

Swiatek bathroom break sets up Jabeur US Open title showdown

Iga Swiatek fights back to defeat Aryna Sabalenka and set up title clash against Ons Jabeur

● Jabeur defeats Garcia to reach first ever final at Flushing Meadows

AFP | New York

An emergency bathroom break powered world number one Iga Swiatek into a US Open final showdown with trailblazing Tunisian fifth-seed Ons Jabeur on Thursday.

Two-time French Open champion Swiatek advanced to the first US Open final of her career after coming from behind to beat Aryna Sabalenka 3-6, 6-1, 6-4 at Arthur Ashe Stadium.

The victory sent the 21-year-old from Poland into a Saturday final with Jabeur, who thrashed France's Caroline Garcia 6-1, 6-3 in Thursday's other semi-final.

Sabalenka, the sixth seed from Belarus, looked poised to create an upset after a dominant first

set performance in which she broke Swiatek no fewer than three times.

But Swiatek was rejuvenated after a quick dash to the bathroom following the opening set. "I kind of needed to go," Swiatek said. "For sure I felt lighter. I'm sorry -- that's disgusting."

Swiatek also said the break had helped her analyse the flaws in her first set performance.

"I tried to use that time to think about what to change because I remember when I was younger all I would do in the bathroom between sets after I lost was cry.



Swiatek has emerged as a dominant figure in women's tennis, with a 37-match winning streak that brought her six titles in one stretch. If she can defeat Jabeur, Swiatek will become the first woman since Angelique Kerber in 2016 to win two majors in one season



Iga Swiatek returns a shot to Aryna Sabalenka

Sabalenka to close out a gutsy victory.

Sabalenka, who was up a break and leading 4-2 in the final set, was left distraught by the defeat. She later appeared at a press conference with mirrored sunglasses on and a baseball cap pulled over her face.

Jabeur dominates

It was the third time Sabalenka has fallen short in the semi-finals of a Grand Slam.

"My team keeps telling me that I have to be proud of myself, what I have done in the last months," she said.

"But I don't feel that way. I feel like in these three semi-finals I had so much opportunities and

I didn't use it."

In Thursday's other semi-final, Jabeur outclassed France's Garcia to become the first African woman ever to reach the final of the US Open.

It was another notable milestone for Jabeur, who was also the first African woman to reach the Wimbledon final in July.

The Tunisian dominated Garcia from start to finish of a one-sided semi-final that took just over an hour to complete.

"It feels amazing," Jabeur said. "After Wimbledon I had a lot of pressure on me and I'm really relieved that I can back up my results."

"The hard court season started a little bit bad, but I'm very



I just tried to use that time and think about what to change. I remember that when I was younger, all I would do in the bathroom between sets when I lost was cry. This time I was able to problem solve

IGA SWIATEK

happy that I made it to the finals here."

Jabeur's victory extended her career-long domination of Garcia.

The 28-year-old Tunisian had beaten Garcia four times as a junior in Grand Slam events, and twice as a professional in Slams before Thursday.

"I know she was playing amazing tennis and that puts a lot of pressure on you," Jabeur said. "It wasn't easy for me but mentally I was so ready."

Garcia, seeded 17, had reached the last four on the back of a 13-match winning streak which included a victory at the Cincinnati Masters lead-in event.

But Jabeur ruthlessly dismantled Garcia's dream of becoming the first French woman to win the US Open crown with a clinical victory.

Bahrain set to host FIBA 3x3 World Tour

TDT | Manama

The Bahrain Olympic Committee (BOC) has signed an agreement with the International Basketball Federation (FIBA) to host an event on the FIBA 3x3 World Tour for the first time in the Kingdom.

BOC vice-president His Highness Shaikh Isa bin Ali bin Khalifa Al Khalifa signed the agreement with Ignacio Soriano, FIBA's Events and Partnership 3x3 president.

Present were Tourism Minister Fatima bint Jaffar Al Sairafi, General Sports Authority (GSA) CEO Dr Abdulrahman Sadiq Askar, Bahrain Tourism and Exhibitions Authority (BTEA) Dr Nasser Qaidi, Bahrain Basketball Association (BBA) chair-



Officials at the signing

man Captain Waleed Al Alawi, and BTEA marketing director Mariam Tourani.

HH Shaikh Isa said the signing of the agreement reflects the directives of His Majesty

King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa and His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince and Prime Minister, to host major events that support Bahrain's

standing on the world sports map.

The deal also embodies the vision of HM the King's Humanitarian Work and Youth Affairs representative and Supreme Council for Youth and Sports (SCYS) chairman HH Shaikh Nasser bin Hamad Al Khalifa, and SCYS first deputy chairman, GSA chairman and BOC president HH Shaikh Khalid bin Hamad Al Khalifa.

Al Sairafi stressed the importance of sports tourism which represents a key pillar of the Tourism Strategy 2022-2026, noting BTEA's support to hosting the event in order to attract more international tourists.

Soriano expressed delight at signing the agreement with BOC.

All soccer in England postponed to mourn Queen

Reuters | London

English soccer's ruling body postponed all fixtures until Monday as a mark of respect following the death of Queen Elizabeth but cricket and rugby matches will go ahead as planned this weekend.

Soccer's top flight Premier League and the English Football League (EFL) had already announced they were postponing their next round of fixtures.

The queen, Britain's longest-reigning monarch, died peacefully at her home in Scotland on Thursday aged 96.



A portrait of Britain's Queen Elizabeth II is displayed on a giant screen during a football match

"As a mark of respect, following the passing of Her Majesty the Queen, English football has united to postpone all football fixtures between 9-11 September," the Football Association said in a statement.

Sainz ensures Ferrari top times again in Monza practice

AFP | Monza

Carlos Sainz made sure Ferrari were fastest in both of yesterday's practice runs at the Italian Grand Prix by topping the times in the second session at Monza.

Spaniard Sainz posted a fastest time of one minute and 21.664 seconds, finishing 0.143sec ahead of championship leader Max Verstappen who is hunting his first ever win at the Temple of Speed.

Red Bull's Verstappen was hit with a five-place grid penalty



Ferrari's Carlos Sainz steers his car during practice

for Sunday's race for taking on his fifth engine of the season.

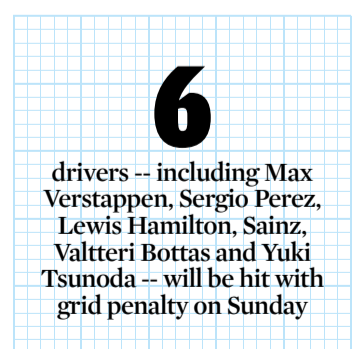
Sainz's Ferrari teammate Charles Leclerc, who trails Verstappen in the driver's standings

by 109 points, finished 0.193sec off the pace in third.

The Monegasque was fastest in the first session of the day and Verstappen's grid penalty has boosted his chances of claiming his second win at Monza after triumphing at the Italian track in 2019.

Verstappen is one of six drivers to be hit with sanctions alongside teammate Sergio Perez — who drops back 10 places for a similar offence — Lewis Hamilton, Sainz, Valtteri Bottas and Yuki Tsunoda.

Seven-time champion Hamil-



ton is yet to win a GP this season and will start at the back of the grid for a power unit change and other engine infractions.

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