

# The Peninsula SPORT

Saturday 18 February 2017

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## Puig fights back to reach Doha semis

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Second-seeded Karolina Pliskova and Puerto Rican Olympic champion Monica Puig overcame multiple rain interruptions to reach the last four stage of the Qatar Total Open at the Khalifa International Tennis Complex.

Pliskova, the World No.2, won 6-2, 6-0 to breeze past China's Zhang Shuai to set up a semifinal showdown with Slovakia's Dominika Cibulkova.

In the other quarter-final, Puig advanced to her first semifinal since her historic gold medal run at the 2016 Rio Olympics after fighting back to beat Russian teenager Daria Kasatkina 6-4, 5-7, 6-4.

"I was waiting for this match since yesterday (Thursday) evening, so I was happy that I



Puerto Rican Olympic champion Monica Puig returns a shot to Russian teenager Daria Kasatkina during their Qatar Total Open Quarter-final played at the Khalifa International Tennis Complex in Doha yesterday. Puig made a remarkable fight back to beat Kasatkina 6-4, 5-7, 6-4.

### QATAR TOTAL OPEN RESULTS

#### Quarterfinals

- ◆ 2-Karolina Pliskova (Czech Republic) beat Zhang Shuai (China) 6-2, 6-0
- ◆ Monica Puig (Puerto Rico) beat Daria Kasatkina (Russia) 4-6, 7-5, 6-4

I also had match points and lost the match but against her it's always going to be tough," Puig said.

"We're both up and coming and she's such a great player so it was a good match and I loved the fight out there."

With the match locked at a set apiece when the players were finally called off court due to rain on Thursday, Kasatkina came out of the blocks quickly, converting her fourth break point to move 3-2 ahead.

Puig saved two further break points in her next service game to keep her hopes alive before breaking back to level the match at 4-4.

A wayward stroke from Kasatkina, serving at 4-5, handed the 23-year-old a stunning comeback victory.

Victory for the Rio Games Gold medal winner means she now faces either Caroline Wozniacki or Lauren Davis for a place in the final.

Her run in Doha already marks her best of the season so far, having suffered back-to-back exits at Brisbane before making the second round of the Australian Open, losing to Mona Barthel.

won," said Pliskova after the match.

"I think she was not playing her best today so that's why it went so fast in the second set but I played solid today so I'm really happy to be through to the semis.

"Definitely the first few days I was happy that it was raining because I needed a few days off. It was a big help the first few days but then actually it was disturbing me a little so today I was five times warming up but finally I made it."

Pliskova was fast out of the blocks, breaking Zhang in the opening game before a second break opened up a 5-2 lead thanks to some big serving and powerful hitting. But another rain delay meant that the players again had to scamper for cover.

On resumption, Pliskova swiftly served out the opening set and broke in the opening game of the second set before the rain returned.

Following yet a lengthy break of almost five hours, the

Czech, who defeated Caroline Garcia in the previous round, was in no mood to hang around any longer than necessary with a semifinal also to play.

Two further breaks put her firmly in charge and she served out to love against Garbine Muguruza's conqueror to book her clash with Cibulkova.

Pliskova has never before defeated Cibulkova in their three previous meetings but hopes that her quarter-final victory will stand her in good stead.

"Definitely a tough one. She

played yesterday last night so she's going to be ready for today and different conditions so I'll try and take advantage of the match I played today and stay aggressive as always and we'll see."

Victory for the US Open finalist marks her best result on her fourth successive appearance in Doha; the Czech had not previously advanced beyond the second round.

Earlier, Puig made a remarkable fight back to beat Kasatkina.

"At our match in Indian Wells



**I was waiting for this match since yesterday (Thursday) evening, so I was happy that I won: Pliskova**



## Al Wakrah fight back to force a draw against Al Shahaniya

The Peninsula

Bottom placed team of Qatar Stars League (QSL) this season, Al Wakrah forced a two-all draw with Al Shahaniya under challenging weather at Al Wakrah Stadium yesterday.

Shahaniya grabbed a first half lead through the head of Rahim Zahivi, before drawing level from the penalty spot on captain Mouctine Moutouali. Late in the second half Zahivi scored again for Shahaniya, before being pegged back from Moutouali via another penalty.

Al Shahaniya made the perfect start to the relegation clash with Iranian striker Rahim Zahivi opened the scoring on the sixth minute with a powerful header from a Mesaad Al Hamad cross. Emboldened it was the away side who had the better of the chances in the opening fifteen minutes of the tie. Rahim Zahivi perhaps should of doubled his tally on the eleventh minute, however his free-kick was well saved by Wakrah keeper Hassan Idriss.

With seventeen minutes on the clock, Wakrah registered their first chance of note with striker Maher Yusef missing a crucial chance to draw his side level. Mouctine Moutouali made a made a surging run on the left wing, and picked out Maher Yusef, but the Qatari player failed to come up with the finish when it mattered.



Al Gharafa's Kriztiani Nemeth (right) scores the only goal of their Qatar Stars League match against Al Khor at Al Khor Stadium yesterday. LEFT: Al Shahaniya's Rahim Abbas Mehdi (left) vies for the ball possession with an Al Wakrah player during their Qatar Stars League match which ended in a two-all draw at Al Wakrah Stadium yesterday.

