

Harris upsets top-seeded O'Connell

● **Thrilling day of matches in first round of singles main draw held in Bahrain Ministry of Interior Tennis Challenger**

TDT | Manama

Billy Harris from Great Britain upset top seed Christopher O'Connell from Australia yesterday in the singles main draw first round of the Bahrain Ministry of Interior Tennis Challenger 2024, part of the ATP Challenger Tour.

Harris, currently ranked a career-high 191st in the world, won after O'Connell retired heading into the second set. Harris

had claimed the opening frame 7-6 (6) following a tight battle against the world number 67, and has moved on to the next stage.

There, he will play qualifier Gastao Elias of Portugal for a berth in the quarter-finals. Elias needed to go the maximum to oust Cem Ilkel of Turkey, also a qualifier, to make it through. He came back from a first-set defeat to take the match 3-6, 6-1, 7-6 (6) in a thrilling finish.

Aside from O'Connell, other seeds to fall on the first full day of singles main draw action at the Public Security Officers Club courts in Gudaibiya were third seed Vit Kopriva of the Czech Republic, seventh seed Lukas Klein of Slovakia, and eighth seed Elias Ymer of Sweden.

French qualifier Laurent

Lokoli, ranked 322nd globally, stunned world number 115 Kopriva 6-1, 6-4 in their round-of-32 affair.

Tough

Marco Tringelliti of Argentina, 229th in the world, defeated 140th-ranked Klein in a tough three-setter 6-4, 3-6, 6-3; while 181st Alexander Ritschard from Switzerland was a 6-2, 6-4 victor against 158th-ranked Ymer.

Second seed Fabio Fognini (103rd) of Italy avoided an upset and advanced to round two, beating Bahraini wild card Yusuf Qaed 6-1, 6-1 in their match.

Fourth-seeded Czech Jakub Mensik (129th) beat Georgian wild card Nikoloz Basilashvili (766th) 6-3, 6-4; while seventh seed Damir Dzumhur (160th)



Jordan's Abdulla Shelbayh hits a backhand return during his match yesterday

of Bosnia-Herzegovina ousted Alessandro Giannessi (234th) of Italy 6-3, 6-1.

Elsewhere yesterday, last year's runner-up in Bahrain, Abdulla Shelbayh of Jordan, ranked 187th in the world, defeated Slovakian Jozef Kovalik 7-6 (4), 6-3.

Others to triumph in their opening stage clashes last night were qualifier Adrian Andreev of Bulgaria, Italian qualifier Peter Buldorini, Turkey's Aziz Dougaz, Bosnia-Herzegovina contender Neriman Fatic, Kazakh alternate Mikhail Kukushkin, and Spaniard Daniel Rincon, who won a marathon match that lasted over two hours against Viktor Durasovic.

Action continues today at the same venue. All are welcome to attend, but must register for tickets, free of charge, online.

Guardiola hails Haaland's 'special mentality' to seek out goals



Manchester City's Norwegian striker #09 Erling Haaland (R) scores the team's second goal past Everton's English goalkeeper #01 Jordan Pickford

AFP | London

Pep Guardiola believes Erling Haaland's strong mentality is the key to the Norwegian's scoring prowess despite trying to take pressure off the 23-year-old's shoulders.

Haaland scored his first goals since November in a 2-0 win over Everton on Saturday after spending two months on the sidelines due to a foot injury.

His return allied to Kevin De Bruyne's recent comeback from a five-month absence with a hamstring injury comes at the perfect time for City ahead of their Champions League last 16, first leg away to FC Copenhagen yesterday.

Haaland has scored 40 goals in just 35 Champions League appearances, including 17 in 16 for City as he fired the English champions to win the competition for the first time last season.

"We don't put pressure on him and say 'you have to score goals for us'. No, we said 'get involved with what we do and the rest will come naturally'," said Guardiola at his pre-match press conference.

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“We don't put pressure on him and say 'you have to score goals for us'. No, we said 'get involved with what we do and the rest will come naturally. He is so strong mentally after one goal, he wants a second one and then a third'”

PEP GUARDIOLA

ter one goal, he wants a second one and then a third.

"You see his numbers at his age - in the Champions League even (Lionel) Messi does not have these numbers at his age.

"It's unbelievable. He has scored goals everywhere all the time. He has a special mentality and attributes and skills.

"We are delighted to have him. And we are delighted he is back after two months out."

The holders are huge favourites to roll over the Danish champions, who will be playing for the first time in two months due to the winter break in their domestic league.

However, Guardiola warned his players against complacency after seeing Copenhagen dump out Manchester United in the group stages and run Bayern Munich close over two games.

