

## Nice stumble at Clermont as Ligue 1 hit by blizzard of red cards



Clermont-Ferrand's players celebrate a goal

Reuters | Nice

Struggling Nice lost 1-0 at Clermont on Sunday, finishing with nine men on an afternoon when seven players saw red in Ligue 1.

Brest won 3-1 at Angers, who ended with 10 men, and Auxerre won 2-1 at Montpellier as both teams had two men sent off.

Elsewhere, Toulouse and Lorient drew 2-2 and, in the early game, Strasbourg and Reims drew 1-1.

Nice, who spent much of last season in the top three before finishing fifth, have not won this season. They drew their first two league games and lost 1-0 away to Maccabi Haifa in their Europa League playoff first leg.

Saif-Eddine Khaoui scored the only goal in the fifth minute.

Nice lost Mario Lemina in the 80th minute, shown a red card for a tackle from behind. Two minutes later, Jean-Clair Todibo collected his second yellow for dissent after a foul was awarded against Aaron Ramsey. Nice sunk to 16th.

# Tsitsipas downs Medvedev to set up Coric clash in Cincy final

Petra Kvitova to take on qualifier Caroline Garcia for Cincinnati title

## ● Borna Coric beats Cameron Norrie in semi-finals

AFP | Cincinnati

Top-ranked Daniil Medvedev committed 11 double-faults in falling to Stefanos Tsitsipas 7-6 (8/6), 3-6, 6-3 in semi-finals of the ATP and WTA Cincinnati Masters.

Medvedev helped seal his own fate in the sixth game of the final set as he double-faulted four times to hand his Greek opponent to a 4-2 lead.

Tsitsipas will play for the title on Sunday against Croatian Borna Coric, who returned to an ATP Masters final for the first time in four years by defeating Britain's Cameron Norrie 6-3, 6-4.

Tsitsipas won only his third match against Medvedev after losing seven and also defeated a reigning number one player for only the second time in 12 career attempts.

The fourth seed put a winner into the corner on the first of three match points to earn the final.

"I knew I would have a difficult task in the third set," Tsitsipas said. "He made it a very physical match, very demand-

ing.

"But I took advantage of his missed first serves. They gave me time to think of my next move clearly. I was very calm and concentrated on every single task."

World number 152 Coric, who missed a year of play with shoulder problems and only returned to the tour in March, advanced in 91 minutes in a match delayed for hours by an afternoon of rain.

"It was a long day. I didn't expect to be playing in the evening," Coric said. "It was a crazy day but it finished very well."

Coric is the second-lowest-rated finalist since the rankings began in 1973, with number 191 Andrei Pavel setting that standard as he played for the Roland Garros title in 2003.

Coric got past a slow start marred by 14 unforced errors in the first six games, settling in to lift the level of his tennis.

The Croat, who lost a Masters final at Shanghai in 2018 to Novak Djokovic, limited Norrie to nine winners while sending over 17 along with 24 unforced errors.

"I played extremely well, but in the beginning I was not there," Coric said. "I then found my rhythm and began serving better. That was the key to the match."



Stefanos Tsitsipas in action during the match against Daniil Medvedev



Keys, the 2019 champion in Cincinnati, defeated three grand slam winners this week, but couldn't close out Kvitova

## Kvitova to face Garcia

In the women's semi-finals, French qualifier Caroline Garcia

survived two rain breaks and advanced to the final by defeating Aryna Sabalenka 6-2, 4-6, 6-1.

Garcia will play for the title against Czech Petra Kvitova, who constructed a 6-7 (6/8), 6-4, 6-3 comeback triumph over American Madison Keys.

Garcia is the first qualifier to ever reach the championship match at a Masters tournament.

Kvitova, a two-time Wimbledon winner who played the semi-finals in 2012 and 2018, will be aiming for her 30th career title in her first Cincinnati final.

Garcia maintained control over sixth seed Sabalenka in their contest, where the weather interruptions totaled four hours. She broke six times in a match

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STEFANOS TSITSIPAS

comprising two hours of actual play.

