



Los Angeles Dodgers starting pitcher Tony Gonsolin delivers during the first inning of a baseball game against the Pittsburgh Pirates in Pittsburgh. Dodgers won 2-1. (AP) — See Page 15

# Sports

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Djokovic, Nadal to meet in semis

## Pavlyuchenkova advances to 1st major final

PARIS, June 10, (AP) — Tour veteran Anastasia Pavlyuchenkova endured long stretches where she didn't enjoy tennis, and because her consistency and confidence were so elusive she considered calling it a career.

Her persistence paid off Thursday, when the 29-year-old Russian advanced to her first Grand Slam final by beating unseeded Tamara Zidansek at the French Open, 7-5, 6-3.

Pavlyuchenkova, seeded 31st, is playing in her 52nd major tournament and her 14th French Open. She had been 0-6 in major quarterfinals before finally surmounting that hurdle on Tuesday, and she was steadier than the big-swinging Zidansek in their semifinal.

### TENNIS

"I wanted this so much that right now I don't feel anything," Pavlyuchenkova told the crowd in French.

Even so, the quality of play in the first match was as enjoyable as the warm, cloudless weather. The 85th-ranked Zidansek, who this week became the first Slovenian woman to reach a Grand Slam quarterfinal, was the better player for much of the first set, moving well and hitting the more aggressive groundstrokes.

But Pavlyuchenkova won the most important points, and Zidansek

dumped consecutive shaky serves into the net to lose the set.

Pavlyuchenkova's groundstrokes carried more sting in the second set as she raced to a 4-1 lead. Her first sign of nerves came as she double-faulted twice, including on break point, to make it 4-3, but she broke back and



Serbia's Novak Djokovic returns the ball to Italy's Matteo Berrettini during their quarterfinal match of the French Open tennis tournament at the Roland Garros stadium in Paris. (AP)

easily served out the victory.

"Tennis is such a mental sport," she said. "That's what is really hard about tennis." Pavlyuchenkova, who has won 12 tour titles, will climb back into Top 20 next week for first time since January 2018.

Novak Djokovic wheeled toward his guest box in a nearly empty Court Philippe Chatrier as midnight neared and let out one yell, two yells, three, four.

Once two points from a straight-set victory and seemingly well on his way to a French Open semifinal showdown against Rafael Nadal, Djokovic had to deal with so much that went awry: consecutive unforced errors that gave away a tiebreaker; a 21 1/2-minute delay while spectators left because of a COVID-19 curfew; a face-down tumble that drew blood from his left palm.

Still, the top-seeded Djokovic held on and moved on, pulling out the quarterfinal victory against No. 9 Berrettini 6-3, 6-2, 6-7 (5), 7-5 Wednesday night.

"This match had it all: falls, crowd, break. It was a lot of intensity. I just felt under tension the entire time," Djokovic said. "The reaction (at) the end was just me liberating that tension that was building up for the entire match." Now comes a semifinal Friday against a familiar foe in a rematch of last year's Roland Garros final, but a round earlier: Nadal, who is 105-2 in the clay-court tournament.



USA's Desirae Krawczyk, (left), and Britain's Joe Salisbury hold the Cup after defeating Russia's Elena Vesnina and Aslan Karatsev in their mixed doubles final match of the French Open tennis tournament at the Roland Garros stadium in Paris. (AP)

## Suns rout Nuggets for 2-0 series lead

Goibert wins 3rd Defensive Player of Year award



Phoenix Suns forward Dario Saric, (left), and Denver Nuggets forward Paul Millsap chase down a loose ball during the first half of Game 2 of an NBA basketball second-round playoff series in Phoenix. (AP)

PHOENIX, June 10, (AP) — Chris Paul is a 36-year-old man who can still put together an NBA point guard's version of a virtuoso performance: Fifteen assists, no turnovers and it led to another blowout playoff victory for his rolling Phoenix Suns.

Apparently so. Paul added 17 points, Devin Booker had 18 points and 10 rebounds and Phoenix routed the Denver Nuggets 123-98 on Wednesday night to take a 2-0 lead in the Western Conference semifinals.

Deandre Ayton had 15 points and 10 rebounds, and Mikal Bridges added 16 points for the balanced Suns in their fifth straight victory.

Paul was particularly impressive and it appears his ailing right shoulder - which greatly limited his play against the Los Angeles Lakers in the first round - isn't much of a problem anymore. The 11-time All-Star had 21 points and 11 assists in Game 1.

Nikola Jokic had 24 points and 13 rebounds for Denver, a day after getting the NBA's Most Valuable Player award. But the Nuggets couldn't find anyone else to score consistently, leaving them reeling going back to Denver for Game 3 on Friday night.

The Suns had a 10-point halftime lead Wednesday and Jae Crowder added a pair of 3-pointers early in the

third to make it 60-43. Phoenix took an 86-67 advantage into the fourth. The Suns led by 31 in the final quarter as they relentlessly pushed the ball even as the lead built.

Crowder had another good night as the Suns' long-range shooter and enforcer. He and Denver's Aaron Gordon were each called for a technical foul after they exchanged words and shoves midway through the third. On the next possession, Crowder coaxed Gordon into committing an offensive foul, much to the delight of the 16,529 at Phoenix Suns Arena.

Crowder said he isn't seeking to be the team's enforcer but the moments keep finding him. He joked that he's already given to much money to the NBA in the form of fines during this postseason.

