

Serena roars back to keep Grand Slam bid alive

BY LARRY FINE
REUTERS

NEW YORK — Serena Williams flirted with grand slam danger once again but kept her calendar-year Grand Slam bid on track by beating a battling 101st-ranked Bethanie Mattek-Sands 3-6, 7-5, 6-0 at the U.S. Open on Friday night.

Williams, who has lost nine sets, including seven first-set losses, in her charge to the Australian, French and Wimbledon titles, was tested by her fellow American but roared back to victory to reach the fourth round.

The 21-time grand slam singles winner, who is aiming to join Maureen Connolly (1953), Margaret Court (1970) and Steffi Graf (1988) as the only women to sweep the four grand slams in a single season, next faces fellow American Madison Keys.

Keys advanced 6-3, 6-2 over 15th seed Agnieszka Radwanska of Poland.

In earlier matches, top seed Novak Djokovic and defending champion Marin Cilic took different routes into the fourth round of the U.S. Open as the upsets and searing heat at Flushing Meadows both eased off.

After a week of punishing heat that saw a record 13

players retire, cooler temperatures and order returned to the year's final grand slam as world number one Djokovic eased to a third round 6-3, 7-5, 7-5 victory over Italian Andreas Seppi.

Cilic also kept his title defence on track but not without a scare as the ninth seed needed over four hours to put away Kazakhstan's 56th-ranked Mikhail Kukushkin 6-7(5), 7-6(1, 6-3, 6-7(3), 6-1.

The big-hitting Croat stepped onto the Grandstand court having won 16 straight sets at the National Tennis Center but that string quickly came to an end when Kukushkin took the opening set in a tiebreak in what was the start of a long and harrowing afternoon for the defending champion.

"I'm happy with the fighting spirit today, just accepting that I wasn't playing so well," said Cilic. "For sure (being defending champion) always has some weight to it.

"Playing on a big court with a full house, that's going to give you some extra motivation in the situations like today when I was a set and 5-2 down.

"I was in the thought process that I am going to stay on the court as much as necessary."

It had been a trouble-free visit to New York for Djokovic, the lanky Serb not



EDUARDO MUNOZ | REUTERS

Serena Williams celebrates after defeating Bethanie Mattek-Sands during their match at the U.S. Open Championships tennis tournament in New York on Friday.

dropping a set while losing just 10 games going into his match against Seppi.

But the 25th-ranked Italian at least made Djokovic work for his spot in the round of 16, the world number one needing a tiring two and a half hours at Arthur Ashe Stadium to secure his victory.

"Just hanging in there, trying to create my own pace and control the rallies," Djokovic said about dealing with the capable and aggressive game of Seppi.

"It was a tough three sets."

Venus Williams, who won the second of her two U.S. Open titles 14 years ago, struck a blow for the older set and stayed on course for a quarter-finals collision with Grand Slam-seeking sister Serena by taming Swiss teen Belinda Bencic 6-3, 6-4.

Venus, 35, produced a vintage power-game performance to beat the up-and-coming 18-year-old in a matchup between the oldest

and youngest players left in the women's draw.

Williams, who played her first U.S. Open in 1997, the year 12th-seeded Swiss was born, had battled to a pair of three-set wins and spent nearly five hours on court to reach the third round.

However, the American made quick work of Bencic, who beat 2015 Australian, French and Wimbledon champion Serena Williams on her way to winning in Toronto last month.

"I just wanted to stay ag-

gressive and keep my errors down," said Venus, who had also beaten Bencic in straight sets in their three previous encounters.

Joining the seven-times grand slam singles winner in the fourth round was Russian 13th seed Ekaterina Makarova, who advanced with 6-3, 7-5 victory over 17th seed Elina Svitolina of Ukraine.

OPEN NOTES: The Roger Federer express will look to gather further pace in the third round of the U.S. Open on Saturday as the world number two continues his bid for a sixth U.S. Open title and an 18th grand slam crown. Federer, who has been in sizzling form since reaching the Wimbledon finals, will face Germany's Philipp Kohlschreiber at Arthur Ashe Stadium, having steamrolled through his first two matches. "Very often I start this tournament quite strong," the 34-year-old Swiss said after crushing Belgium's Steve Darcis 6-1 6-2 6-1 in the second round. "It's always gone quite well for me. I've always enjoyed conditions here — the balls, the speed of the court, the atmosphere in the arena. I think this is another good year." Also in action on Saturday will be third-seeded Scot Andy Murray and fifth seed Stan Wawrinka of Switzerland.