"What a day it has been," number 35 Garcia said. "Last night I was excited to be in the semi-finals.

"Aryna is a difficult opponent, so fast, so strong. We had a lot of very tough rallies and tough weather. You never knew when you would be coming back to the court -- but we managed it."

The pair returned after the second interruption and played out three more games as Garcia finished off the victory.

"No one would have expected this to happen," she said. "It feels great. I've had a long journey in Cincinnati. I'm proud of what I did and I'm happy to be in the final."

## Ten Hag should drop Ronaldo and Rashford for Liverpool clash: Rooney

AFP | London

Manchester United manager Erik ten Hag should drop Cristiano Ronaldo and Marcus Rashford for Monday's game with rivals Liverpool, according to Wayne Rooney.

United have made a slow start to life under Ten Hag, losing their first two games of the Premier League season, including a 4-0 humiliation at Brentford last weekend.

Much of the attention around the difficulties at Old Trafford has focused on Ronaldo, who reportedly wants to leave the club in search of Champions League football.

In his column for The Sunday Times, United's all-time top goalscorer Rooney expressed his belief that his former teammate Ronaldo should be left out of the side, having previously said he thinks the club should agree to sell the Portugal international.

"The first priority is, against Liverpool, to just compete and have a go," he wrote. "Do that and the fans will accept it, even if United get beaten. Play like they did against Brentford, and United will suffer an even worse result than their 5-0 defeat by Liverpool last season.

"I don't expect that to happen, by the way - I can't see United winning, but I believe there'll be a reaction and they'll lose by the odd goal, or even



Wayne Rooney poses with Cristiano Ronaldo after a match (file photo)

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snatch a draw.

"But I wouldn't play Cristiano Ronaldo, and I wouldn't play Marcus Rashford. If I was in Ten Hag's position my main concern would be getting en-

ergy on the pitch, and United's failure to recruit a No 9 means they relied on Ronaldo against Brentford, even though he hadn't trained a lot with the team. He looked like he needs time to get match fit.

"As for Marcus, I think he needs to do a lot of soul-searching and figure out what he wants, for his own good, before anything else. Because watching him is a real concern: he looks like he wants to be anywhere but on a football pitch. I haven't seen him smile on the field for a long time. His performances have dipped - he hasn't been selected by England for more than a year.

"I'm coming from a place of wanting the best for him. He's a lovely kid and a local lad who came through the ranks at United, who everyone wants to see doing well.

## Conte hails team man Kane as striker hits personal milestones

Reuters | London

Tottenham Hotspur's Harry Kane notched up yet more personal milestones with the winning goal in a 1-0 Premier League victory over Wolverhampton Wanderers on Saturday but manager Antonio Conte said the forward remains the ultimate team player.

Kane moved above Sergio Aguero into fourth on the list of all-time Premier League scorers with 185 goals and at the same time set a record in the competition for goals for a single team. He also reached 250 in all competitions for Tottenham.

The home crowd sang their usual refrain of "He's one of our one" as Kane went through his post-match interview on the sun-kissed turf of Tottenham's home stadium at the end.

They know that with Kane they have a chance to end their long wait for silverware stretching back to 2008.

Conte knows that too, but said that it is not just Kane's goals that make him such a pivotal player.

"Harry is a player who makes the difference, for his quality, for his ability. We're talking about a really world-class striker who can be dangerous in all aspects on the pitch," the Italian, whose side have seven points from three games despite not really hitting top gear,



Tottenham Hotspur manager Antonio Conte talks to Harry Kane



Harry Kane's 185th Premier League goal for Tottenham was also the club's 1,000th home goal in the league

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ANTONIO CONTE

told reporters.

"For me, the big surprise about Harry is not only on the football aspect but the person. We're talking about a really good person, a really good man.

"He's always ready to help the team, to work for the team. Usually when you have this type of player, they can be a bit lazy without the ball. They like to play with the ball but without the ball (they think) 'I don't run because I have to be fresh when we have the ball'.