

Incredible feats as fuel to keep collecting Grand Slam titles

Lack of love fuels Djokovic desire to be top dog

LONDON, July 15, (RTRS): Maybe when the fans start serenading Novak Djokovic in a Centre Court love-in it will be time for the Serb to call it a day.

When he starts receiving the same adoration reserved almost exclusively for Roger Federer in Sunday's epic Wimbledon final, maybe his resolve will soften, his hunger for the fight diminish, his love of "sticking it to them" fade.

"Hopefully, in five years' time I can be hearing the same chants," the 32-year-old Serb said as he signed off his news conference following a five-set win over Federer which sealed a fifth Wimbledon title and 16th Grand Slam crown.

Sunday's triumph, in which he saved two match points and soaked up 94 winners off the Federer racket before clawing his way over the line in the longest Wimbledon singles final, confirmed Djokovic as the ul-

time tennis anti-hero.

Apart from those in his box, it seemed the entire crowd were rooting for Federer. They even booed him near the end when he angrily whacked a court-side microphone.

He had the last laugh. While Federer and Rafael Nadal are still swinging their rackets, he

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will behind them in the popularity stakes.

Sheer bloody-mindedness, as well as outrageous talent, is the reason Federer, Nadal and Djokovic, aged almost 38, 33 and 32 respectively, remain out of reach for their pursuers and the reason they share 54 Grand Slam titles, including the last 11.

But while Federer paints the court with strokes of magic and the



Serbia's Novak Djokovic celebrates defeating Switzerland's Roger Federer in the men's singles final match of the Wimbledon Tennis Championships in London on July 14. (AP)

swashbuckling Nadal plays tennis like a superhero, Djokovic is the master of attrition, winning by a thousand cuts.

No matter that he is arguably the best returner the game has ever seen, is the best athlete and has an engaging personality, there is only so much love to go around.

For now Djokovic will not care, and if anything will use a perceived lack of fanfare for his incredible feats as fuel to keep collecting Grand Slam titles and move past Federer and Nadal to the top of the all-time list.

"Whether I'm going to be able to do it or not, I don't know. I mean, I'm not really looking at age as a restriction of any kind for me at least," Djokovic, the only man since Rod Laver to have held all four Grand Slams simultaneously, said on Sunday. "It just depends how long I'm going to play, whether I'm going to have a chance to make historic number one or slams."

"It depends not only on myself, it depends on circumstances in life," the father of two added.

Had Federer converted one of the two match points that came his way at 8-7 in the fifth set he would have moved six Grand Slams clear of Djokovic.

Instead it is four, and having won five of the last six on offer Djokovic appears to be in the middle of a period of domination that shows no sign of ending.

He will go into the US Open as red-hot favourite to retain his title and when next year begins he will have his eyes fixed on winning an eighth Australian Open crown.

Former coach Boris Becker says the race is now on and believes all three will add to their tallies.

But time, perhaps, is on Djokovic's side.

"He's a year younger than Nadal and five younger than Federer - we all know he fancies overtaking them," Becker said. "Honestly, I think he can, but I wouldn't say that for sure."

Djokovic stays atop ATP rankings

Wimbledon champ Halep up to No. 4 as Barty remains at No. 1

WIMBLEDON, England, July 15, (AP): Simona Halep's Wimbledon championship lifted her from No. 7 to No. 4 in the WTA rankings on Monday, while runner-up Serena Williams moved up one spot to No. 9, her best placing since returning to the tour last season after having a baby.

Halep beat Williams in Saturday's final with surprising ease 6-2, 6-2.

Coco Gauff's magical run from a wild-card entry in qualifying all the way to the fourth round at the All England Club allowed her to move into the WTA's top 150 for the first time.

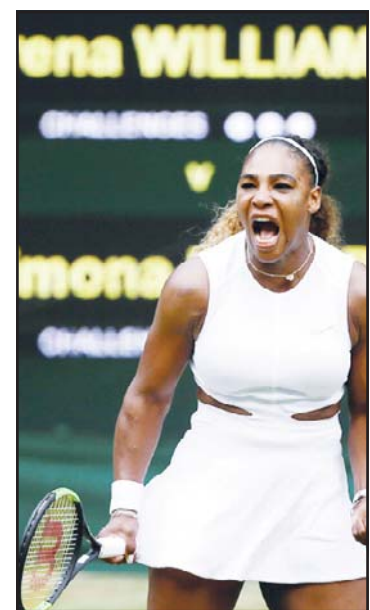
The 15-year-old American rose 172 places to No. 141 from

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No. 313 before the tournament. Gauff was the youngest player to ever qualify for the main draw at Wimbledon, then beat five-time champion Venus Williams on the way to reaching the fourth round. That is when Gauff lost to eventual champion Halep.

Two other big jumps came from Barbora Strycova of the Czech Republic and Lauren Davis of the US.

The 33-year-old Strycova became the oldest first-time Grand Slam semifinalist in the professional era before losing to Williams, allowing her to move up 22 places to No. 32.



United States' Serena Williams reacts after scoring a point against Romania's Simona Halep during the women's singles final match on day twelve of the Wimbledon Tennis Championships in London on July 13. (AP)



Romania's Simona Halep celebrates after defeating United States' Serena Williams during the women's singles final match on day twelve of the Wimbledon Tennis Championships in London on July 13. (AP)

Strycova also took over at No. 1 in the doubles rankings on Monday by winning that title at Wimbledon.

After losing in qualifying, Davis made it into the main draw when someone else withdrew. She then eliminated Angelique Kerber in the second round to become the first "lucky loser" to beat a defending champion at a major in the professional era and went up 13 spots to 75th.

Kerber dropped from No. 5 to 13th.