Doctors optimistic Lincecum will pitch next season

REUTERS

DENVER, Colorado — After undergoing surgery on his left hip, Tim Lincecum is facing a five-month rehab period but should be ready to pitch during the 2016 season.

The operation on the two-time National League Cy Young Award winner was performed in Vail, Colo., by Dr. Marc Philippon at the Steadman Clinic. Giants trainer Dave Groeschner said Philippon "was pretty confident he'll get back to major league pitching for next season."

Philippon repaired Lincecum's torn left hip left labrum, Groeschner said, and addressed a hip impingement or bone build-up that had occurred over time and was the biggest source of discomfort for Lincecum. Groeschner said Philippon shaved down some bone.

"I'm glad we did something here," manager Bruce Bochy said before the Giants lost 11-3 to the Rockies Thursday night. "It's going to give Timmy a little peace of mind to get this behind him.

"Trust me, Timmy still wants to pitch; he still has that fire in the belly. That's probably the biggest reason why he had this surgery, so he could get this behind him, get his rehab done and get back on the mound and hopefully get back to where he was and comfortable on the pitching side of it."

Lincecum will begin range of motion exercises Friday, Groeschner said, and remain in Vail before traveling to Scottsdale, Ariz., early next week and

begin working there with the Giants' physical therapist. Lincecum, 31, went 7-4 with a 4.13 ERA in 76 1/3 innings this season in 15 starts, the last on June 27.

"Timmy was battling to try and get back to pitch this year," Groeschner said. "He was working really hard. He took a couple cortisone shots six weeks ago. As he continued along to try and throw off the mound and get back and get out there, it just wasn't working.

"He did everything he could to try and avoid (surgery). He wants to get back to being Tim Lincecum. He wanted to get this done now, so he can do that."

Yankees place Teixeira on DL

The New York Yankees placed first baseman Mark Teixeira on the 15-day disabled list Friday with a right shin bone bruise.

The move is retroactive to Aug. 27. Teixeira underwent tests Tuesday that showed his sore right shin does not have a broken bone but rather a serious bruise.

Teixeira hit a foul ball off the shin about two weeks ago and started just one game since then.

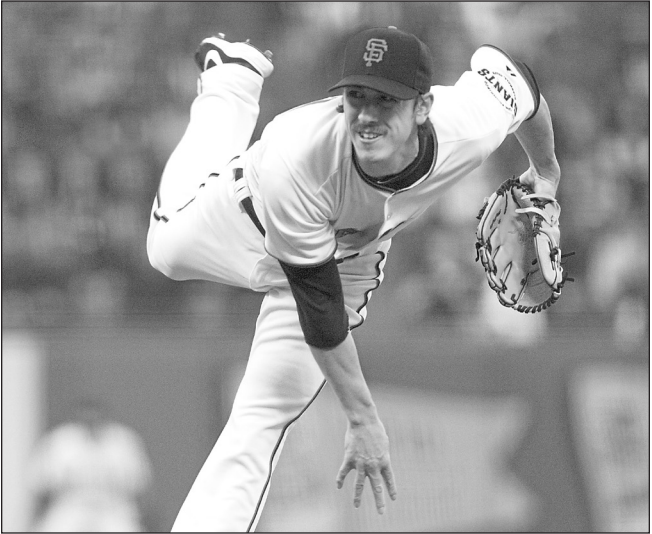
Yankees manager Joe Girardi expects Teixeira to be back before the end of the regular season.

Teixeira, who landed a spot on the American League All-Star team this summer, is batting .255 with 31 home runs and 79 RBIs in 117 games.

The Yankees also recalled right-handed relief pitcher Nick Rumbelow from Triple-A Scranton/Wilkes-Barre.

Astros OF Springer returns

Houston Astros outfielder George Springer



USA TODAY SPORTS FILE

San Francisco Giants pitcher Tim Lincecum has undergone hip surgery and faces a 5-month rehab period. Doctors say he should be ready to pitch in the 2016 season.

was activated from the disabled list on Friday after missing two months with a broken wrist.

The addition of Springer should help the Astros in their stretch run, as they try to protect the two-game lead they held in the American League West heading into Friday's action.

Springer was in the starting lineup and batting leadoff in Friday's game against the Minnesota Twins.

Last year, in 78 games, Springer hit .231 with 20 homers, 39 walks and five steals. In 75 games this season, Springer is hitting .264 with 13 homers, 42 walks and 14 stolen bases.

Springer is expected to be the Astros' everyday right fielder, with Carlos Gomez in center field and Colby Rasmus, Preston Tucker and Jake Marisnick sharing time in left field.