Wakrah began to find their feet in the game, and registered two key chances to draw left. First up midfielder Waheed Mohammed struck from distance which was saved by Khalifa Al Dossari. Then Wakrah defender Johar Al Kaabisaw his header just go wide from the resulting corner as The Blue Waves began to up the pressure on the visitors.

Kais Yaakoubi's side continued to dominate in the second half, with Mouctine Moutouali starting for the Blue Waves. Wakrah's pressure eventually told, as they were

rewarded with a penalty on the sixty third minute. Moutouali stepped up and made no mistake from the penalty spot drilling the ball into the centre of the goal.

Against the run of play, Al Shahaniya took the lead again as Rahim Zahivi slotted away his second goal of the game. Smart holdup play from Jean Mangoua saw the Ivorian lay the ball off to his Iranian teammate who promptly smashed the ball into the bottom corner.

Just a minute later Wakrah were awarded a second

penalty of the evening as Muaaz Al-Salemi was bundled down in the box.

Again Mouctine Moutouali stepped up for his side and scored his second goal of the evening. Both sides then pushed on in the driving rain for a winner with both Wakrah and Shahaniya guilty of missing late chances.

On the eighty second minute Shahaniya striker Rahim Zahivi played the off-side trap perfectly but with the goal at his mercy, and the chance to grab a hat-trick the Iranian slotted well wide.

Whilst in stoppage time Wakrah striker Maher Yusef was denied a winner thanks to a spectacular save from Khalifa Al Dossari. The 2-2 draw does little for both sides survival chances.

Elsewhere, Valentin Lazar scored a beauty in the 90th minute to hand a thrilling 2-1 victory to Al Salliyah against Al Wakrah SC.

Later, Al Gharafa Club lived upto expectations with a 1-0 win against Al Khor thanks to a 13th minute penalty scored by their star striker Kriztiani Nemeth.

### QATAR STARS LEAGUE WEEK 21

Wednesday
Umm Salal beat Lekhwiya 3-1
Thursday
Al Rayyan beat Muaither SC 5-0
Al Sadd beat Al Arabi 7-0
Al Kharaitiyat beat El Jaish 2-1
Yesterday's results
Al Wakrah drew with Al Shahaniya 2-2
Al Gharafa beat Al Khor 1-0
Al Salliyah beat Al Ahli 2-1

# Berdych, Tsonga to clash in semis

## Rotterdam Open

▶ The Czech, winner of the 2014 title in the Dutch port city, crushes defending champion Klizan in straight sets.

Rotterdam  
AFP

Former winner Tomas Berdych crushed defending champion Martin Klizan 6-3, 6-3 to set up a Rotterdam World Tennis semi-final with France's Jo-Wilfried Tsonga yesterday.

The fourth seed will play for a spot in the finals at the Ahoy Stadium today when he takes on Tsonga, who upset top seed Marin Cilic 7-6 (10/8), 7-6 (7/5) in two hours.

The Czech won the 2014 title in the Dutch port city beating Cilic, while back in 2011 Tsonga lost to Sweden Robin Soderling in the final.

Berdych also beat Tsonga in the first week of the year in Doha, but was badly mauled by Roger Federer at the Australian Open third round, which he cannot put out of mind.

"It's hard to accept a third-round loss at a Grand Slam," the



France's Jo-Wilfried Tsonga serves the ball to Greece's Stefanos Tsitsipas during his quarter-final match at the Rotterdam World Tennis Tournament in Rotterdam, yesterday.

13th-ranked Berdych said.

"That made my start of the season tougher.

"I've played well in Australia over the last few seasons and now I'm the guy chasing. I have to make it up at other tournaments, that's what I'm missing this year.

Berdych lost just five points on serve as he overwhelmed Klizan.

"Tsonga is a great player, another tall guy trying to play aggressive," said Berdych.

"But the most important thing will be my game plan and how I execute it. It doesn't matter whom the opponent is."

Berdych has now reached the semi-finals in Rotterdam for a fourth time after also finishing runner-up to Stan Wawrinka in 2015.

Tsonga characterised his winning effort over Cilic as "a good match".

"I played some of my best tennis. If I keep playing like this I have possibilities to go further. I have my chances now to go to the final again."

Earlier, top seed Cilic reached his first quarter-final of 2017 on Thursday when he overcame Croatian compatriot Borna

Coric 6-1, 2-6, 6-4. Cilic, who had just one victory this year going into the Ahoy stadium tournament, improved to a perfect 3-0 over Coric, whose career was sidelined last autumn by injury.

"It's always tough to play a countryman and Borna has been doing well in his comeback. It was not an easy match, even after winning the first set fast," said former US Open champion Cilic.

"Borna has proved himself as a next-gen player. Maybe he didn't have the best season due to his knee surgery, but he's playing quite consistently."

Following his first-set thrashing, where he trailed 5-0, Coric steadied to square the match at a set each.

However, a break in the third by Cilic handed the top seed a crucial 4-3 lead.

Berdych, seeded fourth, hit 10 aces to defeat Frenchman Richard Gasquet 7-6 (7/4), 6-1 and advance into a contest against defending champion Klizan. Belgian third seed David Goffin earned a comeback won over Robin Haase, the last Dutchman in the field, 5-7, 6-4, 6-4.

