final if necessary. Uruguay defender Diego Godin lamented his side's inability to convert their chances. "We were just missing a goal, we kept looking for it but it didn't come and if we had scored it would have been a different game," he said. "We played well, but unfortunately we've been knocked out. We couldn't score and they struck their penalties better than we did." Uruguay won the Copa America a record 15th time in 2011 but they have underachieved in their last three appearances, losing to Chile in the last eight in 2015 and exiting in the group stage in 2016.

Madagascar beat Nigeria to top group in Cup of Nations shock

REUTERS
ALEXANDRIA, EGYPT
MADAGASCAR pulled off one of the great shocks of the Africa Cup of Nations finals when they upset Nigeria 2-0 on Sunday to finish top of Group B and advance to the knockout stages. A horrific defensive mistake and a wicked deflection from a free kick allowed the Indian Ocean islanders, making their tournament debut, to finish unbeaten ahead of both Nigeria and Guinea in the standings. Lalaina Nomenjanahary took advantage of sloppy defending by Leon Balogun to open the scoring in the 13th minute and Carolus Andriamahitsinoero netted the again eight minutes into the second half. Nigeria, one of the five African teams at last year's World Cup, had won their opening two matches but looked flat and proved unable to respond after going behind in their third and face extensive soul searching after an embarrassing setback. Nomenjanahary reacted quickly to intercept a pass backwards from John Ogi to Balogun, who inexplicably backed away from the ball on the edge of the Nigeria penalty box, almost inviting the Malagasy striker to steal it away. The early goal injected some



Madagascar's players rejoice after winning their 2019 Africa Cup of Nations Group B match against Nigeria at the Alexandria Stadium on Sunday. (AFP)

confidence into the Malagasy, a motley collection of players from the lower leagues in France as well as clubs in Belgium, Bulgaria and the United States, but they rode their luck towards the end of the first half as Nigeria sought an equaliser. Ahmed Musa had the best chance for the Super Eagles, unmarked for a first-time finish at the back post in the 31st minute, but he took a touch, giving Madagascar goalkeeper Melvin Adrien the opportunity to storm down on him and put him off his shot. Adrien might have conceded a penalty with his challenge but Nigeria's protests were waved away by referee Bakary Gassama. Nigeria brought on Wilfred Ndidi to try to inspire a second-half comeback but he was culpable for the second goal. First he gave away a free-kick on the edge of the area and then, as he jumped in the wall, deflected the 53rd-minute effort from Andriamahitsinoero. The ball took a wicked loop off Ndidi's body before falling into the net. Madagascar, ranked 108th in world football, finished on seven points to six for second-placed Nigeria. Guinea's four points in third place should be enough to see them also advance to the last 16 but Burundi, in last place without any points, are eliminated.

ABDELRASOUL, MAHMOUD SUFFER LOSS



Qatar's second team of Tamer Abdelrasoul and Assam Mahmoud lost their second Pool E match at the FIVB Beach Volleyball World Championships to Brazilians in straight sets on Sunday. In Hamburg, Germany, debutants Abdelrasoul and Mahmoud played the first set better but were outclassed in the second during their 16-21, 8-21 defeat in 33 minutes. With this loss, they are at the bottom of the pool, which is led by Curtelli and Fihó with two wins. US seeds Ilya Leshukov and Konstantin Semenov from Russia and Billy Allen and Stafford Slick from the US have one win each after the second round. While the top three will advance to the knock-out stage, while the fourth team will bow out after the group play.

Qatar tennis teams to train abroad

TRIBUNE NEWS NETWORK
DOHA

THE players of Qatar national juniors and grassroots tennis teams left here on Sunday for Belgium and France to begin their preparations for the new season under the summer training programme prepared by the Qatar Tennis, Squash and Badminton Federation.

During their training camp, the Qatari players will play some friendly matches against players from other nationalities, improve their fitness and skill levels.

The Qatari under-10 boys team, under-12 and under-16 girls' teams will hold their training camp in Kim Clijsters Academy in Bree, Belgium for two weeks.

The Qatari delegation to Belgium includes Safiya al Thani, Tamim Fakhro, Nawaf al Mohannadi, Amna Houmoud and Ghanim al Ghanim and will be accompanied by the coaches Al Mazri bin Has-



A Qatari tennis player in action in Doha.

san and Ahmed Saeed in addition to the administrator Salwa al Hajri.

The Qatari under-12 and under-14 boys team will undergo their training camp in Mouratoglou Tennis Academy

in Nice, France from June 30 to July 26.

The Qatari players will also participate in some international tournaments in France to bring together players from different tennis schools.

The Qatari delegation to France is headed by Ahmed Bati and includes Abdulaziz al Mufthah, Faisal al Khelaifi, Ghanim al Sulaiti, Hassan Wali, Nasser al Khelaifi, Nasser al Yafei, Jassim al Thani and coach Lotfi al Marnaoui.

