

# Medvedev's top ranking in doubt as ITF called to take 'swift action'

Daniil Medvedev's top ranking under a cloud as Ukrainian federation demands Russia ban

● Medvedev replaces Djokovic as world number one

AFP | London

Moscovite Daniil Medvedev reached the pinnacle of men's tennis when he became the ATP's world number one yesterday but what should have been a day of pride for Russian sport has been engulfed by the country's invasion of Ukraine.

Medvedev is only the third Russian man to top the standings and the first player outside the so-called "big four" of Novak Djokovic, Roger Federer, Rafael Nadal and Andy Murray to hold the top spot in 18 years.

But with the sporting world uniting its in condemnation of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, Medvedev's meteoric rise to the top could hardly have happened at a worse time for tennis.



Daniil Medvedev of Russia returns a ball during a match

On Sunday the Ukrainian Tennis Federation urged the sport's governing body the International Tennis Federation (ITF) to immediately expel Russia and Belarus from the organisation and ban Russia from team and individual tournaments.

In a letter seen by Reuters, the Ukrainian federation described the actions of Russia and Belarus in Ukraine over the past four

days as "unprecedented, cynical and bloody".

"Civilians are dying, including women and children; civilian infrastructure is collapsing ... This is a full-scale war that will push our country back decades," the letter said, adding that the goal of Russia's invasion was "extermination."

"Russia and Belarus do not have the right not only to hold

international competitions on their territory, but also to participate in all ITF team and individual tournaments abroad," the letter continued.

In response the ITF said it had taken "swift action" to cancel all events in Russia indefinitely and that no ITF events would be held in Belarus for 2022.

"This is a fast-evolving situation; we are in active discussion with the ITF tennis family and the ITF Board to decide and align around our next course of action," it said.

"We stand united with the Ukraine and are working with the Ukraine Tennis Federation. Right now, our priority is the safety of the tennis players and the security of all those participating in our events."

Any restrictions on individual Russian players, while seen as unlikely, would cast doubt on Medvedev's participation at the next Grand Slam, the French Open in May.

Ahead of his coronation as world number one Medvedev



Daniil Medvedev has become the first man since 2004 outside the game's "Big Four" of Djokovic, Rafael Nadal, Roger Federer and Andy Murray to occupy the top spot

everything, in people, in love, in safety, in justice, in their chances in life.

"Let's be together and show them that's it true, because every kid shouldn't stop dreaming."

Medvedev's fellow Russian Andrey Rublev, the world number seven, wrote "No War Please" on the lens of a TV camera on his way to winning the Dubai title last week.

French Open 2021 finalist Anastasia Pavlyuchenkova called for an end to violence and war in a social media post yesterday.

"Personal ambitions or political motives cannot justify violence," Pavlyuchenkova said. "This takes away the future not only from us, but also from our children. Stop the violence, stop the war."

Four leading players from Russia and Belarus are on the entry list for next month's prestigious Indian Wells tournament in California. Women's world number two Aryna Sabalenka and world number 16 Victoria Azarenka represent Belarus.

## 'This is the start': Klopp eyes quadruple after Liverpool win League Cup

● Liverpool beats Chelsea 11-10 on penalties to win League Cup

AFP | London

Jurgen Klopp challenged Liverpool to chase a historic quadruple after the Reds won the League Cup final in a dramatic penalty shoot-out against Chelsea on Sunday.

Klopp's side clinched the first of the four major trophies they are competing for this term when Chelsea goalkeeper Kepa Arrizabalaga smashed his penalty high over the crossbar.

Kepa was the only player to miss in the shoot-out as Liverpool converted all 11 of their kicks and Chelsea netted 10.

It was a fittingly tense conclusion to a thrilling encounter that finished 0-0 after extra-time despite both sides creating numerous chances.

Liverpool had a Joel Matip goal controversially disallowed for a dubious offside against Virgil van Dijk in the second half.



Liverpool players celebrate with the trophy

Chelsea were denied three times by the offside flag, with Blues boss Thomas Tuchel furious that Romelu Lukaku's effort didn't survive a VAR check.

Liverpool's record ninth League Cup triumph was their first domestic knockout tournament triumph since 2012.