"It's always nice to play these tournaments. They are smaller draws than Masters or Grand Slams, but the matches are always tough," said Goffin.

## F1: Injured Wehrlein to miss first pre-season test

London  
Reuters

Sauber driver Pascal Wehrlein will miss Formula One's opening pre-season test in Barcelona at the end of February due to a lingering back problem, the German said yesterday.

"I have to skip the first winter test to do medical advice because of a BACK issue. I feel sorry for the team but we'll come back stronger," the 22-year-old said on Twitter.

There was no immediate comment from the Swiss-based team.

Wehrlein was injured at the Race of Champions in Miami last month when he crashed a three-wheeled Polaris Slingshot machine while racing Brazilian Felipe Massa on the opening day of competition.

The machines came together with Wehrlein, who raced for now-defunct Manor in Formula One last season and was also the reserve for world champions Mercedes, flipping his over the barriers.

The German and his passenger walked away from the crash but the driver withdrew from the rest of that event on medical advice.

Ferrari-powered Sauber are due to present their new car online on Monday, a week before testing starts at Barcelona's Circuit de Catalunya.

Reports in Italy indicated that Ferrari's Italian third driver Antonio Giovinazzi would step in for the German at the test alongside Sweden's Marcus Ericsson.

Meanwhile, Liberty Media wants to steer Formula One towards a "better place" but there are no quick fixes for the sport's evident problems, newly-appointed motorsport head Ross Brawn has said ahead of talks with teams.

"There are some straightforward issues that we recognise, but the solutions are going to take some time," the former Honda, Brawn GP and Mercedes team principal, who was Ferrari technical director before that, told BBC radio.

The 62-year-old Briton, appointed as managing director for motorsport after Liberty's Formula One takeover last month, said the teams, governing FIA and commercial rights holder all had their own priorities.

"The commercial rights holder... is going to also focus on making the show as good as it can be and the entertainment and the sport as good as it can be," said Brawn, who will attend the first pre-season test in Barcelona at the end of the month.

"Every decision that's going to be made in the future... all have to tick some boxes and those boxes will be: Does it make the sport better? Does it make it more entertaining? Does it make it more economic?"

Brawn said he was confident the sport would be steered in the right direction ultimately. Liberty Media says it wants better marketing and digital growth identified as key priorities along with expansion in the Americas.

The 10 teams, FIA and commercial rights holders are locked into contractual agreements that govern the distribution of revenues, and grant special payments to some of the biggest teams like Ferrari and Mercedes, until 2020.

# Rafter quits amid Tomic and Kyrgios stand-off

Sydney  
AFP

Pat Rafter stepped down as Tennis Australia's head of performance yesterday, ending his rocky relationship with the country's two polarising stars Nick Kyrgios and Bernard Tomic.

After two years in the role, Rafter has been replaced by his deputy and former Davis Cup captain and coach Wally Masur.

Masur will have the task of bringing the Tomic family back into the fold after relations soured under Rafter.

Tomic made himself unavailable for a Davis Cup tie this month against the Czech

Republic, citing scheduling issues. Reports said Tomic's father John had a bitter ongoing feud over his son and daughter Sara involving funding from Tennis Australia. Last month at the Australian Open Rafter, a former world number one and two-time US Open champion, admitted he had little input into the direction of the country's top players.

Rafter stepped down as Davis Cup captain in early 2015 following a turbulent time dealing with Tomic, while Kyrgios once tweeted: "Another negative comment out of Rafter's mouth. Does this guy ever stop =everyoneisaworkinprogress."

Rafter said recently that he

preferred to leave Tomic and Kyrgios alone. "I haven't really been speaking to them very much and I don't really know where they're at," Rafter said.

"I just sit back and watch from a distance. I don't really have a lot to offer them."

"If they ever want to talk to me, I'm happy to talk."

Kyrgios and Tomic have frequently fallen foul of tennis authorities and have a love-hate relationship with the public.

Kyrgios, 21, was fined for swearing and throwing his racket in a spectacular meltdown at last month's Australian Open, when he threw away a two-set lead to bow out in the second round against Andreas Seppi.



A file photo shows Australia's Davis Cup captain Pat Rafter during a training session two days before the Davis Cup first round between France and Australia in western France. Rafter stepped down as Tennis Australia's head of performance yesterday.

# Wizards rout Pacers while Bulls edge Celtics

Washington  
AFP

With a host of scoring threats, the Washington Wizards have become one of the NBA's hottest teams, showing their scoring depth on Thursday in a 111-98 rout of struggling Indiana.

Otto Porter Jr had 25 points and eight rebounds, Markieff Morris added 21 points and seven rebounds, all-star John Wall contributed 20 points and 12 assists while Bradley Beal had 19 points as the Wizards led all the way.

"We have a lot of threats and it's hard to key on any one guy," Beal said. "We are enjoying this. Winning like this is fun."

"We are playing with a lot of energy and we don't care who is scoring or anything like that. We enjoy playing for each other."

The Wizards improved to 34-21, shooting 51.8 percent from the floor in inflicting the

Pacers' sixth loss in a row. "We have been looking real good for the last few months," Wizards coach Scott Brooks said. "I think we are in a good spot, but I think the thing I love about this group is that they are not satisfied."

