

History-chasing Serena eyes French Open second week

Sixth seed Alexander Zverev cruises into French Open last 16

● **Third seed Aryna Sabalenka crashes out**

AFP | Paris

Serena Williams continues her quest for a record-equalling 24th Grand Slam title in the French Open third round yesterday as the highest-ranked player left in her half of the draw, while Alexander Zverev cruised into the last 16 for the fourth straight year.

World number four Aryna Sabalenka, who was the highest-seeded women's player still in the tournament, was dumped out by Russia's Anastasia Pavlyuchenkova in yesterday's early action.

The Belarusian third seed, who has never reached a Grand Slam quarter-final, slumped to a 6-4, 2-6, 6-0 defeat.

The 31st-seeded Pavlyuchenkova will next face Victoria Azarenka, with a potential quarter-final against Williams up for grabs.

Azarenka, who stunned Williams in their 23rd meeting in last year's US Open semi-finals, cruised past Madison Keys 6-2, 6-2 to reach the Roland Garros fourth round for the first time since making the last four in 2013.

The 39-year-old Williams had already seen yet another of her potential title rivals exit



Serena Williams hits a return

the tournament on Thursday, when world number one Ashleigh Barty hobbled out during the second round with a hip injury.

After Naomi Osaka's shock withdrawal, Simona Halep failing to start the tournament through injury and early losses for Bianca Andreescu and Angelique Kerber, none of the players who have beaten Williams in Grand Slam finals since her last title in the 2017 Australian Open are still in the competition.

The former world number one, still just one short of Margaret Court's all-time record of major trophies, faces fellow American Danielle Collins for a last-16 berth.

Williams won her only previous meeting with Collins, a Ro-

land Garros quarter-finalist last year and 2019 Australian Open semi-finalist, in Melbourne earlier this year.

She says the pair get on well off the court, but it's unlikely the three-time French Open winner will take it easy on her friend on Court Philippe Chatrier.

"She (Collins) has been playing well," said Williams. "She's also a really awesome person off the court. I love seeing her in the locker room."

"Ideally it would be great if we didn't have to play each other, because I always want her to do super well, so... It's fine, though."

Zverev finds form

German sixth seed Zverev needed five sets to beat unher-

“This is the main goal of my tennis career, to win Grand Slams, to reach the top of the rankings. I feel like the last year I'm on the right track again”

ALEXANDER ZVEREV

alded compatriot Oscar Otte in the first round before edging Russian qualifier Roman Safiullin in three tight sets.

He cruised to a 6-2, 7-5, 6-2 win over Laslo Djere yesterday, though, setting up a last-16 clash with former world number four Kei Nishikori.

"This is the main goal of my tennis career, to win Grand Slams, to reach the top of the rankings. I feel like the last year I'm on the right track again," said Zverev.

Nishikori reached the fourth round when opponent Henri Laaksonen retired injured after dropping the first set.

The short outing would have been a relief for Japan's Nishikori, who spent more than eight hours on court over the first two rounds.

In-form Norwegian youngster Casper Ruud was knocked out by Alejandro Davidovich Fokina in a marathon match which lasted more than four-and-a-half hours.

Lewandowski understudy Choupo-Moting extends Bayern contract



Bayern Munich's Eric Maxim Choupo-Moting poses with the championship trophy

AFP | Berlin

Bundesliga champions Bayern Munich have extended the contract of back-up striker Eric Maxim Choupo-Moting by two more years, it was announced yesterday.

The veteran 32-year-old Cameroon striker, understudy to this season's Bundesliga top scorer Robert Lewandowski, was out of contract this month but has signed a new deal until 2023.

Choupo-Moting scored nine goals in 32 matches for Bayern last season in all competitions and helped the Bavarian giants win a ninth straight Bundesliga league title.

When Lewandowski was sidelined by a knee injury in April, Choupo-Moting scored against his former club Paris Saint-Germain in both legs of the Champions League quarter-final as Bayern bowed out on away goals.

