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Appendices II

Sport Articles

Ahsan, Hendra dedicates the world title to RI anniversary

Irawaty Wardany, Tuesday, August 18, 2015

Indonesian has Mohammad Ahsan and Hendra Setiawan to thank for their heroic taking of the badminton world championship title as a special present for the nation's 70th anniversary.

In the final of the competition that began on Aug. 10 the third seeds defeated the ninth seeds of Liu Xiaolong/Qiu Zihan 21-17, 21-14 on Sunday to emulate their 2013 achievement as the wait of the home crowd inside Istora Senayan Indoor Stadium and million of TV viewers was finally rewarded.

The medal was presented by Youth and Sports Minister Imam Nahrawi, whose unpopular soccer policy prompted boos from some in the audience before the national anthem *Indonesia Raya* was echoed.

Although the final match did not appear to be as tough as their semifinal encounter, Ahsan admitted to struggling to quash their doubts.

"Even though we were leading on points we did not think we were winning. We did not let such a thought affect our play," Ahsan said.

"Thank God. This title is not only for us but for all Indonesian people," he said.

"We're proud to be able to present the (anniversary) gift," Hendra said.

The win was definitely a great comeback for the pair who had to skip last year's championships in Copenhagen, Denmark, due to an injury sustained by Ahsan. The title was the third for Hendra, who won his first, the partnering with Markis Kido, in Kuala Lumpur in 2007.

For Hendra, Aug. 16 seemed to be his date of luck with him having won gold for Indonesia during the 2008 Beijing Olympics, also partnering Kido, by defeating their Chinese opponents in the final match on the same date.

Coach Herry Imam Pierngadi smiled widely, saying that he had told them earlier that he wanted them to present the world title for his birthday that falls on Aug. 21.

"This is also a birthday gift for Hendra who will celebrate his birthday on Aug.25," he said.

The win did not avoid President Joko "Jokowi" Widodo's attention as he logged on to twitter to congratulate the Indonesiaa pair.

“Congratulations for Garuda #Indonesia, men’s doubles Ahsan Hendra. Winner of the 2015 world badminton championships. Beautiful gift for #R170,” tweeted the President on his account @jokowi late on Sunday.

Hendra and Ahsan were Indonesia’s only representatives at Sunday’s showing after teammates, who included Tontowi Ahmad/Liliyana Natsir in the women’s doubles, Greysia Polii/Nitya Krishinda Maheswari in the women’s doubles and Lindaweni Fanetri in the women’s singles, were eliminated in the semifinal rounds.

China remained the most successful delegation by winning three of five titles at stake.

Chen Long won the men’s singles crown by overcoming Malaysia’s Lee Chong Wei 21-14, 21-17.

Zhao Yunlei/Tian Qing took the women’s doubles by defeating Christinna Pedersen/Kamilla Rytter Juhl of Denmark 23-25, 21-11 in the mixed doubles match.

In the women’s singles top-seeded Carolina Marin of Spain retained her crown over Saina Nehwal of India with a 21-16, 21-19 win.

Indonesia’s Dede lands world crown

The Jakarta Post, Jakarta | Sports | Tue, August 18 2015, 8:06 AM

Indonesia’s paragliders proved that they were a force to be reckoned with after Dede Supratman won the eighth World Paragliding Accuracy Championship (WPAC), which came to a close after a week long competition on Sunday in Puncak, West Java.

The 28-year-old local athlete dethroned world number one Matjaz Sluga of Slovenia and strong contenders from Europe. The competition featured 121 pilots, 24 of whom were women, from 19 countries.

In the last of five rounds, Dede landed dead center on the pad to concede the least penalty score of 8. Sluga, and Tomas Letnik of Czech Republic, who had topped the standings overnight, were relegated to second and third with 9 and 10 points, respectively.

“Dede’s victory is a sweet present for the nation, which is celebrating its 70th anniversary of independence,” Tagor Siagian, head of the tournament’s public relations, said in a press release on Sunday.

Hailing from Cisarua, Puncak, Dede, the youngest of four siblings, is described as a former “paraboy”, a term given to locals who assist paragliders in packing and unpacking parachutes during training.

“Coming home from school, he would head to the landing area about 100 meters from his house,” Tagor said.

“He started gaining knowledge about Paragliding at an early age, learning flying and landing techniques from domestic and foreign pilots. He now is the king of world’s landing accuracy,” he said.

In the women’s category, Nunnapat Phuchong of Thailand proved to be the most accurate lander with 11 points, followed by Hye Joung-ho of South Korea (239) and Jolanta Romanenko of Lithuania (339).

Mariko Ito of Japan had initially taken the runner-up position before being relegated to 16th place following a protest by England against round four results. The organizers and monitoring team from world governing body FAI later ruled that Ito was guided by ground radio when she was near the landing pad.

Indonesian veteran Lis Andriana, winner of the 2012-2014 PGAWC series, who was reported to have been troubled by a nagging knee injury, faltered in 20th position.

Dede’s success in winning the world event is expected to provide leverage for the national federation in its push for the sport to be included in the next Asian Games Indonesia will host in 2018.

But Dede will have to prove his championship worth further at the ninth WPAC event in Albania in 2017.

Athletics: Say it with flight socks -- Coe's gift to 'knackered' team

Agence France-Presse, Beijing | Sports | Wed, August 19 2015, 9:05 PM

After a year of globe-traversing lobbying in his successful bid to become the new IAAF president, Sebastian Coe vowed Wednesday to buy his "knackered" team flight socks for the journey home.

Coe, speaking after pipping Sergey Bubka 115-92 to succeed Lamine Diack as president of the International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF), said he and his support team had flown 700,000 km in the past eight months.

"On the plane coming over here, three of them [his team] were asleep before the wheels left the tarmac," the Briton said at the IAAF Congress in Beijing.

"The very nice woman who was looking after us in the cabin said to me, 'They seem to be very relaxed' and I said, 'No they're absolutely knackered'.

"I said to her we've done a lot of flying this year, and she looked at me as if 'I'm cabin crew you don't have to tell me about flying'.

"We've done 700,000 km since Christmas, and she said, 'Actually that's quite dangerous, I just thought I'd let you know'," Coe said to laughter.

Turning to his droopy-lidded, airmile-heavy team, the Briton said: "I will buy you all flight socks for the flight home!"

China's Hangzhou bids to host 2022 Asian Games: Report

Agence France-Presse, Shanghai, China | Sports | Wed, August 19 2015, 9:16 PM

China's eastern city of Hangzhou, best known for its tourist attraction the scenic West Lake, has submitted a bid to host the 2022 Asian Games, state media has reported.

The Olympic Council of Asia will pick the host city at a meeting next month, the official Xinhua news agency said.

South Korea's Incheon held the last Asian Games in 2014, while Jakarta will play host in 2018.

If Hangzhou wins, it would be the third time a Chinese city has hosted the regional games following Beijing in 1990 and southern Guangzhou in 2010.

Beijing was just selected to hold the 2022 Winter Olympics after hosting the Summer Games in 2008.

The Asian Games follows the sports program of the Olympic Games, with swimming and athletics as the core sports.

Federer back in groove; Venus, Sharapova exit

Agence France-Presse, Cincinnati, United States | Sports | Wed, August 19 2015, 9:02 AM

Roger Federer shook off the rust in his first match since Wimbledon as women's drawcards Maria Sharapova and Venus Williams withdrew injured from the ATP and WTA Cincinnati Masters on Tuesday.

Federer, who took more than a month off after losing the Wimbledon final to Novak Djokovic, beat Roberto Bautista Agut 6-4, 6-4, improving to 4-0 over the Spaniard without the loss of a set.

But the 34-year-old said that he needed time to adjust again to match conditions after his hiatus.

"It was a good win for me, it can only get tougher from here," said Federer, seeking a record seventh title here.

"I haven't played in a long time and I felt a bit rusty at times in the first set. I need matches right now, so it was good to start well here.

"I'm happy I got through this first one. Now I know what it's about.

"I have a day off tomorrow where I can think about how things went today, where I need to improve."

Sharapova has not played since Wimbledon and has now missed both of the major tune-ups prior to the US Open which begins in less than a fortnight.

The WTA number two is nursing a leg injury which also prevented her from playing last week in Toronto.