"We know we have a lot of work ahead of us. A tough part of our schedule is coming up. We are going to go into it with the right focus and challenge."

"We're not going to win all of them, but we have to stick together when we don't," he said. "Our guys have done that."

The Wizards -- who currently force the most opponent turnovers per game, averaging 15.6 -- rank third in the Eastern Conference after their ninth victory in 10 games.

"We are playing with the big picture," Morris said. "We still have a lot of season to go."

"We have to make sure guys are working out over the All-Star break. We just have to stay ready."

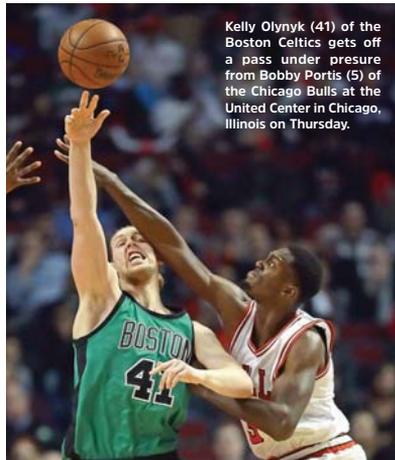
Myles Turner and Paul

George each had 17 points to lead the Pacers -- now 29-28 and sixth in the East -- one game ahead of the Chicago Bulls, who edged visiting Boston 104-103 in Thursday's only other game.

The Bulls made all 22 of their free throw attempts, with Jimmy Butler sinking a pair with .9 of a second remaining to lift Chicago (28-29) to victory.

Bulls scoring leader Butler, 9-for-9 from the free throw line on the night, drew a foul on Marcus Smart off a jump shot on the Bulls' final possession.

Boston's Al Horford missed a fadeaway jumper as time expired. Butler scored 29 points and had seven assists for the Bulls. The Celtics, 37-20 and second overall in the East, were led by Isaiah Thomas with 29 points, including the Celtics' final 11 points. Thomas scored 20 or more points for the 41st consecutive game, breaking a franchise record previously held by Hall of Famer John Havlicek.



Kelly Olynyk (41) of the Boston Celtics gets off a pass under pressure from Bobby Portis (5) of the Chicago Bulls at the United Center in Chicago, Illinois on Thursday.

### SLC announces Bangladesh tour schedule

Colombo AFP

Sri Lanka Cricket (SLC) yesterday announced the schedule for a series of Test matches and limited overs internationals against Bangladesh who begin a tour of the island next month.

The teams will play two Tests at the start of the tour, one in the capital Colombo and another at Galle on Sri Lanka's southern coast.

They then play three 50 over internationals before facing off two Twenty20 matches.

Sri Lanka have a formidable record at home and beat Australia 3-0 in the last series that they hosted in August 2016.

Bangladesh by contrast have only won three of their Test matches on the road since gaining full status 17 years ago although they have shown recent signs of improvement and beat England in a home Test late last year.

The last series between the two sides in Sri Lanka in 2014 saw the hosts win one of the Tests by 248 runs while the second was a draw.

#### Tour schedule

- First Test:** March 7 - 11 at the Galle International Stadium
- Second Test:** March 15 - 19 at the P Sara Stadium, Colombo
- First ODI:** March 25 day and night at Dambulla
- Second ODI:** March 28 day and night at Dambulla
- Third ODI:** April 1 at SSC, Colombo
- First T20:** April 4 at R Premadasa Stadium, Colombo
- Second T20:** April 6 at R Premadasa Stadium



Australia's Tim Paine (behind-on ground) is run out by Nuwan Kulasekara of Sri Lanka during their first Twenty20 cricket match played at the MCG in Melbourne yesterday.

# Sri Lanka clinch Melbourne thriller

Melbourne AFP

Chamara Kapugedera smashed a four off the last ball to give Sri Lanka a thrilling five-wicket victory over Australia in their first Twenty20 international at the Melbourne Cricket Ground yesterday.

The win kept Sri Lanka unbeaten in four T20 internationals in Australia and followed their 2-1 series win over South Africa last month.

The pulsating win was made possible by a dashing 52 off 37 balls by Asela Gunaratne, who was named man-of-the-match for his match-turning innings.

Gunaratne slammed seven fours to share in a decisive 60-run stand with Milinda Siriwardena to put the Sri Lankans just 18 runs short of victory with 17 balls remaining.

Kapugedera stood up to the pressure in the last over and slammed fast bowler Andrew Tye's final delivery through the covers to the boundary rope for the winning hit.

The win put Sri Lanka one up in the series with two matches to play in Geelong tomorrow and Adelaide on Wednesday.