French Open champion Ash Barty remains at No. 1 in singles, followed by two-time major champion Naomi Osaka and Karolina Pliskova.

Wimbledon men's champ Novak Djokovic stayed atop the ATP rankings after his 7-6 (5), 1-6, 7-6 (4), 4-6, 13-12 (3) victory over Roger Federer on Sunday in the longest final in tournament history. Rafael Nadal is No. 2 and Federer is No. 3.

Roberto Bautista Agut, who lost to Djokovic in the semifinals, went from No. 22 to No. 13, equaling his career high.

Daniil Medvedev's third-round showing let him crack the top 10 for the first time at No. 10; he was ranked 13th before Wimbledon. Sam Querrey, beaten by Nadal in the quarter-finals, lifted his ranking by 26 spots to No. 39.



Simon Pagenaud (front left), of France, leads the pack on his way to taking first place at the Honda Indy auto race in Toronto on July 14. (AP)

Pagenaud wins for 3rd time and Rossi tightens title race

Dixon claims Indycar podium finish

TORONTO, July 15, (AP): Simon Pagenaud won his third race of the season and Alexander Rossi tightened the championship race with Josef Newgarden in IndyCar's race through the streets of Toronto.

The win on the streets around Exhibition Place is the first for Pagenaud this year away from Indianapolis Motor Speedway. The Frenchman won the Indy 500 and the road course race at the speedway to save his job with Team Penske.

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Pagenaud had to save fuel in the waning laps to hold off reigning series champion Scott Dixon. But Penske teammate Will Power caused a caution on the final lap and Pagenaud was able to coast to the finish in his Chevrolet.

"I was confident all weekend, I never had a doubt," said Pagenaud, who started from the pole and paced nearly every practice session. "We were only focused on ourselves. I never really looked at who was behind. We were just focused on getting the car where we wanted it to be."

"Those days are the best. There are a lot of bad days in racing, but those sweet days make up for it."

Dixon's runner-up finish denied Chip Ganassi Racing a weekend sweep. Ganassi got his first NASCAR win of the season Saturday night with Kurt Busch in Kentucky.

Dixon again indicated he will need offseason surgery on an ailing elbow - he's described the ligament strain as "tennis elbow" - and that it bothered him during his



First-place finisher Simon Pagenaud (center), of France, second-place finisher Scott Dixon (left), of New Zealand, and third-place finisher Alexander Rossi (right), of the United States, celebrate after the Honda Indy auto race in Toronto on July 14. (AP)

drive. The reigning series champion won at Toronto last year, beating Pagenaud.

Rossi finished third, one spot ahead of IndyCar points leader Newgarden. The two began the race separated by just seven points and Rossi cut the deficit to four points.

"We didn't think we had a first-place car really at any point this weekend," Rossi said. "The fact that we were able to put it in the top five was a good thing."

Then we thought we had a podium car. That was really about it, unless we had anything come to us in the form of luck. So it was good to just kind of capitalize on what we felt was our maximum today. Obviously finishing in front of Josef Newgarden was a good thing."

Robert Wickens drove the parade lap in a car equipped with hand controls that allowed the Canadian to drive for the first time since he suffered a spinal cord injury in a crash last August.

'Suspended' Voynov signs with KHL team

MOSCOW, July 15, (AP): Former Los Angeles Kings defenseman Slava Voynov has signed a one-year deal in the Kontinental Hockey League as he sits out the final months of his NHL suspension.

Russian KHL club Avangard Omsk says it signed Voynov to a one-year deal. His NHL suspension, imposed after the league determined he committed acts of domestic violence, will end midway through the season.

Voynov was suspended indefinitely in October 2014 after being arrested and accused of abusing his wife. He pleaded no contest to a misdemeanor, left the United States to go back to Russia and last year had the conviction dismissed by a judge in Los Angeles. His most recent suspension was imposed in April after he applied for reinstatement.

Voynov won an Olympic gold medal at the tournament last year which didn't have NHL players. He didn't play any pro hockey last season.

Strycova and Hsieh take Wimbledon women's doubles title

LONDON, July 15, (RTRS): Czech Barbora Strycova completed a memorable Wimbledon as she partnered Hsieh Su-wei to the women's doubles title, beating Canada/China duo Gabriela Dabrowski and Xu Yifan 6-2, 6-4.

After the spine-tingling drama of the earlier men's singles final - the longest in the tournament's history - Strycova and her Taiwanese partner finally got on court to bring the

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curtain down on the fortnight with a straightforward victory.

"Oh my God, there is no word to describe the feeling," said a beaming Strycova, who lost to Serena Williams in the women's singles semifinals.

They became the first team to lift the doubles crown at Wimbledon without dropping a set since Serena

and Venus Williams in 2009.

"I felt like this tournament, especially Wimbledon, from the first moment we stepped on the court together, we just laughed and we just enjoyed," the Czech said.

"We kept it through the whole tournament. I think that was the biggest key (to the fact) we were playing the way we played."

"We are very different, but both of us handle stress differently."

"She (Hsieh) is really calm person and I'm very emotional. But I keep (trying) to enjoy it with a smile. That helps me also to relax on the court."

Strycova, 33, had also become the oldest Wimbledon singles semi-final debutant when she lost to Serena on Thursday.

It was great day for Taiwanese players with Latisha Chan teaming up with Croatian Ivan Dodig to win the mixed doubles, beating Latvian Jelena Ostapenko and 42-year-old Swede Robert Lindstedt 6-2, 6-3 in the final.



Czech Republic's Barbora Strycova (left), and Taiwan's Su-Wei Hsieh hold the trophies after defeating Canada's Gabriela Dabrowski and China's Yifan Xu in the women's doubles final match of the Wimbledon Tennis Championships in London on July 14. (AP)