- 'Tough decision' -

"It's a tough decision to make, but I think a wise one, in order to give myself the right amount of time to be as healthy as I can be for the Open, which I believe is very realistic," Sharapova said. "But I don't know if it would be realistic if I did compete and start tomorrow."

The Russian was joined as a victim by Williams, who cited a viral illness.

The pullout of the American gave a walkover into the third round for 2014 finalist Ana Ivanovic.

"I just wasn't able to get out there tonight. Every match you have to be at your best, to win," said Williams, who made her decision after pre-match warm-up. "I just couldn't be at my best today."

US Open winner Marin Cilic, the seventh seed, beat Joao Sousa 6-4, 6-2, while Spain's Feliciano Lopez stopped Canadian Milos Raonic 7-6 (7/4), 6-4 as the ninth seed lost an opening match for the second straight week.

Sam Querrey put out John Isner 6-3, 7-6 (7/3) and South African 15th seed Kevin Anderson defeated Leonardo Mayer 7-6 (7/5), 3-6, 6-1.

Controversial Nick Kyrgios was dumped out, a 6-2, 6-1 first-round victim of French 12th seed Richard Gasquet.

Kyrgios, building a reputation as the bad boy of the game, was unremarkable in his loss, which lasted for only 56 minutes.

Toronto women's champion Belinda Bencic maintained her recent giant-killing form with a battling 7-5, 6-3 win over higher-ranked German opponent Angelique Kerber.

Bencic, 18, is brimming with confidence after winning in Toronto at the weekend after a tournament which included a stunning semi-final defeat of Grand Slam-chasing world number one Serena Williams.

Elsewhere Tuesday, Sloane Stephens took down another seed as she beat number 10 Carla Suarez Navarro 6-1, 6-2.

France's Kristina Mladenovic overcame Daniela Hantuchova 6-2, 6-1; Flavia Pennetta defeated former Australian Open finalist Domanika Cibulkova 7-5, 6-2.

Mona Barthel beat Australian Casey Dellacqua in a 2-6, 6-3, 7-6 (7/4) comeback while Caroline Garcia beat Sabine Lisicki 3-6, 6-3, 6-4.

Former number one Victoria Azarenka reached the second round 6-1, 6-2 over Lauren Davis.

Rested Hamilton looks to avoid repeat of Belgian mishap

Tim Collings, Agence France-Presse, Francorchamps, Belgium | Sports | Thu, August 20 2015, 10:04 AM

Four weeks on from a poignant and incident-packed Hungarian Grand Prix, the Formula One circus is back this weekend with defending champion Lewis Hamilton aiming to increase his lead in this year's title race at the classic Belgian Grand Prix.

The 30-year-old Briton, who has a 21 points advantage over his Mercedes team-mate German Nico Rosberg in the drivers' championship after 10 of this year's 19 races, wants not only to stay on top, but to erase all memories of last year's events with a confidence-boosting win.

After the sadness of losing Frenchman Jules Bianchi, who died shortly before last month's Hungarian race won by resurgent German Sebastian Vettel for Ferrari, Hamilton and the rest have taken a break and returned recharged for the action that lies ahead.

Last year, Hamilton and Rosberg collided in a controversial and spectacular incident that overshadowed the race and led to disciplinary action by the team, a sequence of events that team chief Austrian Toto Wolff is keen not to see repeated.

"Any mistake we make is a gift to our rivals and we cannot afford to do that," he said.

"With 10 races down and nine to go, we enter the second half of the season with a stronger points total than at this stage last year and yet our margin to the competition is actually smaller.

"In F1, there is never a moment you can take your foot off the gas and Hungary proved once again that any slip is an opportunity our rivals can grab with both hands.

"We have all enjoyed a chance to recharge over the summer, but we have also kept our minds focused on what lies ahead. I think we know what is needed and we have to remain relentless."

Hamilton finished sixth last time out in Hungary after a scruffy race littered with mistakes and has been in Barbados and New York during his holidays.

"It's been good to relax, train and recharge the batteries," he said.

"There's always that flame in the back of your mind that just wants to get back out there and get on it – especially after a race like Hungary.

"For me, Spa is a great track to kick off the second part of the season.

"It's one of the really great, old-school circuits with so much history. It's mostly medium to high speed corners, so you're pretty much pedal-to-the-metal the whole way round, which is a lot of fun."

Rosberg, who finished eighth after a late collision, said: "Hungary was such a big disappointment and I've been itching to get back to racing ever since. When you're in such a close battle for the championship, any opportunity to gain points is crucial and it's up to me to take those chances – but also to make them for myself.

"That's definitely the target for the second half of the year for me. It's all still to play for."

Mercedes have won eight of the 10 races to date, but have some concerns about the introduction of rule-changes that reduce the 'driver aids' in use at the start of the race and hand greater responsibility to the man in the cockpit.

Williams technical chief Pat Symonds, however, said he believed the changes won't make much difference at all when the lights go out again on Sunday.

Given that Mercedes were beaten comprehensively at the start at the last two races, it is Wolff who will have most to worry about this time.

He may need to take special note of the form of Finn Kimi Raikkonen who is not only a Spa specialist, but also a driver boosted by being told on Wednesday that he will stay with Ferrari next year.

"What can I say?" he said.

"For me, to be able to stay another year it means that the dream goes on. The Scuderia is my family, as I always said, it's here I want to end my career."

Beijing pollution awaits runners at worlds, just like '08

Eddie Pells and Pat Graham, Associated Press, Beijing | Sports | Thu, August 20 2015, 1:48 PM

The drifting smoke from forest fires sometimes makes it difficult for marathoner Heather Lieberg to take a deep breath during her afternoon training runs in the hills of Montana.

Even on days when the local advisory lists the air quality as "unhealthy for sensitive groups," Lieberg is out there chugging away through the hazy and hot conditions.

No better way to acclimate her body to what awaits in Beijing for the world championships.

"I've literally trained when there's ash falling on me, where they say 'Do not go outside,'" said Lieberg, a 36-year-old from Helena. "My lungs are definitely ready."

Seven years after the Olympics sparked talk of a dramatic clean-up of pollution in Beijing, a milky haze still covers the city on most days and is expected to be there when the marathons take place — Saturday for the men, and Aug. 30 for the women.

According to a recent study conducted by physicists at the University of California, Berkeley, 1.6 million people die each year in China from heart, lung and stroke-related problems due to polluted air. The statistic is a reminder that while the Olympics may serve to shed light on a host city's environmental problems, they don't necessarily solve them.

With the 2022 Winter Olympics set to also take place in Beijing, the environment is likely to stay in the spotlight, in part because of plans to bring tons of artificial snow to the relatively dry mountains outside Beijing.

It's as true for Rio de Janeiro today as it was for Beijing in 2008, Athens in 2004, Sydney in 2000 or almost any other host, all of which have had their problems with air and/or water, said John Karamichas, author of the 2013 book "The Olympic Games and the Environment."

"All these issues were, in one way or another, addressed for the duration of the games," Karamichas said. "Environmental legacy will depend on the post-event political processes."

An expert from the World Health Organization, Martin Taylor, said government figures have shown some improvements in Beijing's air quality since the Olympics left town "but there is still some way to go before (it) meets international safe standards."

Competition conditions for the Olympic athletes have been at the forefront recently with the Rio Games less than a year away.

An analysis commissioned by The Associated Press found viruses running rampant in Rio's sewage-strewn water. The International Olympic Committee has made no plans to test for viruses, sticking with a plan to only monitor bacteria. Some swimmers have fallen ill after competing in the water, though the direct correlation between the water and the illness is difficult to make.

Running in heavily polluted air carries some health risk because of particulates that can clog up passageways and increased ozone that mainly bothers people with asthma. It can also affect finely tuned athletes who operate at maximum lung capacity. In 2008, the marathon world record holder, asthma sufferer Haile Gebrselassie, said he wouldn't run the race. "The pollution in China is a threat to my health," he said.

But he was an exception. And even though pollution readings distributed by the U.S. Embassy's Beijing Air Quality Monitor frequently shows the air quality in the "unhealthy" range, the races at world championships will go on.

