



Philadelphia 76ers' Seth Curry, (left), goes up for a shot against Atlanta Hawks' Kevin Huerter and Clint Capela during the first half of Game 2 in a second-round NBA basketball playoff series in Philadelphia. (AP)

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Jokic becomes lowest draft pick ever to win MVP award

76ers even series with Hawks as Jazz edge Clippers in Game 1

PHILADELPHIA, June 9, (AP) — Joe Embiid had 40 points and 13 rebounds, and Shake Milton scored 14 points in an electrifying stretch off the bench to lead the Philadelphia 76ers past the Atlanta Hawks 118-102 in Game 2 on Tuesday night and even their Eastern Conference semifinal.

Game 3 is Friday in Atlanta. Milton was a sixth man who then lost his spot in the rotation and scored only 17 points over spotty action in six playoff games this season. Coach Doc

BASKETBALL

Rivers kept the faith and Shake rattled the Hawks and helped the Sixers roll to a 14-0 run that blew the game open and sent a packed house into a frenzy.

Milton buried a long-distance 3 to send the Sixers into the fourth quarter with a 91-84 lead. He kept it going with a jumper early in the fourth that made it 95-84.



Los Angeles Clippers' DeMarcus Cousins (15) and Luke Kennard (5) defend against Utah Jazz guard Joe Ingles during the first half of Game 1 of a second-round NBA basketball playoff series in Salt Lake City. (AP)

Embiid, Tobias Harris and Seth Curry steadied the top-seeded Sixers a game after they fell behind by 26 and were stunned in a Game 1 defeat.

Trae Young scored 21 points for the Hawks, Danilo Gallinari scored 21 and Kevin Huerter had 20.

Jazz 112, Clippers 109

In Salt Lake City, Donovan Mitchell scored 45 points to lead the Jazz to a victory over the Clippers in Game 1 of their Western Conference semifinals series.

Mitchell did most of his work in the second half, scoring 32 points to rally the Jazz from a double-digit deficit. Jordan Clarkson and Bojan Bogdanovic chipped in 18 points apiece. Mitchell and Clarkson combined for 12 3-pointers.

Kawhi Leonard scored 23 points to lead Los Angeles. Paul George chipped in 20 points and 11 rebounds. Luke Kennard added 18 points while making a team-high four 3-pointers.

Utah and Los Angeles will play Game 2 on Thursday in Salt Lake City.

The Jazz trailed by as many as 14 points before rallying and overtaking the Clippers in the fourth quarter. Utah took the lead for good on a 21-9 run bookended by 3-pointers from Bogdanovic. His second one gave the Jazz a 103-93 lead with 5:22 remaining.

George hit a 3-pointer to cut the deficit to 112-109 in the final minute. But Rudy Gobert blocked a potential game-tying shot from Marcus Morris with a second left to preserve the victory.

Meanwhile, Nikola Jokic was selected with the 41st draft pick when he entered the NBA seven years ago.

Now, by overwhelming consensus, he's No. 1.

The Nuggets' big man was revealed Tuesday as the NBA's Most Valuable Player for 2020-21, making him by far the lowest draft pick ever to win the award. "The Joker" now has his name etched alongside the greatest players in league history, which surely seemed unlikely when he was that unheralded prospect out of Sombor, Serbia in 2014.

Brazil extend lead



Chile's Francisco Sierralta (left), and Bolivia's Marcelo Martins battle for the ball during a qualifying soccer match for the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 in Santiago, Chile. (AP)

Sakkari stops Swiatek streak in quarters

Nadal drops set but moves into French Open semifinals

PARIS, June 9, (AP) — Rafael Nadal's French Open set streak is over. His pursuit of a record-breaking 21st Grand Slam title - including 14 at Roland Garros - remains very much intact.

Nadal shrugged off dropping a set in Paris for the first time in two years and regained control Wednesday, whipping violent forehands punctuated with first pumps and yells of "Vamos!" en route to a 6-3, 4-6, 6-4, 6-0 victory over 10th-seeded Diego Schwartzman to reach the semifinals at the clay-court major tournament.

Nadal, who turned 35 last week, is now 105-2 for his career at Roland Garros.