Paul pushed the sellout crowd into a frenzy in the fourth, throwing his 15th assist to Craig after criss-crossing around helpless Denver forward Paul Millsap. Paul then hit a pair of 3-pointers and the celebration was on in the desert with the Suns rolling in their first playoff appearance in 11 seasons.

### BASKETBALL

Phoenix took a 52-42 halftime lead after a sloppy first half where both teams struggled to generate offense. Denver was shaky with its long range shooting, making just 1 of 13 3-pointers in the first quarter.

Booker had 13 points before the break. Jokic countered with 15 points. Some of Denver's better players are dealing with injuries, including forward Michael Porter Jr. (back) and guard Will Barton (hamstring). Both were listed on the injury report.

Porter started and played 27 minutes, finishing with 11 points and six rebounds but shot just 3 of 13 from the field. Barton played for the first time in about six weeks, entering the game late in the first quarter. He played 16 minutes and had 10 points and was also called for a technical foul in the third.

Meanwhile, Rudy Goibert saved Utah's opening game of the second round with a blocked shot, the kind of play that's earned him recognition as the NBA's best defender.

It would have been ever better if Mark Eaton had seen it.

The former Jazz center died last month at 64 and Goibert was thinking about his predecessor Wednesday after breaking a tie with him for most Defensive Player of the Year awards in franchise history by winning it for a third time.

"I thought about it last night because I knew that I probably would have got a text after the game," Goibert said.



In this file photo, Utah Jazz center Rudy Goibert (27) scores against Memphis Grizzlies center Jonas Valanciunas during the second half of Game 5 of an NBA basketball first-round playoff series in Salt Lake City. (AP)

'We can't wait to experience hearing 15,000 people singing the national anthem'

## A year late, Italy & Turkey play opening game at Euro '20

ROME, June 10, (AP) — Somehow it seems appropriate that Italy, the first country in Europe that was overwhelmed by the coronavirus pandemic, is hosting the opening game of the European Championship.

Even if Euro 2020 is kicking off in 2021.

The biggest crowd to gather in Italy for a year and a half will witness an Azzurri squad aiming for the title play a Turkey team aiming to spring a surprise on Friday at Stadio Olimpico in Rome.

"We've been waiting a year for this European Championship and we can't wait to experience hearing 15,000 people singing the national anthem," veteran Italy defender Leonardo Bonucci said. "Soccer with fans inside the stadium is a different sport." After embarrassingly failing to qualify for the 2018 World Cup, Italy won all 10 of their qualifying matches for Euro 2020 and enters on a 27-match unbeaten run.

"We want to go all the way," Bonucci said. "Other national teams have more experience but we can play with anyone. We don't have a (Romelu) Lukaku or a Cristiano Ronaldo. Our strength is the team." Turkey took four points off France in qualifying, including a 2-0 win over the World Cup champions, and lost

only one of their matches to finish second in their group.

"Being in this tournament and playing in the opening match makes us proud," Turkey coach Şenol Güneş said. "In every opening game there are surprises and I hope we can also spring one." Wales and Switzerland, the other two teams in Group A, meet in Baku, Azerbaijan, on Saturday.



England's Marcus Rashford stretches for a ball during the training session at St George's Park, Burton upon Trent, England on Thursday June 10, 2021. England play their first match at the Euro 2020 soccer championship against Croatia at Wembley stadium in London on June 13. (AP)

This year's tournament is being played in 11 cities scattered across the European continent.

The Italian government decided that the Stadio Olimpico can be filled to 25% capacity for the four games it will host.

That amounts to a maximum of 15,948 spectators.

Ticket-holders need to show one

of three documents to enter the Stadio Olimpico: either a certificate from Italian health authorities showing they have been vaccinated against COVID-19, another document from Italian health authorities showing they have recovered from the coronavirus within six months, or a negative test result issued within 48 hours of kickoff.

While more than 2,000 tickets for the opening game were sold in Turkey, many of those fans are not expected to travel to the match.

### SOCCER

Fans arriving at the stadium will have their body temperature measured by thermal scanners, and anyone with a fever or other coronavirus symptoms will be ushered to a quarantine area.

The protocols seem like a small price to pay after Italy became the epicenter of the pandemic in Europe in early 2020, as cities like Bergamo struggled to keep up with the sick and the dead. There have been more than 125,000 confirmed deaths from COVID-19 in the country and more than 4 million people infected, including many members of Italy's squad - both players and coaches.

Italy have won their past eight

matches without conceding a goal and has 20 clean sheets in 32 matches since Roberto Mancini took over as coach.

While record-setting goalkeeper Gianluigi Buffon retired from international soccer after the failed World Cup qualification, Italy remain solid at the position with 22-year-old Gianluigi Donnarumma now between the posts. Also, Bonucci and Italy captain Giorgio Chiellini form a strong and experienced pairing in central defense.

One of Turkey's main strengths is also their solidity at the back. They allowed only three goals in qualifying and managed to keep forwards Memphis Depay and Erling Haaland scoreless in recent World Cup qualifiers.

Both sides are also strong at center forward. Ciro Immobile won the European Golden Shoe award when he matched the Serie A record with 36 goals in 2019-20.

Burak Yilmaz is Turkey's second highest scorer of all time, with his 29 goals putting him behind only the retired Hakan Şükür (51 goals).

Andrea Bocelli will sing the Giacomo Puccini aria "Nessun Dorma" during the tournament's opening ceremony preceding kickoff.