Questions about if runners should wear masks for competition are resurfacing. Scientists think that would produce, at best, mixed results. The masks do filter out particulates but most elite runners are creatures of habit and not used to wearing them. Distance runner Galen Rupp won U.S. championships wearing a mask in 2011, but he had trained extensively with it, and it was used to filter out pollen, not pollution.

"One can't with a straight face say that it doesn't do anything," said Dr. Sverre Vedal, a health science professor at the University of Washington. "But one of the issues that comes up is the practicality of wearing a mask if you're performing."

Last October, the Beijing Marathon began with thousands of participants wearing masks. The air quality reading that day was considered hazardous, and a level at which the U.S. Embassy says everyone should avoid all outdoor exertion.

Big events such as the Olympics and world championships put authorities on timelines to mitigate the problems, at least temporarily.

For the track meet, local organizers are following a model nicknamed "APEC Blue" — a Chinese government program that produced blue skies last November for the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit.

This approach calls on nearby provinces to cut down on the amount of pollution drifting in from factories outside the city limits. Officials also will restrict the number of cars on the streets of Beijing starting Thursday, two days before the world championships begin. They took half the cars off the road each day starting a few weeks before the Olympics.

A handful of athletes the AP interviewed said they're heading to Beijing knowing they can't do much about the pollution.

"I'm running for only 12 seconds," American hurdler David Oliver said. "Now, if I were a marathoner, maybe I'd pay more attention."

Otamendi signs on for Manchester City

Agence France-Presse, London, United Kingdom | Sports | Thu, August 20 2015, 4:56 PM

Argentina defender Nicolas Otamendi has signed for Manchester City, the Premier League side announced on Thursday after a deal was agreed with his current side Valencia.

The 27-year-old has signed a five-year contract although no financial details of the transfer were released.

Otamendi will bolster central defensive ranks at City that include two familiar faces in former Porto team-mate Eliaquim Mangala and international colleague Martin Demichelis, as well as captain Vincent Kompany.

Otamendi told the club's website, www.mcfc.co.uk: "I am here to give my best, to fight game by game and push City to the highest peaks for as long as possible, and I wish we will be able to win several cups and titles.

"That's most important. To be here inside a club that looks so wonderful from the outside is a dream."

Valencia were believed to be hoping to use the sale of the player to write off part of the fee they still owe City for striker Alvaro Negredo.

Otamendi joined the Spanish club from Porto just a year ago. Initial reports at the weekend claimed Valencia wanted to offset his loss by signing Mangala on loan in exchange but City had no intention of allowing the Frenchman to leave Eastlands.

City manager Manuel Pellegrini said: "Nicolas Otamendi was arguably the best defender in La Liga last season and so naturally I'm delighted to have added a player of his quality.

"He is an established international for one of the best nations in world football and I have no doubt that he has the right mentality to fit into a squad where he will find many familiar faces, including Eliaquim and Fernando who he played alongside in Portugal.

Otamendi has 25 caps for Argentina and was a member of the side that reached the Copa America final in the summer alongside new City team-mates Demichelis, Sergio Aguero and Pablo Zabaleta.

Aussie stopper Ryan desperate to face Messi, Ronaldo

Kieran Canning, Agence France-Presse, Valencia, Spain | Sports | Fri, August 21 2015, 9:13 AM

The thought of it would cause most goalkeepers nightmares, but Australia and now Valencia's number one Matthew Ryan has waited patiently for the chance to try his hand at stopping the likes of Cristiano Ronaldo and Lionel Messi.

Ryan, 23, has taken an unusual route to arrive at one of the world's top leagues having swapped the A-league with Central Coast Mariners for Club Brugge two years ago.

A brilliant spell in Belgium allied to being the rock behind Australia's Asia Cup triumph earlier this year brought interest from around Europe, but it was Valencia's ambitious project to be back challenging amongst the elite in the Champions League that attracted Ryan.

That ambition remains on track after he played a starring role in a 3-1 win over last season's quarter-finalists Monaco in the first leg of their playoff in midweek with one particular save from Bernardo Silva making a fine first impression on the Mestalla faithful.

"It was a very nice feeling to be honest. I think any young player coming into a team wants to justify himself as quickly as possible and I think that save was a nice confidence booster to feel important within the team," he told AFP.

"It's always good to make a save like that where you sort of surprise yourself."

Ryan's move to Valencia has been hailed by Australia's national coach Ange Postecoglou as he aims for more Socceroos to end up at the top level in Europe, but it also comes with a risk.

Diego Alves has been one of La Liga's top goalkeepers in recent seasons until he ruptured cruciate ligaments on the final day of last season, leaving Valencia looking for a new 'keeper.

Ryan has filled that void for now, but knows he has plenty of hard work ahead of him to keep the Brazilian international on the sidelines when he is fit come the new year.

"I knew my next stop after Brugge I wanted to go somewhere where it is more competitive for spots," he added.

"I always wanted to get to the bigger and better leagues to challenge myself, no matter where I would have liked to end up after Brugge I knew I was going to go somewhere where there would be a lot of competition.

- Foot in the door -

"Some of the individual talent in the squad is the best I've been in contact with on a regular basis. I am really enjoying being here and continuing to learn.

"I've got my foot in the door now and hopefully will not give the coach a reason to take me out of the team."

As well as the internal competition Ryan is tasked with stopping an array of the deadliest strikers in world football. The dates with Messi and Ronaldo have been put on the back burner for now, though, as Valencia travel to Rayo Vallecano for their season opener on Saturday.

And he believes they can draw inspiration from Atletico Madrid's title triumph two years ago to challenge Real Madrid and Barcelona for silverware come the end of the campaign.

"It's obviously my first time in one of the premier leagues in world football. I'm not expecting any easy games in such a league," added Ryan.

"The club is very ambitious. The owners have stated they want to win things in the coming years that is why I play the game. You play to win games, to win silverware and create memories that will remain for the rest of your life.

"Atletico surprised everyone a couple of years ago and won the league. To those sorts of teams we are an underdog but we want to get on a level where we're seen as on a par with those sorts of teams."

Ryan isn't just learning on the pitch with Spanish lessons also high on the agenda to help him communicate with his new teammates.

For now he has Valencia's new English assistant manager Phil Neville for company, although he admits to avoiding the former Manchester United man after taking some flak for Australia's defeat in the Ashes.

"There isn't much I can say so I am trying to steer clear of him at the moment until I can get my own back."

Unlike the Aussie batsmen, Ryan is at least one sportsman from Down Under who appears to be thriving in Europe this summer.

Djokovic rallies to win at Cincy; Serena Williams wins too

Joe Kay, Associated Press, Mason, Ohio | Sports | Fri, August 21 2015, 8:53 AM

Novak Djokovic smacked his racket on the court after losing serve, seemingly headed for another unexplainable loss at a tournament that has eluded him. In the end, he stopped fuming and started playing like the best.

The top-ranked Serb rallied from a 3-0 deficit in the final set to a 6-4, 2-6, 6-3 victory over David Goffin on Thursday, reaching the quarterfinals of the Western & Southern Open.

Eighth-seeded Rafael Nadal lost to fellow Spaniard Feliciano Lopez 5-7, 6-4, 7-6 (3) in an evening match.

Serena Williams moved on to the quarterfinals, losing only two games in her lopsided match.

Djokovic has never won Cincinnati. He's trying to become the first player to win all nine ATP Masters events in a career.

"It was a solid first set, but whatever happened in the next 45 minutes — I don't want to remember it," Djokovic said. "I wasn't on the court. You know, I just lost the intensity and concentration. Luckily for me, I managed to bounce back, dig myself out of this hole I was in."

With things falling apart in the second set, Djokovic slammed his racket three times, drawing a warning. And it kept getting worse against Goffin, a 24-year-old Belgian who is 1-20 against top-10 players. Finally, Djokovic pulled himself together and pulled it out.

Djokovic will face fifth-seeded Stan Wawrinka, who beat him for the French Open title. Wawrinka pulled out a 6-7 (2), 7-6 (5), 7-6 (5) win after Ivo Karlovic double-faulted on match point, his second serve hitting the top of the net.

Nadal, coming off a rain-delayed match that ended at 12:43 a.m., fell behind 3-1 in the third-set tiebreaker and never recovered. Lopez's ace finished off a 2-hour, 24-minute match.

