

## US Open loses 2 more top-10 women: Svitolina, Bertens

## Martić and Kontaveit reach Palermo Open semifinals

PALERMO, Sicily, Aug 8, (AP) — Top-seeded Petra Martić and fourth-seeded Anett Kontaveit advanced to the semifinals of the first tour-level event in five months at the Palermo Ladies Open on Friday.

Martić beat qualifier Aliaksandra Sasnovich 7-6 (5), 7-6 (3) then Kontaveit defeated Italian teenager Elisabetta Cocciaretto 6-1, 4-6, 6-1.

The other semifinal will feature Fiona Ferro of France against local favorite Camila Giorgi of Italy.

Ferro eliminated two-time Palermo champion Sara Errani 6-4, 6-1; and Giorgi saved two match points in the second set before rallying past seventh-seeded Dayana Yastremska 4-6, 7-6 (5), 6-3 after nearly three hours.



Martić

Martić was coming off a three-set win a day earlier.

"I had two tough matches and my body's holding up well," Martić said. "I

have no major issues ... just maybe soreness that I'm sure we all have in the first tournament back.

"It feels nice to be reminded of how it feels to be that kind of tired. But all in all I'm happy. I had some good weeks of practice and it's paying off."

Kontaveit said she was looking forward to facing Martić.

"I was doing fitness for a long time," Kontaveit said of the break due to the coronavirus pandemic. "I started playing a lot of tennis 1 1/2 months ago."

Meanwhile, two more top-10 women — Elina Svitolina and Kiki Bertens — will miss the US Open, joining No. 1-ranked Ash Barty in skipping the



Sheldon Creed (2); Austin Hill (16); Johnny Sauter (13) and Todd Gilliland (38) race during a NASCAR Truck Series auto race at Michigan International Speedway in Brooklyn, Michigan, on Aug 7. (AP)

## TENNIS

Grand Slam tennis tournament during the coronavirus pandemic.

The US Tennis Association also announced Friday that Barbora Krejčíková withdrew. She is ranked 115th in singles, eighth in doubles.

The fifth-ranked Svitolina, a Ukrainian who was a semifinalist at Flushing Meadows a year ago, posted Friday on social media that she doesn't "feel comfortable to travel to US without putting my team and myself at high risk."

No. 7 Bertens, who is Dutch, wrote on Instagram that one of her concerns is the need to be quarantined upon returning to Europe after the US Open, which runs from Aug 31 to Sept 13 and will not have any spectators.

The French Open — where Bertens reached the semifinals in 2016 — is scheduled to begin Sept 27. She also wants to play on the clay-court tournament in Rome before heading to Paris. "The situation around COVID-19

is still that worrying and the health of everyone and the control over this virus is priority," Bertens wrote.

Defending men's champion Rafael Nadal also has said he won't play at the US Open, citing concerns about traveling during the pandemic. Also out of the field: Roger Federer, who is sitting out the rest of the season after two operations on his right knee.

Stan Wawrinka, Fabio Fognini and Gael Monfils are among other men not going to New York.

With Friday's three withdrawals, Francesca Di Lorenzo, Natalia Vikhlyantseva and Viktoriya Tomova moved into the women's singles draw.

Sachia Vickery gets the wild-card invitation that originally was awarded to Di Lorenzo.

The professional tennis tours went on hiatus in March because of the pandemic. The women's circuit returned to action this week in Palermo, Italy; the men are scheduled to begin play later this month.

## Smith captures first NASCAR Truck Series win in overtime

Sauter below cut-line following a crash with Enfinger

**BROOKLYN, Michigan, Aug 8, (AP) — Zane Smith scored the first Truck Series win of his career Friday night with a last-lap pass in double overtime at Michigan International Speedway.**

Grant Enfinger tried to win the race as the leader on four previous restarts but a slew of cautions spoiled his race. Enfinger

## TRUCK RACING

ger was the leader on the restart in a second two-lap overtime shootout when he surged to the front with a push from Austin Hill.

But he then attempted to block Hill and contact between the two trucks caused Enfinger to spin. Christian Eckes moved into the lead with a lap to go and tried to win his first career race when Smith passed him for the win.

The victory for Smith, a 21-year-old in his first season at NASCAR's



Zane Smith celebrates his victory after a NASCAR Truck Series auto race at Michigan International Speedway in Brooklyn, Michigan, on Aug 7. (AP)

national level, locked the California native into the Truck Series playoffs. Five spots remain up for grabs, with former series champion Johnny Sauter below the cut-line following a crash with teammate Enfinger with 16 laps remaining.

"I don't even know where to

some team is something special."

Smith has seven top-10 finishes this season driving a Chevrolet for GMS Racing. He joined Sheldon Creed as first-time winners this season in the Truck Series.

Eckes finished second, followed by Tanner Gray, Tyler Ankrum and Todd Gilliland.

Enfinger dropped to 33rd after trying to win despite four cautions over the final 16 laps.

The race was stopped by 11 cautions, including a red flag of nearly 10 minutes to clean oil off the track for a crash in the first overtime attempt.

One of the cautions was when Sauter and Enfinger were racing for the lead, with Sauter sliding to the front at the start/finish line. But as the two trucks raced side-by-side, the teammates touched and Sauter spun.

Sauter hit the wall and heavily damaged his Ford, ruining his shot at a victory that would have locked him into the playoffs. Sauter, the 2016 Truck Series champion, is winless through 11 races this season.