For a time it looked as though the Australians, playing without their leading stars, Steve Smith, David Warner, Mitchell Starc and Josh Hazlewood all on tour in India,

#### SCOREBOARD

AUSTRALIA		SRI LANKA	
A Finch	Malinga b Gunaratne... 43	N Dickwell	Klinger b Zampa... 30
M Klinger	Malinga b Sandakan... 38	U Tharanga	Paine b Cummins... 0
T Head	Prasanna b Malinga... 31	D Munaweera	C Finch b Zampa... 44
M Henriques	Kapugedera b Sandakan... 17	A Gunaratne	Paine b Turner... 52
A Turner	Prasanna b Malinga... 19	M Siriwardena	bow Turner... 15
J Faulkner	(not out)... 14	C Kapugedera	(not out)... 10
T Paine	(run out)... 0	S Prasanna	(not out)... 8
P Cummins	(not out)... 0	Ertas	(B-LB-3-W-9)... 13
<b>Total (for 6 wickets in 20 overs)..... 168</b>		<b>Total (for 6 wickets in 20 overs)..... 172</b>	
<b>Did not bat:</b> A Zampa, A Tye, B Stanlake		<b>Did not bat:</b> S Bandara, I Malinga, N Kulasekara, L Sandakan	
<b>Fall of wickets:</b> 1-76, 2-86, 3-116, 4-153, 5-153, 6-162		<b>Fall of wickets:</b> 1-5, 2-79, 3-91, 4-151, 5-152	
<b>Bowling:</b> Malinga 4-0-29-2 (1w), Kulasekara 4-0-38-0 (1nb, 1w), Bandara 3-0-35-1 (1w), Prasanna 4-0-23-0 (1w), Sandakan 4-0-30-1, Gunaratne 1-0-11-1.		<b>Bowling:</b> Cummins 4-0-29-1, Stanlake 3-0-42-0 (4w), Faulkner 4-0-27-0 (1w), Tye 3-0-32-0, Zampa 4-0-26-2, Turner 2-0-12-2. <b>Result:</b> Sri Lanka won by 5 wickets.	

would hold off the fast-finishing Sri Lankans.

The home side posted a competitive total of 168 for six off their 20 overs with skipper Finch smashing two sixes and two fours in his topscoring 43 off 34 balls.

Finch shared in an opening stand of 76 with T201 debutant Michael Klinger.

Klinger, making his debut at the age of 36 after starting with the Perth Scorchers in the domestic Big Bash League, hammered 38 off 32 balls with four boundaries.

Lasith Malinga, who has played virtually no cricket for nearly a year due to injuries, was an influential figure taking two wickets in two balls and taking two catches.

Malinga claimed the wickets of Travis Head for 31 off 24 balls and debutant Ashton Turner for 18 off 13 balls, both caught by Seekkugge Prasanna at deep mid-wicket.

Malinga finished with two wickets for 29 off his four overs.

Paceman Pat Cummins struck with the last ball of his opening over getting skipper Upul Tharanga to edge to wicketkeeper Tim Paine for a duck in the first over of the Sri Lanka innings.

Leg-spinner Adam Zampa claimed the big wicket of free-scoring opener Niroshan Dickwell for 30 off 25 balls.

Dickwell, who slammed four fours and a six, looked to flick Zampa over mid-wicket only to lob a leading edge to Klinger at short third man in the ninth over.

Dilshan Munaweera smashed a breezy 44 off 29 balls with six fours before he hit a short ball from Zampa to mid-wicket where Finch took a head-high catch.

But Gunaratne took charge and his half-century turned the tide to set up the thrilling victory.

# Brilliant Tahir spins Proteas to victory

Auckland Reuters

Leg-spinner Imran Tahir justified his position as the top-ranked bowler in white-ball cricket with an inspired display in South Africa's 78-run victory over New Zealand in their one-off Twenty20 international at Eden Park yesterday.

Tahir, who took two wickets in two balls in his second over, had his figures marginally sullied by successive sixes from Colin de Grandhomme but still finished with a career-best 5-24 in 3.5 overs, with the home batsmen unable to pick his googly.

The 37-year-old was able to build on a superb performance by opening bowler Chris Morris, who was also denied a hat-trick on his way to figures of 2-10 in his initial three-over spell.

Andile Phehlukwayo claimed three victims, including the vital wicket of New Zealand captain Kane Williamson, as the hosts were dismissed for 107 in 14.5 overs in pursuit of South Africa's 185 for six.

"They played well in all departments. Frustrating from our perspective, we didn't fire a shot," Williamson told reporters.

"On this ground, you don't know what a good score is. We pulled it back (when bowling) and probably gave ourselves a par target. But rotating strike is hard on drop-in surfaces

and we lacked partnerships."

The loss was New Zealand's first at home this summer.

The South African top order also underlined how dangerous they would be in the five match one-day series that starts at Seddon Park in Hamilton on Sunday with nearly all of them making telling contributions.

While Quinton de Kock fell for a duck in his first over, Hashim Amla (62), captain Faf du Plessis (36), AB de Villiers (26) and JP Duminy (29) all scored quickly.

Amla hit nine boundaries and a six in his 43-ball innings and combined with du Plessis in an 87-run partnership from 8.3 overs as the visitors looked well set to score in excess of 200.

De Grandhomme, however, dismissed both du Plessis and de Villiers to leave their side in 145-4 in the 16th over, ensuring the all-rounders needed to push the innings on.

Opening New Zealand bowler Trent Boult finished with an impressive 2-8 from four overs.

"We played some good cricket," du Plessis said. "We were consistent with the bat on a wicket that bounced and we played really well."

"We have had six or seven months that have been amazing. We are confident but we know that we have to rock up every day and perform."