Also, No. 6 Tomas Berdych beat Tommy Robredo 6-0, 6-1 to reach the quarterfinals. He'll face qualifier Alexandr Dolgoplov, who beat Jerzy Janowicz 6-3, 3-6, 6-4 win over Jerzy Janowicz.

On the women's side, Williams needed only 54 minutes to beat Karin Knapp 6-0, 6-2. She lost just 12 points while winning the first nine games.

Williams, the defending Cincinnati champion, is using the tournament as a final tuneup for the U.S. Open, where she'll try to complete a calendar Grand Slam sweep. Her quarterfinals opponent is Ana Ivanovic, who beat Sloane Stephens 2-6, 6-4, 6-1.

Williams beat Ivanovic in straight sets to win her first Cincinnati title last year.

"It will be a really good match for me and kind of test where I am, you know, just in general," Williams said. "Yeah, so I look forward to that."

A right forearm injury forced Swiss teen Belinda Bencic to withdraw after she dropped the first set against seventh-seeded Lucie Safarova. The 12th-seeded Bencic said she didn't think the injury was very serious, but it was too soon to know if she could play in next week's tournament at New Haven, Connecticut. The 18-year-old said her forearm has been sore for some time.

"Every match, it was getting tighter and tighter," she said. "I was hoping that a lot of (therapy) would help, but I couldn't do it."

Bencic was coming off the biggest moment of her brief career. She upset Williams in the semifinals at Toronto last week and went on to win the tournament.

Victoria Azarenka became the fourth woman to withdraw from the tournament when she had to quit her evening match against Anastasia Pavlyuchenkova. Azarenka hurt her upper left leg a few days before the tournament started, and it bothered her as she won the first set 6-1. She quit three games into the second set.

"Such a short period of time before the U.S. Open, it's a little bit dangerous," she said. "I had to unfortunately make that decision. It hurts a little bit because I have been playing so well. Obviously I felt like I had that match in control."

Federer joins Djokovic in Cincy quarter-finals

Agence France-Presse, Cincinnati, United States | Sports | Fri, August 21 2015, 1:26 PM

Roger Federer engineered a 6-1, 6-1 rout in less than an hour, outclassing the big-serving Kevin Anderson to join Novak Djokovic in the quarter-finals of the ATP and WTA Cincinnati Masters on Thursday.

Switzerland's Federer swept the first set in 21 minutes and began the second set with a break of South African Anderson.

"I'm pleased with a rock-solid performance," said the six-time champion. "I know it's only the quarters but I'm playing great tennis. I hope I can keep it up tomorrow."

While the second seed was able to make it all look easy, it was a slog for an exhausted Andy Murray as the third-seeded Montreal title-winner needed a shade under three hours to put down Grigor Dimitrov 4-6, 7-6 (7/4), 7-5.

Dimitrov led a set and two breaks before Murray hauled the second set back. The Bulgarian then owned the third 5-2 but could not close it out despite getting to match point.

Murray gathered the last of his reserves to take the win, his 26th at the tournament which he won in 2008 and 2011.

Djokovic also survived a scare in the pursuit of a first career Cincinnati title, with the top seed holding off David Goffin 6-4, 2-6, 6-3.

Djokovic, aiming to become the first man to win all eight Masters 1000 events, nearly found himself on the sidelines as his 13th-seeded Belgian opponent won the second set and went two breaks up in the decider.

But the experienced Serb pulled back from the brink, levelling at 3-3 and ran out the winner after a tense one and three-quarter hours.

Djokovic stayed alive despite seven double-faults and five breaks of his serve.

"It was a solid first set, but whatever happened in the next 45 minutes I don't want to remember it.

"Luckily for me I managed to bounce back, dig myself out of this hole I was in," added Djokovic, who admitted he had struggled to adjust to the conditions.

- Wawrinka happy -

Djokovic will face Stan Wawrinka in the next round after the Swiss fifth seed prevailed over Ivo Karlovic to win 6-7 (2/7), 7-6 (7/5), 7-6 (7/5).

"I'm really happy to get the win, you know what to expect from him," said Wawrinka, who saw 35 aces from Karlovic fly past him. "You need to stay calm and aggressive.

"I'm happy with the way I stayed positive with body language, and always made him play one more ball. You must accept that he will have a lot of aces. I'm happy to get through."

Sixth seed Tomas Berdych crushed Spain's Tommy Robredo 6-0, 6-1.

Frenchman Richard Gasquet knocked out US open winner Marin Cilic, the seventh seed, on the cusp of a Grand Slam title defense, leaving the Croatian hurting after a 7-5, 6-3 loss.

Former champion Rafael Nadal, seeded eighth, lost to Spanish compatriot Feliciano Lopez 5-7, 6-4, 7-6 (7/3) in another night-time marathon.

Women's holder Serena Williams dispatched Karin Knapp 6-0, 6-2, while sixth seed Ana Ivanovic overhauled Sloane Stephens 2-6, 6-4, 6-1.

"Everyone enjoys easier matches. I think testing is also really important, but at the end of the day if you could have only easy matches for the whole tournament I don't think anyone would object to that," Williams said after her stroll in 54 minutes.

Williams won't get her wish in the next round as she plays former world No. 1 Ivanovic who is having a strong season. It will be a re-run of their final from 12 months ago.

French Open finalist Lucie Safarova advanced to the quarter-finals when injured opponent Belinda Bencic quit trailing 6-2. Jelena Jankovic punished eighth seed Karolina Pliskova 6-2, 3-6, 7-5.

Two-time Australian Open champion Victoria Azarenka had to stop with leg pain after being taped at the end of the first set, handing a 1-6, 3-0 win to Russian Anastasia Pavlyuchenkova.

From the PGA tour: Day delivers major championship win in record style

Dale Dhillon, The Jakarta Post, Kohler, Wisconsin | Sports | Fri, August 21 2015, 7:44 AM

A "Day-dream" came true for Australia's Jason Day when he finally captured his first major championship win at the 97th PGA Championship at Whistling Straits Golf Club (par 72) in Kohler, Wisconsin, the US, on Sunday.

When asked about his challenging path to win the PGA Championship, the emotional Day said: "I wouldn't have been here if my father didn't pass away. And that's just because of that door closed for me, but another opportunity opened up for me. That was for my mom to sacrifice and my sisters to sacrifice for me, so I could get away to a golf academy and work hard and meet Colin [caddie] and work hard on my game." Day is no stranger to tragedy. At age 12, he lost his Irish Australian father to stomach cancer. Day is a person of mixed ethnicity whose mother Dening is Filipino.

His mother raised him through hardship and enrolled him in a golf academy. "I remember growing up, we, my mom, I mean, we were poor. I mean, I remember watching her cut the lawn with a knife because we couldn't afford to fix the lawn mower. I remember not having a hot water tank, so we had to use a kettle for hot showers," said Day. Golf was his refuge and while at the golf academy he borrowed a book about Tiger Woods from a friend, which inspired him to practice and achieve greatness.

The 27-year-old Day has repeatedly and cruelly been turned away from major championship glory in 2015. He courageously battled vertigo to finish tied for ninth place at the US Open, holding the lead after three rounds. At the Open Championship in Scotland, he narrowly missed a putt that would have gained him entry into a playoff that ultimately decided the champion. Day achieved his win on Sunday in grand style by setting a major championship winning record-low score of 20 under par.

When asked about the result he said: "I had no idea about the record until after it was over and someone told me about it. So, the amount of history that's been through our game, in our sport, to be able to hold that record currently is really amazing. Just there's been so many fantastic golfers throughout the history of our sport playing so many major championships, but for me to be able to get to 20 under par and hold that record, I mean, some of the names I never thought I would be able to put my name with."

Day's past near misses prepared him through the school of very hard knocks. "It was probably the hardest round of golf that I've ever had to play. I knew today was going to be tough, but I didn't realize how tough it was going to be. I learned a lot about myself, again, being able to finish the way I did. The experiences that I've had in the past with previous major finishes have definitely helped me prepare myself for a moment like this," he said.

Day trumped his opening round 4 under par 68 with a splendid 5 under par 67 in round two to get to 9 under par. He then shot a stellar 6 under 66 to take the lead at 15 under par after three rounds. He was two strokes ahead of the US' Jordan Spieth at 13 under, three strokes ahead of Justin Rose of England and Brandon Grace of South Africa. He played brilliantly in the final round, fending off Masters and US Open champion Jordan Spieth. By the time he set foot on the 18th green he had built an unsurmountable lead of three strokes at 20 under par over Spieth who later admitted that he had run out of answers to Day's spectacular play.