Having failed to win a trophy last season, Klopp believes his players can use the momentum from their Wembley success to fuel their bid to become the first English club to enjoy a trophy clean-sweep.

The Reds are six points behind Premier League leaders Manchester City with a game

in hand, hold a 2-0 lead heading into their Champions League last-16 second leg against Inter Milan and host Norwich in the FA Cup fifth round on Wednesday.

"This is the start. We are not silly. You need luck. We have to survive, work hard and, we have to play on Wednesday again, which I cannot believe at this moment," Klopp said.

"Anfield will be rocking because of this result and hopefully we can deliver a game to enjoy.

"We don't get nervous when things don't go well. We are more experienced now.



"It's a big one for us. The first time for this group. The atmosphere was outstanding. It was nice to celebrate with the people after the match."

Liverpool's final kick in the shoot-out was coolly converted by keeper Caoimhin Kelleher, who was again deputising for first-choice Allison Becker after playing all but one game in the competition this season.

"The game he played was absolutely incredible. I can remember two brilliant saves. He showed his full skill set in the penalty shoot-out," Klopp said.

"It was like two lions going at each other. It was absolutely crazy. It was one of the most spectacular shoot-outs I ever saw."

## Svitolina to donate prize money to help Ukraine's military, relief efforts

Reuters | London

Elina Svitolina said she will donate her prize money from WTA tournaments to Ukraine's military and to help with humanitarian efforts following Russia's invasion of her country last week.

The world number 15 told Eurosport her family and friends in Ukraine were defending the country and that she wanted to help.

"Really until the very last moment we did not believe that



Elina Svitolina

this war would actually start and then everything just happened at night ... Everyone is terrified, everyone is heartbroken," she said.

"My family is there. Lots of my friends who didn't leave the country are there. They're fighting for their life, some of them are fighting for our country. It takes a lot of courage and it's unbelievable that some people took weapons in their hands and went to fight for our land.

"The most painful thing I would say is I feel completely useless because I want to help them. I want to do something for them. Some of my friends are without electricity, without water, without food. They're

really struggling."

Ukraine's health ministry said on Sunday that 352 civilians, including 14 children, had been killed since the beginning of Russia's invasion. It also said that 1,684 people, including 116 children, had been wounded.

Russia calls its actions in Ukraine a "special operation" that it says is not designed to occupy territory but to destroy its southern neighbour's military capabilities and capture what it regards as dangerous nationalists.

## Verreynne, Rabada and spin have South Africa eyeing New Zealand win

AFP | Christchurch

Kyle Verreynne, Kagiso Rabada and the spin of Keshav Maharaj had South Africa eyeing victory over New Zealand at stumps on day four of the second Test in Christchurch yesterday.

New Zealand, set an imposing record target of 426, were 94 for four with Devon Conway on 60 and Tom Blundell on one. South Africa declared their second innings at 354 for nine with Verreynne not out 136, his maiden Test century.

Verreynne said it was a satisfying innings that went according to plan.

"When I did cross the mark and get to a hundred there was just that sense of pride and joy that I'd made a big impact towards pushing for a result," he said, adding it was Rabada's quickfire 47 that really lifted the team.

"He said to me he was going to stick around with me until I got my hundred but once he



Kyle Verreynne (L) celebrates reaching his century

When I did cross the mark and get to a hundred there was just that sense of pride and joy that I'd made a big impact towards pushing for a result

KYLE VERREYNNE

started hitting it I said he had to keep going. It was like he couldn't miss.

"The way he played was probably one of the big factors in terms of the energy we took into our bowling. What he was able to do just gave everyone a bit of energy."

**AQUA COOL**  
Ultra Pure Bottled Drinking Water

35 YEARS

Easy & Secure Online Ordering of your favourite Aqua Cool Products

Download the AQUA COOL App Now

Jalal Ionics Co. W.L.L. is ISO 22000 : 2005 certified

Free Home Delivery  
Call Us Now-1787 5098  
www.aquacool.bh

Jalal Ionics Co. W.L.L.  
P.O. Box 1770, Manama, Kingdom of Bahrain  
C.R. No. 14986, Public Health Registration No. 18/0006