He is just two wins from eclipsing the men's mark for most total Grand Slam singles championships that he currently shares with Roger Federer.

In addition to his 13 trophies at Roland Garros - four in a row from 2005-08, five in a row from 2010-14 and another four in a row so far since 2017 - the Spanish left-hander won four titles

TENNIS

at the U.S. Open, two at Wimbledon and one at the Australian Open.

There are four first-time Grand Slam semifinalists left in the women's bracket, something that last happened at the 1978 Australian Open.

In Wednesday's quarterfinals, No. 17 seed Maria Sakkari ended Iga Swiatek's title defense by beating her 6-4, 6-4, and unseeded Barbora Krejickova stopped the run of 17-year-old Coco Gauff 7-6 (6), 6-3. So Sakkari faces Krejickova on Thursday, when the other semifinal will be No. 31 Anastasia Pavlyuchenkova against unseeded Tamara Zidansek.

Nadal entered his quarterfinal with a 35-set run at Roland Garros that began during the 2019 final. That grew to 36 on Wednesday, before Schwartzman outplayed him for a stretch, surprisingly winning more of their exchanges that lasted at least nine strokes.

Ah, but what matters is who wins the match, and Nadal asserted himself quickly after Schwartzman was ahead 4-3 in the third.

Nadal would not drop another game, breaking to go up 5-4, before holding at love to take the third set. Then he broke again to open the fourth and really remove any remaining sense of suspense.

Schwartzman - now 1-11 against Nadal, including a loss in the 2020 French

Open semifinals - started muttering to himself and bounced his racket off the clay a moment before getting broken again to trail 3-0 in fourth.

When one last forehand from defending champion Iga Swiatek landed wide in the French Open quarterfinals, Maria Sakkari crouched on Court Philippe Chatrier and bowed her head, relishing the moment.

Sakkari is still two wins away from lifting the trophy, but Wednesday's victory means she's already in new territory - just like the other three women left in the draw.

Sakkari ended Swiatek's 11-match and 22-set winning streaks at Roland Garros by beating her 6-4, 6-4 Wednesday to guarantee that there will be a first-time Grand Slam champion when the tournament ends.

On Thursday, the 17th-seeded Sak-

kari plays unseeded Barbora Krejickova in the semifinals, and No. 31 Anastasia Pavlyuchenkova faces unseeded Tamara Zidansek. All four are making their Slam semifinal debuts.

Krejickova advanced Wednesday by eliminating 17-year-old Coco Gauff 7-6 (6), 6-3.

This is only the second time in the professional era that there has been four first-time semifinalists at any major tournament, according to the WTA. It also happened at the 1978 Australian Open.

Krejickova has won two Grand Slam doubles titles with Katerina Siniakova - and they're into the semifinals in Paris - but is playing in only her fifth major tournament in singles.

Look at her now. She's ranked a career-high 33rd and on a 10-match winning streak in singles.

Krejickova ended the nine-match run of the 24th-seeded Gauff, who is based in Florida and was the youngest French Open quarterfinalist since 2006.

Gauff's 41 unforced errors included seven double-faults - and after one, she mangled her racket frame by whacking it three times against the ground.



Sakkari



Spain's Rafael Nadal plays a forehand to Argentina's Diego Schwartzman during their quarterfinal match of the French Open tennis tournament at the Roland Garros stadium in Paris. (AP)

Colombia hold Argentina in S. American WC qualifying

SAO PAULO, June 9, (AP) — Brazil moved further ahead in South American World Cup qualifying on Tuesday with a 2-0 win at Paraguay, their sixth in six matches on the road to Qatar.

The Brazilians are now six points clear of second place Argentina, which drew 2-2 at Colombia after squandering a two-goal advantage.

Neymar and Lucas Paqueta scored Brazil's goals, marking the team's first win at Paraguay in World Cup qualifiers in 35 years.