All week, Day's driving and putting display was one for the record books and he shot a remarkable 5 under par 67 in the final round to achieve his historic winning score. His win moves him to number 3 in the world but Day said he was not done just yet: "I still want to accomplish that No. 1 goal of mine, which is to be the best player in the world. I'm still motivated and still very hungry for that, even after this win."

Less than perfect, Usain Bolt still favored in 100 at worlds

Pat Graham, Associated Press, Beijing | Sports | Fri, August 21 2015, 1:54 PM

Usain Bolt's coach believes he looks good. So if Glen Mills is happy, Bolt is happy.

And everyone else should be very worried.

The powerful Jamaican returns to the Bird's Nest — the place where he broke three world records while winning three gold medals at the 2008 Beijing Games — to defend his 100-meter title at world championships.

It's a strong field, too, with American teammates Justin Gatlin and Tyson Gay, along with Jamaican sprinter Asafa Powell, sure to push Bolt. The first round begins Saturday and the final is set for the following night.

This has not been a good season for Bolt. He's been hobbled by joint problems that caused him to "pretty much run slow." His most recent time was 9.87 seconds, which is .29 slower than his world record, but was at least a step in the right direction.

Of course, he's the favorite. But Gatlin is listed as a close second-favorite, at around 6-5 by several European sports books. The American hasn't lost in two seasons, but none of his wins have had Bolt in the field.

"I'm ready to go," said Bolt, who turned 29 on Friday. "All I need to do right now is execute."

Bolt sort of enjoys the what's-wrong-with-Bolt story line. It was something like that at the London Olympics, when he was less than 100 percent and entered the games following losses to teammate Yohan Blake at the Jamaican Olympic trials. Bolt dominated the Olympics and won three more gold medals.

"As soon as I get injured, people start to question if I can come back from injury," Bolt said. "They're writing, 'Usain Bolt is injured' or 'Usain Bolt won't come back' or 'Usain Bolt will get beat.' I ignore what's going on and put the work in to get it right."

Bolt had some good training sessions leading up to worlds, with Mills complimenting his protege on his burst out of the blocks, which has long caused the 6-foot-5 sprinter problems.

"Coach was smiling — a thumbs-up to me," Bolt said, laughing.

While Bolt has been track's fun-loving champion, Powell (six months), Gay (one year) and Gatlin (four years) have all served doping suspensions. The expected main showdown between Bolt and Gatlin has been portrayed as good vs. evil.

Not that simple, Gatlin insists.

"I've done a lot of great things before that situation," said Gatlin, who won the 100 gold at the 2004 Athens Olympics. "I've done a lot of great things after that situation. I'm more than just four years. I'm more than that."

Here are some things to know about Day 1 of world championships:

KEEPING PACE: The weather is supposed to be a comfortable 23 degrees Celsius (74 degrees Fahrenheit) when the men hit the streets for the marathon in the morning. A more important number to watch will be the air quality index. On Friday, the reading by the U.S. Embassy Beijing Air Quality Monitor listed it as "good" after ranging between "moderate" and "unhealthy for sensitive groups" in recent days. Stephen Kiprotich of Uganda is the defending champion.

UNDER SCRUTINY: All eyes in the 10,000-meter race will be on Mo Farah and Galen Rupp. Farah, the defending champion, and Rupp, the 2012 Olympic silver medalist, are both coached by Alberto Salazar, who is under investigation by the U.S. Anti-Doping Agency for allegedly encouraging Rupp and other runners to skirt anti-doping rules.

HER SPOTLIGHT: Olympic champion Jessica Ennis-Hill returns to the heptathlon after the birth of her son last year. The British standout made a late decision to compete in the two-day event that starts Saturday. "I am a different athlete now," Ennis-Hill said.

NEW CHAMPION: Valerie Adams of New Zealand won't defend her shot put title after undergoing shoulder and elbow surgeries last September and a minor knee procedure this month. Adams is a four-time world champion and two-time Olympic gold medalist.

RUDISHA'S RETURN: With an opening round 800-meter race, David Rudisha of Kenya takes the first step toward reclaiming his world title. The 2012 Olympic champion missed the worlds two years ago with a bad knee.

Man United, Adidas acclaim record kit launch

Agence France-Presse, Manchester, UK | Sports | Fri, August 21 2015, 7:49 PM

The launch of Manchester United's new Adidas home kit was the biggest in both the club's and the German sportswear manufacturer's history, the two companies announced on Friday.

The new strip, released on August 1, marked the start of a 10-year partnership worth £750 million (\$1.18 billion, 1 billion euros) to the Premier League giants, making it the biggest deal in sports licencing history.

In a joint statement, the companies said that United had witnessed a month's worth of forecasted sales within five days at their Old Trafford club shop and online store.

"Partnering with Adidas, we had high expectations; quality innovative kit, superb marketing, world-beating distribution, a deep understanding of our history and our fans," said United managing director Richard Arnold.

"Adidas have not broken those expectations, they have smashed them."

The companies claimed that "phenomenal demand across the globe" had made it "the biggest ever launch of replica".

United and Adidas have since launched an away strip, featuring white shirts and black shorts, and will also launch a new third kit later this month.

Soccer friday: Former Singapore U21 winger makes big impact in Malaysia

Jason Dasey | Sports | Fri, August 21 2015, 7:46 AM

He's one of the new stars of the Malaysia Super League with the most multicultural of backgrounds — Canadian and Japanese with Singapore and Australian influences — that makes him almost impossible to pigeonhole.

Issey Nakajima-Farran's full name is so long that fans at his new base of Kuala Terengganu aren't likely to be chanting it in the terraces. But that hasn't stopped the 31-year-old Canadian international winger from scoring nine goals in just 11 matches since moving to Malaysia four months ago.

Terengganu have won seven of their last eight games to jump ahead of LionsXII in the chase for a top-three finish. On Aug. 5, Issey scored a brace as the Turtles defeated the Singapore outfit 4-2 in Kuala Terengganu.

“Things are clicking now and we’re enjoying those moments in the game when you look at each other after a certain play and smile as you both just enjoyed it,” Issey told ESPN FC.

“The chemistry between the players is good and the Malaysian food and rich culture we’ve enjoyed together has helped too.”

Issey has embraced many cultures and cuisines through a football journey that began in Tokyo when his English-Canadian father and Japanese mother moved from Calgary when he was just three years old.

He progressed through the tough J-League youth system with Tokyo Verdy, interrupted by a two-year spell in the junior teams of Crystal Palace in England.

But it was a move to Singapore in 2004 with J-League feeder club Albirex Niigata (S) that changed his life. After being named S. League Player of the Year in 2005, he was capped at U21 level by Singapore, facing up to none other than Japan.

After scoring two goals and winning the man-of-the-match award in his debut, there was talk of Issey becoming a full Singapore international.

But he was soon headed to Europe to join Kim Poulsen — one of his former coaches in Singapore — at Danish club Vejle Boldklub.

Issey spent six years in Denmark, played in the UEFA Cup and scored more than 30 goals. He earned his first Canadian call-up in 2006 — he has represented the Canucks in four CONCACAF Gold Cups — closing the door on a possible international career with Singapore or Japan.

“I was considering Singapore nationality but that would have made my European dreams more difficult. That’s when Canada knocked on my door and options in Europe weren’t jeopardized,” he said.

“In Japan, I was seen as a foreigner. In England, I was always considered Japanese. But the Canadian national team suited me because it has so much diversity yet we share the same footballing language.”

Along with many highs, Issey has had his share of lows in his seven-country football odyssey. He’s still chasing unpaid wages from two clubs in Cyprus, he was cut from Brisbane Roar’s AFC Champions League squad despite helping the A-League set a national, unbeaten record and he was left in limbo after being waived by Major League Soccer club Montreal Impact before the start of the 2015 season.

started a chain of events — after a training spell in Spain — that saw him picked up by Terengganu in the April transfer window.