"I am proud to be here. FC Bayern is a very special club, the number one club in Germany and also one of the best clubs in the world," said

9 goals were scored by Eric Maxim Choupo-Moting in 32 matches for Bayern last season in all competitions

Choupo-Moting in a statement.

"I want to continue to have success with the team, I'd like to reach the German Cup final in Berlin and ideally win the Champions League."

Bayern sports director Hasan Salihamidzic described Choupo-Moting as a "very important player for us, who performed strongly last season" and who can "help us achieve our goals in the next two years".

Bayern are set to start the 2021/22 Bundesliga season with Oliver Kahn as the club's new chairman and Julian Nagelsmann as head coach, replacing Hansi Flick who will take charge of the Germany team after Euro 2020.

Champions League winner Tuchel extends Chelsea contract to 2024

AFP | London

Chelsea rewarded Thomas Tuchel for winning the Champions League in his first five months in charge with a new contract to 2024 yesterday.

The German joined in January with the Blues languishing in ninth in the Premier League.

But Chelsea were revitalised by Tuchel's arrival, climbing the table to finish fourth before winning European club football's biggest prize against Manchester City in Porto last weekend.

"I cannot imagine a better occasion for a contract renewal. I am grateful for the experience and very happy to stay part of the Chelsea family," said Tuchel.

"There is far more to come and we are looking forward to our next steps with ambition and much anticipation."

Tuchel was unceremoniously sacked by Paris Saint-Germain in December despite winning two Ligue 1 titles in his first two seasons in charge and leading the French giants to their first ever Champions League final in 2020.

The 47-year-old was handed just an 18-month deal when he arrived in London, but his success in guiding Chelsea to a second European Cup triggered a clause in his initial contract for an extension.

"Chelsea Football Club is very happy to confirm that, following our triumph in the Champions League, Thomas Tuchel's contract has been extended by



Chelsea's coach Thomas Tuchel celebrates with the Champions League trophy

5 games were only lost by Chelsea out of the 30 games under Tuchel

two years, as agreed when he joined the Club," the club said in a statement.

Tuchel was keen to stress after edging out Premier League champions City in Porto last Saturday that he wants to use Champions League glory as a launchpad to greater success.

Chelsea finished 19 points behind City and have not been champions of England since

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THOMAS TUCHEL

2017.

"I think it's good because nobody wants to rest," Tuchel said after the Champions League final. "I want the next one, the next title. I want to be a part of it and I demand to be a part of it and this is what comes next."

Of his 30 games in charge so far, Chelsea have lost just five. He also guided the Londoners

YOU KNOW WHAT
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to the FA Cup final which they lost 1-0 to Leicester.

Chelsea director Marina Granovskaia added: "When Thomas joined us in January there was still so much to play for domestically and in Europe. He slotted in seamlessly and immediately became an integral part of the Chelsea family."

"Returning us to the top four in the Premier League was crucial, and we could not be happier with our success in the Champions League which crowned a remarkable season at Chelsea."

"We are obviously extremely pleased therefore to retain Thomas for a further two years, and look forward to more achievements in the coming seasons."

Ex-Sri Lanka skipper Jayasuriya to coach low-key Aussie club

AFP | Colombo

Former Sri Lanka captain and chief selector Sanath Jayasuriya was appointed head coach of a little-known club in Australia yesterday, joining two fellow countrymen at the ambitious side.

Mulgrave Cricket Club, which plays in Victoria's Eastern Cricket Association, said the 110-Test veteran would be in charge for the 2021/22 season.

"We are thrilled to have Sanath at the club to coach and work with our players, providing a fantastic wealth of

experience for our seniors and juniors," it said on Facebook.

Jayasuriya, 51, will join fellow Sri Lankans Tillakaratne Dilshan and Upul Tharanga, who had already signed on as players.

Mulgrave president Malin Pullenayegam said Dilshan, who played with Jayasuriya in a Sri Lanka Legends' side earlier this year, was instrumental in helping secure his services.

"We've been having a chat to him for a while through obviously Dilshan as a contact," he told the Melbourne Herald Sun newspaper.

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