Khalid al Khelaifi, Board Member of the federation and chairman of national teams' committee, said that the training camps aim at preparing the Qatari players for the upcoming sport season and international tournaments.

"When preparing for any training camp, the federation takes the needs of each age group into consideration," said Khelaifi, while stressing that Mouratoglou and Kim Clijsters Tennis Academies are classified among the best in the world. He also reaffirmed that the federation is keen to provide the Qatari players with all possible means of support to reach their goals.

Djokovic, Federer & Nadal all ready to rule again

AFP
LONDON

NOVAK Djokovic, Roger Federer and Rafael Nadal are set to tighten their private stranglehold on Wimbledon as rivals struggle to keep afloat while bidding to dethrone the sport's A-list stars.

World number one Djokovic is the defending champion and chasing a fifth title at the All England Club.

Federer, promoted to second seed, can win a ninth crown while two-time champion Nadal is seeking to complete a rare back-to-back Roland Garros-Wimbledon double.

Twelve months ago, Djokovic arrived at Wimbledon with his career threatening to spiral into decline.

Unable to shake off the effects of right elbow surgery, the Serb was ranked at 21, his lowest position for over a decade.

But two weeks later, Djokovic had captured the 2018 title to add to his 2011, 2014 and 2015 wins, becoming the lowest-seeded player to take the Wimbledon trophy since Andre Agassi in 1992.

Since then, he has been rejuvenated, going on to claim a third US Open and seventh Australian Open title.

The only blip was a rain-hit semi-final exit to Dominic Thiem at Roland Garros, a loss which ended his attempt to become just the second man to hold all four Slams at the same time twice.

"Coming off from the sur-



Novak Djokovic (left), Roger Federer (center) and Tomas Berdych during a training session at the All England Lawn Tennis Championships in Wimbledon, London, on Sunday. (EPA-EFE)

gery, being unable to have consistency with results, this was a huge springboard for me, the win at Wimbledon last year," said Djokovic, who will take a 10-2 career record over Philipp Kohlschreiber into their first-round clash on Monday.

Federer, chasing a 21st major, first played Wimbledon in 1999.

Pushing 38, he would be the oldest ever Grand Slam champion if he were to lift a ninth title.

Close to landmark
The Swiss star is also just five wins from becoming the first man to register 100 victories at the same Slam.

But Federer is quick to praise the influence of Djokovic and Nadal – between them, the trio have won 53 of the last 64 Slams.

WIMBLEDON BEGINS TODAY

Federer starts on Tuesday against South Africa's Lloyd Harris, who is making his Wimbledon debut.

Nadal, meanwhile, arrives in London on the back of a 12th Roland Garros title.

His 18th career major also meant he moved within two Slams of Federer's all-time mark for the first time.

The Spaniard, ranked two but – much to his irritation – seeded three was champion in 2008 and 2010.

He is now trying to join Bjorn Borg by achieving the Roland Garros-Wimbledon double for the third time.

"I won here in 2010 after a very, very tough first couple of rounds. Sometimes that helps, especially in this event, that

you arrive here without playing much on this surface," said Nadal, who starts his campaign against Japan's world number 258 Yuichi Sugita.

After that looms a possible titanic clash with Nick Kyrgios, who shocked him in 2014, in the second round.

It's been 17 years since anybody not named Djokovic, Federer, Nadal or Andy Murray captured the Wimbledon title. That long-distant honour went to Lleyton Hewitt in 2002.

The problem for the chasing pack in 2019 is their record at the tournament as well as various frailties in body and spirit.

Them, Alexander Zverev and Stefanos Tsitsipas, who occupy the next three spots in

the world rankings, have yet to get past the last 16 on Wimbledon's grass.

Kei Nishikori, the world number seven, was a quarter-finalist in 2018 while eighth-ranked Kevin Anderson, seeded fourth this year, was runner-up 12 months ago.

Anderson saved a match point to beat Federer in the quarter-finals.

His challenge to Djokovic in the final, however, was compromised by playing a six-hour 36-minute semi-final to beat John Isner.

It was the second longest match in the history of Wimbledon and decided by a 26-24 final set.

There will be no repeat of such lung-busting epics this year as Wimbledon has introduced a final set tiebreaker – at 12-12 – for the first time.

Holder Kerber wary of Serena threat

AFP
LONDON

THERE are seven Grand Slam winners in defending champion Angelique Kerber's quarter of the draw at Wimbledon this year but the German admits she is only conscious of one particular minifielder – Serena Williams.

Kerber won her third career major at the All England Club last year to add to her triumphs at the 2016 Australian and US Opens.

Williams was her victim in the 2018 final as she avenged her loss to the 23-year-old major winning American in the final two years earlier.

"I don't know everyone who is in my draw, I just know Serena is there. Heard it all the time already," said the 31-year-old German on Sunday.