"I have huge respect (for them). I said to the players this morning you have to prepare mentally and be ready to suffer," added Guardiola.

40

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'Hard graft' from all-rounders leads South Africa fightback

AFP | Hamilton

All-rounders Ruan de Swardt and Shaun von Berg used "hard graft" to lead a South African rearguard yesterday as they reached 220-6 after New Zealand had dominated the start of the second Test.

De Swardt reached his maiden half-century and was 55 not out at stumps on day one. The 37-year-old Von Berg was 34 on his Test debut, with the pair having put on an unbroken 70 off 27 overs at Seddon Park in Hamilton.

South Africa won the toss but were 64-3 at lunch and tottering at 150-6 early in the final session after David Bedingham was dismissed in freakish fashion.

After losing in Mount Maunganui by 281 runs, an under-strength South Africa must win to avoid becoming the first team from their country to lose a Test



New Zealand debutant Will O'Rourke (left) celebrates a wicket

series to New Zealand.

De Swardt, who had been one of six Proteas debutants in the first Test, showed the specialist batsmen how to survive in a gritty 135-ball knock.

He received support from veteran leg-spinner von Berg, who was finally given an international opportunity after playing 135 first-class matches.

"It was quite hard graft out

there," de Swardt said.

"I thought the New Zealanders bowled pretty well but for me it was just about getting stuck into them, having that mental toughness and keeping going.

"There's still quite a bit in the wicket so if we can bat well tomorrow, get past 300, 350, we're definitely in with a chance."

The pair halted a mini-collapse either side of the tea break inspired by Rachin Ravindra, who took 3-33.

Ravindra, who scored 240 in the first Test, underlined his all-round talent by removing Zubayr Hamza for a painstaking 20 off 99 balls and Keegan Petersen for two.

His left-arm spin then accounted for the unfortunate Bedingham, on 39, whose leg-side flick struck the top of his shoe and flew to close-in fielder Will Young.

Record-setting West Indies beat Australia in third T20

AFP | London

Andre Russell and Sherfane Rutherford put on the biggest sixth-wicket partnership in a Twenty20 international to steer the West Indies past Australia by 37 runs in their third and final clash yesterday.

Both men crunched quick-fire half-centuries to propel the visitors to 220-6 in Perth with Australia managing just 183-5 in reply, David Warner top-scoring on 81 in his last appearance for Australia at home.

The hosts won the first match in Hobart by 11 runs and sealed the series with a 34-run victory at Adelaide.

The West Indies made a horror start after winning the toss and opting to bat, losing three wickets in the opening three overs.

But Russell (71 off 29 balls) and Rutherford (unbeaten 67 off 40) led the fightback, with both posting their highest T20 scores in a 139-run sixth-wicket partnership that set a new standard.

Spinner Adam Zampa went for 1-65 off four overs -- his most expensive in the format.

"I was just happy I could contribute tonight," said Russell. "I think it's just the nature of this team, we are never out of it. Five



West Indies' Andre Russell plays a shot

Scorecard

West Indies 220 for 6 (Russell 71, Rutherford 67*, Bartlett 2-37) beat Australia 183 for 5 (Warner 81, David 41*, Chase 2-19, Shepherd 2-31) by 37 runs

wickets down, but there wasn't any panic in the change rooms.

"I'm happy we came together as a team and we were definitely playing as a unit tonight."

Australia started well with Warner and captain Mitchell Marsh reaching 61 without loss after the six-over powerplay.

Warner clocked his 3,000th

run as he brought up a 26th half-century off 25 balls before Marsh departed for 17, skying a catch to Jason Holder off Akeal Hosein.

They reached 98-1 at the half-way mark but were pegged back by tight bowling.

The match turned when Australia lost three wickets for three runs. Roston Chase bagged two of them, including Warner and Josh Inglis (one), while Romario Shepherd bowled Aaron Hardie (16).

Glenn Maxwell blasted an unbeaten 120 in Adelaide but, with 96 needed off the final five overs, it was a bridge too far

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ANDRE RUSSELL

even for him and he fell for 12 as the chase fizzled despite Tim David cracking a lightening 41.

"We knew they'd come into this series, they're a really good team with some amazing cricketers, so fair play to the West Indies," Marsh said.

With Australian pace spearhead Josh Hazlewood rested, Xavier Bartlett earned a debut and Johnson Charles nicked to wicketkeeper Matthew Wade in his first over before he bowled Kyle Mayers in his second over.

In between, Nicholas Pooran was removed by Jason Behrendorff to leave the West Indies reeling at 17-3.