#### SCOREBOARD

SOUTH AFRICA		NEW ZEALAND	
H Amla	Boult b Wheeler... 62	G Phillips	de Kock b Morris... 5
de Kock	Santner b Boult... 0	K Williamson	Parnell b Phehlukwayo... 13
F du Plessis	bow de Grandhomme... 36	C Munro	Morris... 0
A B de Villiers	Wheeler b de Grandhomme... 26	I Brouse	Tahir... 33
J P Duminy	(run out)... 29	A Anderson	de Kock b Phehlukwayo... 6
F de Bruin	Anderson b Boult... 8	C de Grandhomme	Duminy b Tahir... 15
C Morris	(not out)... 9	M Ronchi	de Kock b Tahir... 0
W Parnell	(not out)... 11	M Santner	Amla b Phehlukwayo... 5
Ertas	(B-LB-4-W-3)... 4	B Wheeler	Tahir... 6
<b>Total (for 6 wickets in 20 overs)..... 185</b>		<b>Total (all out in 14.5 overs)..... 107</b>	
<b>Did not bat:</b> A L Phehlukwayo, Imran Tahir, D Parnell		<b>Fall of wickets:</b> 1-10, 2-10, 3-38, 4-55, 5-67, 6-60, 7-68, 8-80, 9-106, 10-107	
<b>Bowling:</b> Boult 4-0-47-0, Santner 4-0-40-0, de Grandhomme 3-0-22-0, Munro 1-0-11-0.		<b>Bowling:</b> Morris 3-10-2, Parnell 2-0-13-0, Parnell 3-0-4-0, Phehlukwayo 3-0-19-3, Tahir 3-5-0-4-5.	

# Rumford two shots clear at halfway in Perth event

Perth AFP

Australia's Brett Rumford opened up a two-shot lead after the second round of World Super 6 Perth as former winners Thorbjorn Olesen and Louis Oosthuizen made their moves at Lake Karinyup yesterday.

Perth native Rumford followed up his opening 66 with a 65 to get to 13 under and lead from countryman David Brandson with another Australian Steven Jeffress a further shot back in the European Tour event.

Rumford had shared the overnight lead with Englishman Mark Foster, who dropped back a five under after a second round 73.

While Rumford looked the one to beat in the new format Super 6 event, South African Oosthuizen and Dane Olesen kept in contention.

Oosthuizen, the 2011 British Open winner and three-time major runner-up, carded a four-under 68, while Olesen had a five-under 67 to lurk six strokes off the halfway lead.

The top 24 players after

Saturday's third round will progress to the six-hole match play knockout phase, with the top eight of those receiving a bye into the last-16.

Rumford is in a comfortable position to make it into Sunday's final day but he will not be taking his foot off the pedal and is aiming to earn himself a spot as one of the top eight seeds.

"Oh 100 percent, definitely," he said. "That's one less lottery round you have to deal with, isn't it?"

"So that's definitely a huge bonus qualifying inside that top eight. It's definitely something I am thinking about."

Rumford birdied the first hole and produced the shot of the day from the trees in making par on the fourth before reeling off five consecutive birdies-ends from the sixth.

He holed from 15 feet on the sixth, got up and down from sand on the seventh, put his tee-shot to four feet on the next and two smart approaches got him to 12 under.

A 30-footer from the fringe on the 13th was followed by a bogey but he bounced back with another gain on the next to re-establish his cushion.

# Saunders takes two-shot lead at Riviera

Pacific Palisades AFP

Sam Saunders, grandson of golf great Arnold Palmer, got off to a strong start at Riviera Country Club on Thursday where he's in search of a first US PGA Tour title.

Saunders fired seven birdies in a seven-under par 64 to seize a two-stroke lead over US Open champion Dustin Johnson and four other players in a round delayed by fog and halted by darkness.

World number three Johnson, who has a chance to topple Australian Jason Day from the top of the rankings with a win this week, had six birdies and a bogey in his 66.

Day was among 48 players still on the course when darkness fell and was even through 16 after four birdies and four bogeys.

Two-time major winner Jordan Spieth was two-under through 16 and world number five Hideki Matsuyama -- who like Johnson could possibly seize the number one ranking with a win, was one-under through 16.

The first round was scheduled to resume at 7 am (15:00 GMT), with the second to start shortly thereafter, if predicted rain storms don't intervene.



Sam Saunders hits from the ninth hole tee box during the first round of the Genesis Open golf tournament at Riviera Country Club in California, USA on Thursday.

"(It's) kind of a little bit of a bonus," Saunders said of completing the round, adding that he was "mentally prepared" for the possibility that weather could prevent him from playing at all yesterday.

Saunders, 29, took center stage in October with a moving eulogy at a memorial service for Palmer, who died on September 25 at the age of 87.

While he once may have felt pressure to escape from Palmer's shadow, that's a burden he no longer carries.

While Saunders is playing

Riviera for the first time, Johnson is after a win on a course where he has come close several times, including a 2015 playoff loss to James Hahn.

Johnson's round was enlivened by a bee stung on the green at the first hole, his 10th of the day. He responded with birdie putts of 24 and 31 feet at the second and third.