A torn oblique muscle in early May halted his initial progress, but his devastating recent form in tandem with Malaysia internationals Norshahrul Idlan Talaha and Ashari Samsudin means that fast-finishing Terengganu could be a major threat in the upcoming Malaysia Cup campaign.

“I’m truly excited to be here and physically I feel fit and motivated to keep fighting. I have a new-found love for nasi dagang [curry seafood rice] and teh tarik [milk tea] but I have to control that one.”

With his long black locks and head band, Issey has quickly become a local celebrity on Malaysia’s East Coast who could pass as a leading man from one of the Malay soap operas.

But it is painting and not acting — he’s an accomplished artist who sold more than two dozen pieces for as much as US\$4,000 — which is his creative passion. “My art has been the remedy to the lows of football,” he said. “My paintings take me away from all the pressure and make me relaxed and refreshed for the next match.”

Visa flap may sink World Cup qualifying match for Guam

Grace Garces Bordallo, Associated Press, Hagatna, Guam | Sports | Fri, August 21 2015, 8:50 AM

Visas for members of the Guam national soccer team to enter Iran have been delayed two weeks ahead of a qualifying match, leaving a Guam official to say political tensions between the U.S. and the Islamic republic shouldn't affect sports.

Matao, the national soccer team for the U.S. territory of Guam, is scheduled to play Iran on Sept. 3 in a Group D World Cup qualifying match.

But Guam says it is struggling to get the needed visas from Iran.

The president of the Guam Football Association, Richard K. Lai, says their counterpart in Iran has been giving them "the run-around," and if the situation doesn't get straightened out soon, his players may not get into Iran.

Lai is hopeful the Iran Football Association steps in and gets the country to grant visas to the Guam players

Jury awards Michael Jordan big win, \$8.9M for name's use

Michael Tarm, Associated Press, Chicago | Sports | Sat, August 22 2015, 9:09 AM

Jurors at a civil trial focused on the market value of Michael Jordan's identity handed him a major win Friday, ordering a grocery-store chain to pay him \$8.9 million for invoking his name in a steak ad without his permission.

The amount was close to the \$10 million his attorneys said the one-time use of his name was worth and Jordan hugged his lawyers after the decision was read in a federal court in Chicago, where Jordan won six NBA titles with the Bulls.

"I'm so used to playing on a different court," a visibly delighted Jordan told reporters outside the courthouse. "This shows I will protect my name to the fullest. ... It's my name and I worked hard for it ... and I'm not just going to let someone take it."

Jordan added that the case "was never about money" and that he'll give the damages award to charities in Chicago.

Stepping back into the courthouse, two jurors asked him for a photograph and he obliged by throwing his arms around them and smiling for a cellphone camera.

A judge ruled before trial that the now-defunct Dominick's Finer Foods, which was owned by Safeway, was liable. So the sole unresolved issue was damages for the unauthorized ad in a 2009 Sports Illustrated. It congratulated Jordan on his Hall of Fame induction and included a \$2-off coupon above a photo of a sizzling steak. Jurors deliberated for six hours before returning with the \$8.9 million figure, at one point sending a note to the judge that said, "We need a calculator."

Jordan's fame loomed over the case, with one would-be jurors struck from the jury pool during jury selection after describing Jordan as his idol. During closings earlier Friday, Jordan attorney Frederick Sperling appealed to city pride in trying to persuade jurors to side with Jordan.

"He gave us six championships," he told jurors, Jordan sitting nearby.

Steven Mandell, the Dominick's attorney, told jurors he was also proud of Jordan's accomplishments in sports. But he said Jordan's attorneys overvalued their client's name, saying jurors should award Jordan no more than \$126,900.

Evidence presented during trial provided a peek at Jordan's extraordinary wealth, including the \$480 million he made from Nike alone between 2000 to 2012.

Among the witnesses was Estee Portnoy, a marketing executive hired by Jordan, who said she was shocked when she saw the Dominick's ad, which included the text, "Michael Jordan ... You are a cut above."

Asked after the jury's decision whether he ever tried one of the steaks Dominick's advertised, Jordan laughed and noted his own namesake steakhouse was a few blocks away.

"You can go get a steak over there," he said.

Unheralded Eritrean teen bags first gold of worlds

Luke Phillips, Agence France-Presse, Beijing, China | Sports | Sat, August 22 2015, 12:50 PM

Eritrean teenager Ghirmay Ghebreslassie claimed the first gold medal of the Beijing world championships when he sprinted away for a shock victory in the men's marathon on Saturday.

The 19-year-old took the lead from Lesotho's Tsepo Ramonene Mathibelle on the 36km mark and saw off pressure from Ethiopian Yemane Tsegay for a memorable win at the iconic Bird's Nest stadium in clear conditions and temperatures around 27 degrees Celsius (81F).

Ghebreslassie, who became the youngest ever world marathon winner in just his fourth race, clocked 2hr 12min 27sec, with Tsegay, fourth in 2009 and eighth in Moscow two years ago, taking silver in 2:13:07 and Munyo Solomon Mutai of Uganda the bronze (2:13:29).

It was Eritrea's second ever world medal after Tadesse Zersenay's silver in the 10,000m in the 2009 worlds in Berlin.

"Although I do not have much experience, I will work to make another special history in Rio," Ghebreslassie said of his plans for next summer's Olympic Games.

"The weather was very nice for me. Since childhood I grew up in similar weather conditions.

"I had decided to try to leave any group by the 34km mark," he said of his pre-race strategy.

Mongolia's Ser-Od Bat-Ochir had his moment of fame when he took the lead for a few early kilometres, but was quickly swept up by the chasing pack, Bahrain's Ethiopian-born Shumi Dechasa setting much of the early pace.

The runners swept through the 10km mark in 31:51, and a surge through the following 5km saw the pack string out with Dechasa up front, and Uganda's defending champion Stephen Kiprotich just five seconds off the pace in the chasing pack.

A definitive break predictably saw the Ethiopian trio of Lelisa Desisa, Tsegay and Berhanu Lemi, Ugandans Kiprotich, Mutai and Jackson Kiprop, and world record holder Dennis Kimetto, along with fellow Kenyans Wilson Kipsang and Mark Korir all eyeing each other up.

Eritrean duo Ghebreslassie and Amanuel Mesel were also in the mix as Italian team captain Daniele Meucci shot out to the front on the picturesque course around the streets of Beijing.

Meucci, the 2014 European marathon champion, went through 20km in 1:03:23, teammate Rugero Pertile taking up the running.

The Italian duo struck out on their own, but were sucked in around the 25km mark, Lesotho's Mathibelle sprinting away after 90 minutes of running and building up a 25-sec lead.

Ghebreslassie set out after Mathibelle, overtaking the flagging Lesothan on the 36km mark.

Tsegay was on his heels, with Mutai in third, the Eritrean nervously looking at his watch and over his shoulder as he tried to pace himself through the final few kilometres under an increasingly hot sun.

The pair were neck-and-neck as they approached the Bird's Nest, but Ghebreslassie produced one last kick, punching the air and snatching his country's flag as he entered the stadium for the final 100 metres.

"Not only was it hot, it was windy," lamented Tsegay, who also complained of stomach cramps from 38km. "It was a very difficult race with all the star athletes competing."

There was no luck for Kiprotich, who missed out on an unprecedented three consecutive global championship marathons after previously winning golds at the London Olympics and the Moscow worlds.

The Ugandan eventually finished sixth (2:14:42), with Kimetto, who clocked a world best of 2:02:57 in Berlin last year, pulling up after 1:38.

Top seeds Djokovic, Federer reach Cincy semis

Agence France-Presse, Cincinnati, United States | Sports | Sat, August 22 2015, 9:17 AM

World number one Novak Djokovic brushed aside Switzerland's Stan Wawrinka in straight sets to advance to the semi-finals of the ATP and WTA Cincinnati Masters Friday.

The top-seeded Serb breezed past Wawrinka with little difficulty in just over an hour, winning 6-4, 6-1 to avenge his defeat to the Swiss in the French Open final.

Djokovic will face Ukrainian qualifier Alexandr Dolgoplov, who upset Czech sixth seed Tomas Berdych 6-4, 6-2. The Serb owns a 4-0 record in that series, most recently winning in Miami five months ago. Before this week, Dolgoplov had lost all four of his previous matches at the pre-US Open event.