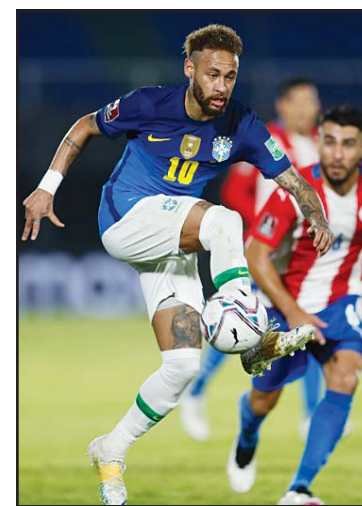
SOCCER

Earlier, Miguel Borja scored an equalizer for Colombia in the last seconds of added time against Argentina in one of the best matches yet in South American qualifying.

Colombia goalkeeper David Ospina was the best player on the pitch, stopping Lionel Messi and his teammates on multiple occasions.

The game at the Metropolitan stadium in Barranquilla was attended by 10,000 fans despite the region's alarming COVID-19 figures.

The top four teams in South American qualifiers will advance automati-



Brazil's Neymar controls the ball during a qualifying soccer match for the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 against Paraguay at Defensores del Chaco stadium in Asuncion, Paraguay. (AP)

cally to Qatar 2022. The fifth-place team will go into an inter-continental playoff. The current standings show Brazil leading the 10-team competition with 18 points, followed by Argentina (12), Ecuador (9) Uruguay and Colombia (8).

The atmosphere in the Brazil camp has been heavy ever since last Friday's win over Ecuador. Players did not speak publicly amid a possible revolt against Copa America in their home nation. And coach Tite didn't answer questions as to whether he would remain in the job despite tensions with the management of the Brazilian soccer confederation.

On Sunday, the president of the confederation, Rogério Caboclo, was suspended from office after an accusation of sexual harassment emerged.

But none of that affected with the team's mentality for the match against Paraguay.

Neymar opened the scoring in the 4th minute after a cross from Gabriel Jesus. And Lucas Paqueta closed the deal in added time with a classy touch that hit the right post before finding the back of the net.

"We know how difficult it is to win here - it hasn't happened to Brazil since 1985," defender Marquinhos said. "We are glad we have this advantage on the table. It was a match of details. And scoring early on gave us the tranquility we needed. It forced Paraguay to come at us." Paraguay are now in sixth position with seven points.

As in recent weeks, police officers in Barranquilla used water canons and tear gas against dozens of protesters, who responded by pelting rocks and other objects. Colombian streets have been rocked by demonstrations since the end of April. Some tried to break into the stadium, but were stopped.

South Korea 'rout' Lanka

SEOUL, June 9, (AP) — Kim Shin-wook scored the first goal for South Korea on Wednesday in a World Cup qualifying match, and then the whole team celebrated the memory of a former national team great.

Kim and his teammates held aloft a shirt bearing the name of Yoo Sang-chul, who represented South Korea 124 times and died on Monday at the age of 49 after a battle with pancreatic cancer.

South Korea went on to beat Sri Lanka 5-0 and close in on a place in the third round of Asian qualifying.

Kim scored another goal later in the first half, after Lee Dong-gyeong had made it 2-0. Hwang Hee-chan and Jung Sang-bin scored in the second half.

"It was a fair result," South Korea coach Paulo Bento said. "The players stayed focused and worked for the win."

Son Heung-min was rested for the match following a busy season with Tottenham.

The 2002 World Cup semifinalists are three points ahead of Lebanon in Group H. Lebanon lost to Turkmenistan 3-2.

South Korea and Lebanon will play each other on Sunday in the final game of the group.

The eight group winners qualify automatically for the third round, which is scheduled to start in September, along with the four best runners-up.

Australia can become the third team to advance on Friday if they beat Nepal in Kuwait City. Australia coach Graham Arnold rested a number of players for Monday's 5-1 victory over Taiwan in Group B.

Argentina scored twice in the first eight minutes. Cristian Romero headed past David Ospina in the 3rd minute and Leandro Paredes doubled the lead in the 8th after dribbling through the middle of Colombia's defense and gently sliding a shot into the back of the net.

But Colombia lifted in the second half, as Argentina were either failing at the finishing or being stopped by Ospina. Argentina's Nicolás Otamendi conceded a penalty and Luis Muriel scored from the spot at the 51st. But just when it appeared Argentina would take another step closer to the World Cup with an away win, Borja's header triggered wild celebrations for the hosts.