The golf course gave me a little love back after I got the bee stung," said Johnson, who was alone atop the leaderboard at six-under before his lone bogey of the day at the par-three fourth.

"I was just hitting really good golf shots," said Johnson, who was tied with newcomer J.T. Poston, Daniel Summerhays, Brett Stegmaier and Australian Cameron Percy, who birdied 18 for a share of second shortly before darkness fell.

Five-time major winner Phil Mickelson headed a group of four-under 67. He was joined by

Australia's Marc Leishman, Ireland's Padraig Harrington, South Africa's Branden Grace, South Korea's An Byeong-Hun and Americans Billy Hurley, Pat Perez and Kevin Na.

# Ibra, Dzeko run riot in Europa League

## Man United win

Swedish striker puts Saint-Etienne to the sword with a hat-trick as Manchester United beat the French club 3-0 in the first leg.

Paris AFP

Zlatan Ibrahimovic put Saint-Etienne to the sword with a hat-trick as Manchester United beat the French club 3-0 in the first leg of their Europa League last-32 tie on Thursday.

The Swede loved playing against Les Verts throughout his four years at Paris Saint-Germain and he was at it again to take his tally in 14 games against them to 17 goals.

Ibrahimovic opened the scoring with a deflected free-kick a quarter of an hour in and had a headed effort disallowed for offside at the start of the second half.

However, he tapped in from a Marcus Rashford cutback 15 minutes from the end and wrapped things up with a penalty two minutes from time after he had been brought down in the box.

Victory gives Jose Mourinho's side one point in the last 16 ahead of next Wednesday's return leg, although things could have been very different had Nolan Roux not spurned a chance just before United's second goal.

The win also meant United star Paul Pogba came out on top in his first competitive appearance against his elder brother, Florentin, and the world's most expensive player came close to scoring with a header that hit the bar in the second half.

Bosnian striker Edin Dzeko has been in fine form himself



Manchester United's Swedish striker Zlatan Ibrahimovic is fouled by St Etienne's Ole during the UEFA Europa League Round of 32 first-leg match against Saint-Etienne at Old Trafford Stadium in Manchester, north-west England, on Thursday.

and he scored three times in little over 20 second-half minutes as Roma romped to a 4-0 victory away to Villarreal in Spain.

The Brazilian Emerson Palmieri gave Roma the lead with a vicious 32nd-minute hit and Dzeko then took charge in the second half, scoring the first of his three goals in the 65th minute.

Dzeko is Serie A's leading scorer with 18 goals and now has eight goals this season in the Europa League, in which Roma appear to have more than one foot in the last 16.

Tottenham Hotspur have work to do in their tie against Genoa after losing 1-0 in the first leg in Belgium.

The only goal of the game came just before the hour mark when French striker Jeremy Perbet, formerly of Villarreal, scored at the second attempt from a Danijel Milicevic cutback, as Genoa coach Hein Vanhaezebrouck celebrated his 53rd birthday with a win.

Tottenham goalkeeper Hugo Lloris pushed a Milicevic shot onto the post while Harry Kane had earlier struck an upright at the other end.

It was a disappointing performance from Mauricio Pochettino's side, who must now look to turn the tie around in next week's return at Wembley.

"I am disappointed because we had a lot of opportunities before we conceded, but the tie is open," Pochettino told BT Sport.

Tottenham struggled to adapt to playing 'home' games at Wembley in the Champions League, losing to Monaco and Bayer Leverkusen there.

"This is a fantastic opportunity for us to demonstrate to ourselves that we can win at Wembley and be ready for next season," when they will play all home matches there, Pochettino added.

Meanwhile, Federico Bernardeschi scored the only goal

from a fine free-kick as Fiorentina won 1-0 away to Borussia Moenchengladbach.

Alexandre Lacazette found the net twice as Lyon romped to a 4-1 victory away to AZ Alkmaar in the Netherlands and Schalke also claimed a big win on the road.

The German side beat PAOK 3-0 in Greece with Klaas-Jan Huntelaar securing the win when he scored his 50th European goal late on.

Ariz Aduriz scored his seventh goal in six Europa League games for Athletic Bilbao but their 3-2 win at home to APOEL keeps the Cypriots in the tie ahead of the return.

There were also first-leg wins for Krasnodar, Rostov, Shakhtar Donetsk, FC Copenhagen, Besiktas and Anderlecht.

The Belgians beat fancied Zenit St Petersburg 2-0 in Brussels with two goals from Ghana international Frank Acheampong.

## Sutton ready to add to Wenger's woes

London AFP

The manager of Sutton United will have no qualms about doing all he can to add to the burden of Arsenal boss Arsene Wenger when their teams meet in the last 16 of the FA Cup.

The tie of the fifth round, at least for those who still believe in the "romance of the Cup", sees non-league Sutton at home to joint-record 12-times Arsenal on Monday.

Arsenal will make the trip from north to south-west London, for a match on the artificial pitch at Sutton's Gander Green Lane ground, with Wenger under intense pressure following a humiliating 5-1 loss away to German giants Bayern Munich in the first leg of a last 16 Champions League tie.

That defeat came hot on the heels of a recent shock league loss to Watford and an ensuing, rather more predictable defeat by Chelsea that between them appeared to have scuppered the Gunners' hopes of a first Premier League title since 2004.