"Serena is one of the best players in the world. She's a champion. To see how she is still competing and trying to come back, trying to play her best tennis, she's one of the toughest opponents to beat still.

"Also with her experience, how she tries to play always her best tennis. Of course, young players are coming, but for me she is one of the best ones."

Fifth-ranked Kerber will have plenty of challenges before she even contemplates facing seven-time champion Williams who she can't meet before the last 16.

Amongst potential third round opponents are five-time major winner Maria Sharapova, the 2004 Wimbledon champion, and 2011 US Open winner Samantha Stosur.

Also in her section are new world number one and Roland



Defending champion Angelique Kerber of Germany.

Garros winner Ashleigh Barty, 2017 Wimbledon champion Garbine Muguruza as well as 2004 US Open and 2009 winner Svetlana Kuznetsova.

It's enough to put even an experienced player such as Kerber under pressure, especially when it comes after a roller-coaster career at the Slams which has often seen her flatter to receive when defending a title.

Her defence of her Australian Open in 2017 ended in the fourth round while her attempt to defend the US Open crown later that year was over in a flash, Naomi Osaka applying the knockout blow in the first round.

At Roland Garros this year, her hopes of completing the career Grand Slam were also dashed at the first hurdle when Kerber fell to Russian teenager Anastasia Potapova.

Happily for Kerber, she has not lost in the first round at Wimbledon since 2011. "Wimbledon is more like mentally, also you have the experience of playing a lot of matches on grass, which is completely different to the other surfaces," said Kerber, who made the final in Eastbourne on Saturday, losing to Karolina Pliskova.

Lanka to meet WI today, hang on to slim semis hopes

AFP
DURHAM (UNITED KINGDOM)

SRI Lanka captain Dimuth Karunaratne is refusing to give up on his team's World Cup hopes ahead of Monday's must-win clash against the West Indies.

Karunaratne's side no longer have control of their World Cup fate after losing to already-eliminated South Africa on Friday.

A victory in Durham against the West Indies, who are also about to head home, could keep 1996 champions Sri Lanka in with a slender chance of making the semi-finals of the 10-team tournament going into their last match against India.

They will need help from other results, but Karunaratne is confident his team's batsmen are ready to power them to a strong finish in their last two group games.

"We can control the other games, you know. Sometimes they were playing really well,

sometimes they couldn't," Karunaratne told reporters on Sunday.

"I think we had a good chance. Still we have a chance, I think, but we have to win these two games and wait to see what will happen in the other games."

"Only we can control the matches we are going to play, the two matches, so we are trying to give our best and try to win these two matches and, hopefully, if we have a chance, we definitely can be in the top four teams."

Sri Lanka's World Cup campaign has been undermined by poor batting, with their surprise win over hosts England largely achieved due to fine bowling.

Karunaratne and Kusal Perera have both made half-centuries, but no Sri Lankan has reached three figures yet.

"I think the batting is the main collapse, you know. We couldn't get a hundred," Karunaratne said.

"We played like six, five



South Africa's Hashim Amlia shakes hands with Sri Lankan players after winning the Cricket World Cup match at Chester-Le-Street, England, on Friday. (REUTERS)

matches, so we couldn't get a hundred, only a couple of 50s in our team, so that is the only major thing.

"If you want to compete

with the good sides, you definitely got to have a good batting line-up and you have to put runs on the board."

Karunaratne has resisted

the temptation to bring in an extra batsman after Nuwan Pradeep suffered chickenpox, calling up bowler Kasun Rajitha instead.

Looking to the future

West Indies, after having been knocked out of contention for a semi-final spot, are already looking ahead to the future with a young core coming to the fore, head coach Floyd Reifer said on Sunday.

West Indies have not won a single game at the tournament since beating Pakistan in their opening match and were ruled out of making the top four after a 126-run loss to India last week left them ninth in the standings.

The Caribbean side suffered narrow defeats to Australia and New Zealand in the group stage and Reifer said the squad had frank discussions on their performances so far, with an eye on finishing strongly with two more games to go.

"Yes, we're out of the World Cup but there is still a lot of cricket to play after the World Cup," Reifer told reporters ahead of Monday's match against Sri Lanka.

"It's important for us to...

find the winning ways and find the winning formula going forward; it's important for us to play this game as hard as possible. We want to create that winning culture, it has to start from somewhere.

Despite a disappointing campaign in England and Wales, Reifer said West Indies cricket had a bright future after a number of youngsters staked their claim at the tournament to be permanent fixtures in the one-day international squad.

"The future of our cricket is good," Reifer added. "We have a lot of young guys here. (Shai) Hope, (Nicholas) Pooran, (Shimron) Hetmyer, (Oshane Thomas) Sheldon Cottrell had a very good World Cup."

"We have young John Campbell, he was injured from early. So our future is good. I'm confident in these youngsters that going forward we can bring West Indies cricket back to where it belongs at the top."