Six-time winner Roger Federer crushed Spain's Feliciano Lopez 6-3, 6-4, earning a 12th straight win without a loss in that series.

The second seed lost just four points on serve in the opening set as he steamrolls through his matches in what will be his lone tune-up for the Open which begins a week from Monday.

The defending champion Federer, who is chasing a fifth trophy this season, improved to 43-7 on the season after a minimal 61-minute sweep.

"I'm very happy with how I got out of the blocks again," said Federer, who last played in the Wimbledon final. "I wasn't sure how I'd come back from vacation and training. I'm pleased with how I'm playing.

"I'm playing great tennis and I'm feeling good, feeling healthy and enjoying myself. That's important at this point of my career.

"I feel better at the net than I ever have and I hope to keep that up. I want to win the US Open again but I still have work to get done here."

- Murray rallies -

Britain's third seed Andy Murray rallied after losing the first set to Richard Gasquet, turning the tide for a 4-6, 6-1, 6-4 win.

Murray, who is trying to back up last week's Montreal title with his third in Cincinnati, fired 35 winners and broke four times in just over two hours against his French opponent.

The Scot admitted that his stamina is running low.

"I'm obviously tired, I've played a lot of matches, a lot of late nights. My recovery hasn't been perfect either.

"I'm just happy I managed to fight through a lot of tough matches, difficult situations, and hopefully that will stand me in good stead for the US Open. I'm obviously tired because it's been tough."

World number one Djokovic improved to 18-4 over Wawrinka.

"It was the best performance I had so far this week. It came at the right time against one of my biggest rivals and the guy I lost to last time we played in the finals of French Open," said Djokovic.

"Obviously I approached this match very seriously in trying to prepare myself and get myself in a good position to win. That's what I have done."

Djokovic is on a mission to finally win Cincinnati and become the first player in history to complete a matched set of all nine Masters 1000 trophies.

He has lost four finals here, two apiece to Murray and Federer.

Defending champion Serena Williams swept the last six games to overhaul Ana Ivanovic 3-6, 6-4, 6-2 in a repeat of the 2014 final won by the American. Her next opponent will be Ukrainian 14th seed Elina Svitolina, who upset Roland Garros finalist Lucie Safarova 6-4, 2-6, 6-0.

Williams said that after playing on the back foot in the first set, she raised her game to post her ninth victory in 10 meetings over the former Roland Garros champion from Serbia.

"I was lethargic in the first set and she played incredibly well. I just had to do better.

"This was my best performance since (winning) Wimbledon. I hope to take the momentum into the next match."

The last two women's semi-finalists will be decided as third seed Simona Halep plays Russian Anastasia Pavlyuchenkova and former winner Jelena Jankovic faces Anna Schmiedlova of Slovakia.

Djokovic faces Federer in finals; Serena Williams there, too

Joe Kay, The Associated Press, Mason, Ohio | Sports | Sun, August 23 2015, 10:06 AM

Novak Djokovic had to rally against a lowly qualifier to get another shot at a title he's never won. Next in his way: Roger Federer, who has more Cincinnati trophies than anyone else.

Djokovic got a little help in the tiebreaker and pulled away to a 4-6, 7-6 (5), 6-2 victory over Alexandr Dolgoplov on Saturday to reach the Western & Southern Open final.

He'll face Federer, a six-time champion who has never lost a Cincinnati title match.

"There's always a lot at stake, this one in particular," Federer said.

The top-ranked Djokovic is 0-4 career in finals at Cincinnati, where he's never even won a set. It's the only one of the nine ATP Masters to elude him.

A victory Sunday would make him the first player to win all nine ATP Masters during his career.

"I gave myself another chance to fight for the trophy," Djokovic said. "That was the goal and that was the wish coming here in Cincinnati. Obviously last couple of years, it was always in the back of my mind, the potential history making, and obviously that motivates me even more.

"Having that in back of my mind helped me to go through matches like the one today."

On the women's side, defending champion Serena Williams gave herself a chance to make it two Cincinnati titles in a row. She beat 14th-seeded Elina Svitolina 6-4, 6-3.

Williams will face third-seeded Simona Halep, who beat Jelena Jankovic 6-1, 6-2 in the other semifinal. Halep's win will move her ahead of Maria Sharapova, who withdrew from Cincinnati with a leg injury, into the No. 2 seed for the U.S. Open.

"It definitely feels good to be back in the finals," Williams said. "I was playing aggressive more today and it really helped me, and it can keep me going for the next few weeks."

Federer won the marquee matchup of the semifinals, using his steady serve to beat Andy Murray 6-4, 7-6 (6). The defending champion is trying for an unprecedented seventh title in Cincinnati.

It's his first tournament since he beat Murray in straight sets at Wimbledon before losing to Djokovic in the finals. And he's looking very fresh, especially with his serve.

He hasn't been broken during his four matches, a total of 29 service games. He lost only 14 points off his serve while beating Murray for the fifth time in a row.

"I've definitely been holding my serve very well," Federer said. "If you seldom get broken or you don't get broken in a match, it's quite hard to lose at this point."

Murray played a lot of long, draining matches during the last week. Mainly, he couldn't keep up with Federer's serve.

"Today it was a tough one," Murray said. "I started slowly the last couple of days. Almost got myself back in the match today, and I just didn't return as well as I would have liked. That was the difference."

For a while, it looked like Djokovic was going to come up short of his finals destination again. He needed a few mistakes by the 66th-ranked Ukrainian to help him pull it out.

Dolgopolov took advantage of Djokovic's sluggish start and won the first set in 31 minutes. It wasn't the first time that Djokovic has fallen behind to him: Dolgopolov got up 7-6, 4-1 at Miami earlier this season before losing in three sets.

Djokovic took a medical timeout after the fifth game of the second set. A trainer checked his lower rib cage on his left side and his abdomen — Djokovic called it a "minor problem." He went back out on court and took it to a tiebreaker.

Up 5-4 and serving, Dolgopolov dumped a pair of backhand shots into the net. Djokovic closed out the 67-minute set with a forehand winner.

"He just makes you play, and (he) plays more careful on the big points," Dolgopolov said. "You have to beat him and go for the risk.

"Ifs, a lot of ifs. You make a decision and you have to roll on it."

Dolgopolov committed 20 unforced errors as the third set slipped away.

Iran coach says Guam visa hassles nothing to do with soccer

John Duerden, The Associated Press, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia | Sports | Sun, August 23 2015, 1:32 PM

Iran coach Carlos Queiroz says the frustrations faced by the tiny Pacific island of Guam in obtaining visas to travel to Tehran for a World Cup qualifier next month give just a glimpse of the problems long faced by his team in negotiating international soccer.

Iran, Asia's top-ranked soccer team, has been dealing with the effects of American-led sanctions for years.

Those sanctions may have been lifted in July, but as yet Queiroz says there has been no let-up in the complications involved with being in charge of Iran's soccer team.

As well as the absence of some western embassies in Tehran, the Iranian Football Federation has struggled to gain access to international funds, hold overseas training camps and play warm up matches.

Iran also has visa problems ahead of its Nov. 17 World Cup qualifier in Guam.

Guam is an unincorporated U.S. territory and entry requirements are the same as for any other U.S. destination. However, in a bid to boost tourism, the U.S. federal government has implemented a Guam-only visa-waiver program for most Asian countries.

"The situation is very complex because Guam play under the umbrella of the United States, but this is football," Queiroz told The Associated Press. "It is very difficult for us to find a way to get visas for our players because Guam demands the list 60 days in advance.

Not only that, all the players must go the American Embassy but there is none in Iran," he added. "So the question is: how can I find a way to release players from their club duties to spend three or four days in a foreign country to get the visas? We are in trouble."

Queiroz, who took Portugal to the 2010 World Cup and Iran to Brazil 2014, wants the Asian Football Confederation to step in and find a resolution to the problem.

"The AFC should come across and, once they accept Guam to play in this competition, they must be clear with the rules," the Portuguese coach said. "Guam must find a way not to force the Iranian players to spend three or four days to get a visa in a period when the clubs don't release the players so this is a very difficult situation for us."

If no other solution presents itself, Queiroz, a former coach of Real Madrid, is ready to use what should be training time before an October qualifier against Oman to secure the visas.