Even those once loyal to veteran manager Wenger, in charge at Arsenal since 1996, have started to question whether the 67-year-old Frenchman will seek a renewal of his contract when it expires at the end of the season. But

Sutton boss Paul Doswell, whose side beat second-round, was blunt when asked about Wenger's plight.

"Do I feel sympathy for him? No. He is well schooled, and he has been in the job for 20 years," said Doswell, whose team are currently 17th in the National League, the fifth tier of English football.

Wenger accepted Arsenal had "collapsed mentally" against Bayern and Gunners defender Laurent Koscielny, who went off injured four minutes into the second half with the score at 1-1, could not explain why.

"I don't know either," he told Arsenal TV. "I think the first half was good -- we were deep, like you need to be, and tried not to give them space or opportunities to score."

Lincoln City, the other non-league side to make it to the fifth round, will also face Premier League opposition when they travel to Burnley today. "We approach it the same way we do any team," said Burnley manager Sean Dyche. "There's not a divine right to win football matches." Premier League leaders Chelsea travel to second-tier Wolves, with Pedro praising the impact made by Blues manager Antonio Conte since his pre-season arrival.

# Lowly Leganes hand Barca chance to lick PSG wounds

Madrid AFP

Still reeling from their humiliation at the hands of Paris Saint-Germain, Barcelona can't afford a Champions League hangover as they return to La Liga action at home to Leganes tomorrow.

Barca trail league leaders Real Madrid by a point, but have also played two games more than their title rivals, leaving Luis Enrique's men little room for error in their quest for a third straight La Liga title.

Enrique has been the fall guy for Barca's disastrous showing in a 4-0 thrashing in Paris on Tuesday with fans, media and even the club's players criticising his tactical set up.

Key midfielders Sergio Busquets and Andres Iniesta, who were overrun by PSG's pace and power, insisted Barca's problem was not one of attitude one but being outplayed thanks to PSG boss Unai Emery's master plan.

Even Lionel Messi was off colour as his mistake led to PSG's second goal, but Javier Mascherano claimed the five-time World Player of the Year is the only Barca player who can't be questioned.

"Leo is indispensable and, yes, the rest of us are expendable," Mascherano told Barca magazine.

"He is unique. We are talking about the best player in the history of this sport without any doubt."

### LIGUE 1

Fixtures (GMT)

Today

Granada vs Real Betis (19:45)

Tomorrow

Spurs vs Atletico Madrid (20:00), Real Madrid vs Espanyol (15:15), Deportivo la Coruna vs Alaves (17:30), Sevilla vs Eibar (19:45)

Tomorrow

Real Sociedad vs Villarreal (18:00), Valencia vs Athletic Bilbao (15:15), Celta Vigo vs Osasuna (17:30), Barcelona vs Leganes (19:45)

On Monday

Malaga vs Las Palmas (19:45)

Napoli 3-1 and could have even more firepower available with Gareth Bale in line for his return after three months out with ankle ligament damage.

Real boss Zinedine Zidane resisted the temptation to rush the Welshman back into action after he returned to training last weekend, but is expected to at least appear off the bench.

Espanyol's hopes of European football next season were punctured by a first home defeat since September to Real Sociedad last weekend to leave them four points off the top six.

And there is little in Espanyol's recent record against Madrid to give former Watford boss Quique Sanchez Flores the men hope as they have lost their last nine against Real and haven't won in their last 20 meetings. Sevilla can leapfrog Barca into second for at least 24 hours as they warm up for their Champions League clash with Leicester City on Wednesday by hosting the on-form Eibar, who harbour European ambitions of their own.

Atletico Madrid could also have a return to Champions League action in mind when they travel to a Sporting Gijon side suddenly eying survival after their first win since December at Leganes last weekend. Any slip up by Atletico could be punished on by Sociedad, who trail Diego Simeone's men by just a point in the battle for fourth, and host sixth-placed Villarreal.



Barcelona striker Luis Suarez smiles as he looks at a caricature of himself by Spanish cartoonist Vizcarra during the presentation of the 12th edition of the book "Relats solidaris de l'esport" (Stories of solidarity in sport) in Barcelona yesterday.

# Lahm backs struggling Mueller in Berlin

Berlin AFP

After thrashing Arsenal in mid-week, leaders Bayern Munich return to Bundesliga business at Hertha Berlin on Saturday with captain Philipp Lahm backing Thomas Mueller to return to form.

Bayern head to the capital with a seven-point lead in Germany's top flight and one foot in the Champions League's quarter-finals after hammering Arsenal 5-1 in Wednesday's last 16, first-leg.

Carlo Ancelotti opted for Thiago Alcantara instead of Mueller to run Bayern's attack against the Gunners.

The attacking midfielder scored two goals in a display his coach hailed as 'perfect'. Germany star Mueller was left on the bench but still managed to come on and score Bayern's fifth goal in his four minutes on the pitch -- after Thiago presented him with a simple tap-in.

It had been 999 minutes since he had previously netted for Bayern. Ancelotti is set to rotate his squad with Mueller poised to make the starting line-up at Berlin's Olympic Stadium. Lahm says home-grown Germany star Mueller is working tirelessly to rekindle his form.