"I thought I was doing it right. I guess not. I just lost it," Sauter said over his radio.

## Men's T20 WCup in Australia delayed

## 2021 Women's Cricket WC in New Zealand moved to 2022

WELLINGTON, New Zealand, Aug 8, (AP) — The Women's Cricket World Cup in February in New Zealand has been postponed for a year.

Also, the men's Twenty20 World Cup in Australia that had been pushed from October-November this year to the same time in 2021, was delayed by another year to 2022.

India, which was to host the T20 World Cup in 2021, will stage it as planned with all 16 teams which qualified for the 2020 edition participating in India. There will be a new qualifying process for the 2022 T20 World Cup, the International Cricket Council

so the integrity of the tournament is maintained."

On Saturday, Cricket Australia interim chief executive Nick Hockley faced several questions about India's possible influence in the men's 2021 T20 World Cup decision during a media teleconference. The first question was whether it had been "India's call" to host the next T20 World Cup instead of Australia.

"It was an ICC decision, made by the ICC board," Hockley said.

"We have to respect that India had the hosting rights for the 2021 event. In many ways, hosting in 2022 in Australia gives us an even better chance of putting on the event we originally planned for. We're just pleased that we have some certainty."

Hockley was also asked whether the traditional Boxing Day Test in Melbourne against India was in jeopardy of being moved because of the big increase in COVID-19 cases in Melbourne over the past month, forcing a lockdown in the city and an overnight curfew.

"If we can get a crowd at the MCG, we are going to play at the MCG," Hockley said. "There are 4-1/2 months to go. It is premature to be talking about this."



Sawhney

## South African rugby aims for September restart without fans

## Hurricanes beat Chiefs in Super Rugby Aotearoa

WELLINGTON, New Zealand, Aug 8, (AP) — Center Peter Umaga-Jensen scored two tries as the Hurricanes took a bonus point from a 31-18, five-tries-to-two win over the Chiefs in Super Rugby Aotearoa Saturday, to keep the title race alive for at least another day.

The Christchurch-based Crusaders will clinch the crown with one round remaining if they beat the Dunedin-based Highlanders Sunday.

The Crusaders lead by two points from the Auckland-based Blues, and by three points from the Wellington-based Hurricanes. A win over the Highlanders would put them six clear of the Blues, who they play next weekend, and out of the range of the Hur-

"We gave ourselves an opportunity tonight to stay in the fight," Hurricanes captain T.J. Perenara said. "We knew we had to come into this game and get five points from it.

"Our fate now remains with the Highlanders and the Blues next week, if we can get the job done again next week, but we did our bit and gave ourselves an opportunity."

Umaga-Jensen scored in the seventh and 27th minutes to help the Hurricanes into a 12-3 lead at halftime.

Hurricanes winger Cobus van Wyk was sin-binned in the 38th and the Chiefs took advantage with a try from Sean Wainui just after halftime. But the Hurricanes replied through hooker Dane Coles while still down to 14 men

and led 17-10 after 50 minutes.

Van Wyk claimed a superb try from a set play in the 56th minute but the Chiefs again threatened to deprive the Hurricanes of a bonus point with a try by flanker Mitch Karpik.

The Hurricanes regained a three-try advantage with a touchdown from replacement Billy Proctor in the 73rd minute.

Meanwhile, rugby in South Africa is aiming to restart next month after the government gave permission for matches to go ahead again without spectators. National body SA Rugby said approval for full-contact training sessions and games was given Thursday but it will take teams around a month to be ready to play competitive

matches again.

SA Rugby hasn't announced where games will be played in a country among the worst affected in the world by the coronavirus pandemic. South Africa has more than half a million confirmed COVID-19 cases, the fifth biggest caseload in the world. It has more than half of the cases across the entire African continent. Cities like Pretoria, Johannesburg, Durban and Cape Town, home to the biggest teams, all have high numbers of COVID-19 cases.

The relaxation of rules does not apply to any trans-national competitions and teams cannot leave or travel to South Africa.

South Africa's top domestic teams have been out of action since the southern hemisphere's Super Rugby competition was suspended in mid-March. Southern hemisphere rivals New Zealand and Australia have been running their own domestic rugby competitions for the last month. Two South African teams also play in Europe's Pro 14 league, which is planning a return to action later this month with games between teams from the same countries. The development in South Africa may allow its Pro 14 teams to follow suit.

South Africa's national team, the world-champion Springboks, hasn't set foot on the field since winning the Rugby World Cup last November and will likely be out of action for at least a year because of the virus. The Springboks' next target is the delayed southern hemisphere Rugby Championship, which could now be played in November and December if restrictions on travel are lifted.

## RUGBY

ricanes, who end their season next weekend against the Highlanders.

There is no finals series.

The Crusaders are chasing a fourth Super Rugby title in as many years. They won the five-nation tournament three years in a row and were on target for a fourth when it was suspended in March because of the coronavirus pandemic. New Zealand created Super Rugby Aotearoa as a substitute domestic tournament when cross-border matches became impossible.

Saturday's win was the fifth in a row for the Hurricanes who beat the Crusaders three weeks ago, inflicting their first home defeat in four years. The Chiefs ended their first season under British and Irish Lions coach Warren Gatland with eight straight losses.



In this Nov 2, 2019 file photo, South African captain Siya Kolisi holds the Webb Ellis Cup after South Africa defeated England to win the Rugby World Cup final at International Yokohama Stadium in Yokohama, Japan. (AP)