"This is what we have at the moment. Instead of preparing for the game with Oman we will instead have to go to Turkey or the (United Arab Emirates) instead and go to get the visas to play against Guam which is a bizarre situation."

Guam has similarly complained of its problems obtaining the proper documentation to enter Iran for its Sep. 3 qualifier despite, according to the Guam Football Association, starting the visa application process in June.

"Any visa or logistical matters are being handled by my executive and president Richard Lai and they are capable of dealing with it," Guam coach Gary White told Associated Press. "As far as I'm concerned, we are playing in Iran on September 3 until told otherwise. My focus is on the team and the preparation of the team. We are excited and motivated and are looking forward to what should be a great test."

Guam, under its English coach, has won both games so far in the second round of qualification and sits on top of its group.

The island of just 170,000 people has climbed to 146 in FIFA's world rankings and is one of Asia's most improved teams, but playing Iran is as testing off the field as on.

These are problems Iran should be accustomed to. Years of sanctions affected the ability of the IFF to access funds from world governing body FIFA and the AFC, and therefore pay for facilities or organize training camps overseas.

The cancellation of the relatively few friendly matches arranged for the team have been a common occurrence over the years.

After the 2014 World Cup, during which Iran gave a good showing despite earning a single point from three games, Queiroz explained that he was ready to leave but was persuaded to stay by a federation that believes the situation will change.

"It was my hope that things could change and that we could have the right conditions to prepare the team for the World Cup in Russia," he said. "The federation board still believes that with the end of the sanctions there is now a chance to put something in place to change the situation. Let's see. I have this perception that things will not happen in the short term."

Appeal Terry red card 'waste of time', says Mourinho

Alec Kennedy, Agence France-Presse, West Bromwich, UK | Sports | Mon, August 24 2015, 8:55 AM

Manager Jose Mourinho believes Chelsea should contest captain John Terry's red card from the 3-2 win at West Brom but admits an appeal would probably be "a waste of time".

Mourinho appeared to be unhappy with the dismissal of his skipper for a foul on Salomon Rondon nine minutes into the second half at The Hawthorns a week after he was substituted at Manchester City.

But Mourinho hinted an appeal to the FA to have the sending-off overturned was unlikely after several failed appeals by Chelsea in the last year.

"Normally, it's a waste of time for us," said Mourinho. "I think we should (appeal), but normally it's a waste of time.

"Remember (Nemanja) Matic against Burnley last year, Diego Costa against Liverpool, (Thibaut) Courtois (against Swansea)?

"It's a waste of time."

Terry's dismissal by referee Mark Clattenburg meant the 34-year-old had failed to complete successive Premier League games for the first time in 17 years and 462 appearances.

He was sent off for denying a goalscoring opportunity when he was adjudged to have dragged down Albion's record signing Rondon on 54 minutes.

"I don't want to make (anything of it)," said Mourinho.

"To speak about that I have to speak about many other things in the game, some things you can see, others we can see.

"It's a ball into space behind the full-back. The full-back is pressing high. The striker makes the movement and then Mr Clattenburg decides a red card."

Mourinho saw new signing Pedro mark his debut with the opening goal as Chelsea led 2-0 and 3-1 and then held on for their first win of the season following the loss of Terry.

Pedro is believed to have cost the Premier League champions around £21 million (28.9 million euros) but Mourinho was delighted with the Spaniard's first Premier League performance.

"He is a very good player," said Mourinho. "There is always a question mark because how many top players come to England and don't perform immediately, and then people wonder if he's the right player, can he adapt, was he a good or bad buy?"

"There are examples in our club, and in lots of clubs. So it's very nice for him to come and perform straight away as he did."

Diego Costa and Cesar Azpilicueta were also on target for the Blues while James Morrison scored both West Brom goals and had a penalty saved by Courtois at 0-0.

West Brom coach Tony Pulis criticised his side's defending after they conceded three times for the second successive home game following defeat in the opening fixture against Manchester City.

But he praised their attacking play without star striker Saido Berahino, who he left out following a failed bid from Tottenham Hotspur last week.

"The transfer window is absolutely ridiculous," said Pulis.

"For it to be going through into the start of the season, I find just ridiculous.

"Everybody should be talking about the game and this wouldn't be an issue or a problem.

"Saido's a great lad but this can be disruptive and it has been disruptive. I had a good chat with him.

"He's fine, there are no problems with him, but it's the transfer window that causes the problem. There are still seven days to go. He's a young lad and he needs to be protected.

"There is a lot of stuff going on his mind and a lot of people saying things and doing things. The kid shouldn't have this problem. Nobody should. The season has started."

Lydia Ko wins Canadian Pacific Women's Open

The Associated Press, Coquitlam, British Columbia | Sports | Mon, August 24 2015, 1:30 PM

Lydia Ko won the Canadian Pacific Women's Open for the third time and first as a professional Sunday, beating Stacy Lewis with a par on the first hole of a playoff.

The 18-year-old Ko finished with an even-par 72 to match Lewis at 12-under 276 at Vancouver Golf Club. Lewis, also a playoff loser this year in the ANA Inspiration, had a 67.

"This feels amazing," Ko said. "I had an amazing week. ... To play good golf in front of great crowds was one of the highlights of this week. I feel somewhat Canadian."

Ko won in 2012 at Vancouver Golf Club at 15 years, 4 months to become the LPGA Tour's youngest winner and fifth amateur champion. The New Zealander successfully defended her title in 2013, also as an amateur, in Edmonton, Alberta. She has three victories this year to push her career total to eight.

"It's great to come back to Vancouver and play well in front of such big crowds," Ko said. "I didn't know that in 2012, I might be coming back here in a couple years, and then winning here again. So many great memories here and, hopefully, we'll be able to come back here."

Ko won with a 2 1/2-foot putt after Lewis missed her 9-foot par attempt.

Lewis drove into the left rough and missed the green with her approach. Ko hit the fairway and green, though she left a 50-foot putt.

"I said, 'Hey, you've just got to concentrate on your game, just one shot a time,' and that's what I tried to do," Ko said. "I said, 'I don't want to get too aggressive to that pin, but maybe it was a little bit too safe and maybe wasn't the best shot going in. I made a really good first putt on my normal 72nd hole, and made a good putt on the first playoff hole."

Lewis has 19 runner-up finishes, six since winning the NW Arkansas Championship in June 2014 for the last of her 11 LPGA Tour titles. This year, she has finished second four times and third three times.

"If you would have told me at the beginning of the day, I was going to be in a playoff, I would have been pretty happy," Lewis said. "Just with the way my game has been over the last month or so, I felt I was close to putting together a good round, and that's what I did today. Still, left a few out there. But would have liked a better lie in the rough in the playoff, but other than that, it was pretty good."

So Yeon Ryu, the winner last year at London Hunt in Ontario, tied for third with fellow South Korean player Sei Young Kim at 11 under. Ryu had a 64, and Kim shot 68.

Canadian teen Brooke Henderson, coming off her first tour victory last week in the Portland Classic, closed with a 67 to tie for 23rd at 4 under.

"I wanted to show and give the crowd a little bit of excitement," the 17-year-old Henderson said. "I think today I did that. I knew I was capable of it. The other couple of days I was hitting the ball not too bad, but just wasn't making any putts. Today they fell."s

CURRICULUM VITAE

1. Name : Rahmawati
2. Place and Date of Birth : Tambulihan, 26 Oktober 1993
3. Religion : Islam
4. Nationality : Indonesian
5. Marital Status : Unmarried
6. Address : Jl. Gerilya H. Hasan Baseri RT. 03 Desa Cukan Lipai Kecamatan BAS Kabupaten HST
7. Phone Number : 085753986405

8. Education :
 - a. TK Sayang Ibu Cukan Lipai graduated 1999
 - b. SDN Cukan Lipai graduated 2005
 - c. MTsN ! BAS graduated 2008
 - d. MAN 3 BARABAI graduated 2011

9. Family:
 - a. Father
 - 1) Name : Rahmadi
 - 2) Occupation : Farmer
 - b. Mother
 - 1) Name : Juwairiah
 - 2) Occupation : Farmer
 - c. Sibling : Mahdani dan Saripudin

Banjarmasin, Rabiul awal 1437H

January th 2016 A.D

Rahmawati