Springer played in five games on his minor league rehab assignment with Triple-A Corpus Christi and went 5-for-18.

Cardinals activate Jon Jay

The St. Louis Cardinals activated outfielder Jon Jay from the 15-day disabled list Friday.

Jay, 30, who was placed on the DL for a second time

this season on July 1, most recently missed 57 games due to a left wrist stress reaction. The left-handed hitting Jay was sent to Triple-A Memphis last Sunday on an injury rehabilitation assignment. In four games with the Redbirds, he batted .385 (5-for-13) with one home run and two stolen bases.

In 57 games prior to being placed on the DL, Jay batted .223 with one home run and 11 RBIs for St. Louis. Jay, who had wrist surgery last offseason, spent time on the DL earlier in the year (May 11-29) with left wrist tendinitis.

Indians recall two

The Cleveland Indians recalled infielder Michael Martinez and left-hander Giovanni Soto from Triple-A Columbus.

They also transferred left-hander TJ House from the 15-day disabled list to the 60-day list and designated outfielder Carlos Moncrief for assignment.

Orioles put pitcher on DL

Baltimore Orioles right-hander Miguel Gonzalez (right shoulder tendinitis) went on the 15-day disabled list, retroactive to Monday.

The Orioles also recalled outfielder Junior Lake and right-hander Jorge Rondon from Triple-A Norfolk.

Time is running out for Kahne and Biffle to make the Chase

THE SPORTS XCHANGE

In basketball terms, Kasey Kahne and Greg Biffle must hit a buzzer to make the Chase for the NASCAR Sprint Cup.

With just two races remaining, Kahne (37 points behind) and Biffle (83) are too far below the points cutoff line to get into NASCAR's playoffs without a victory.

The two veteran drivers will get the first of their final two chances to take a checkered flag Sunday in the Bojangles' Southern 500 at Darlington Raceway (7 p.m., NBC).

Kahne is no stranger to the pressure of his current "win or go home" situation. Winless heading into Atlanta on Labor Day weekend last season, he piloted his car to Victory Lane in a last-ditch effort to secure a spot in the Chase.

Kahne has never won at Darlington but does lead active drivers there with four poles and ranks fourth in laps led in the past 10 races at the South Carolina track (327).

"It would mean a ton to win the Southern 500," Kahne said. "It's always been one of the races that I've wanted to win. We've come close but haven't been able to do it, so to do it in this car that time of the year right before the Chase would be a perfect time."

Biffle has struggled this season, with just two top-five

and three top-10 finishes in 24 starts, but he has been successful at Darlington throughout his career.

The Roush Fenway Racing driver boasts two wins at the track "Too Tough to Tame" and leads all drivers in laps led there over the last 10 races (637).

"Darlington is a fun place. It's one of the toughest places that we race," Biffle said of the 1.366-mile egg-shaped oval. "Driving into the corner at 190-plus mph and sliding up about three or four inches from the fence, or at least you hope that's where it stops sliding, and riding the fence all the way around. It's a demanding, tough, fast race track and I look forward to going back there with the new package and tires. I'm pretty excited about it."

Elliott eyes repeat win

Egg-shaped with long straightaways and short, quick turns, Darlington Raceway eats up and spits out even the most experienced drivers.

No one told Chase Elliott that last year.

The then 18-year-old driver made a mad dash from sixth with two laps remaining to visit Victory Lane in his first start at the track "Too Tough to Tame." That day, Elliott defeated NASCAR Sprint Cup Series stalwarts Kevin Harvick, Matt Kenseth, Kyle Busch and Joey Logano.



Biffle



Kahne

Gordon field hockey team edges Husson

WENHAM, Massachusetts — Emily Allcroft scored two second-half goals to lift Gordon College by Husson University 2-1 in field hockey action Friday.

Husson cut the lead to 2-1 when Mikayla Toth scored at the 58th minute.

Both teams had 17 shots with Kaitlin Dolloff making 10 saves for Husson (0-2) and Shannon Hicks finishing with six for Gordon.

Men's Soccer

USM1, Westfield St. 0

At Gorham, freshman

Samuel Anderson scored his first intercollegiate goal in the 82nd minute to lead the University of Southern Maine Huskies by Westfield State University.

The goal was set up when Jonathan Bobe sent a perfectly placed ball to a streaking Anderson. Simon Hulbert made six saves for USM while Marc Patnaude had three for Westfield.

UMFK 6, Maine Maritime 0

At Fort Kent, the University of Maine-Fort Kent's Willy Monthe scored the game's first goal with two minutes to go in the first half and then added his sec-

ond goal four minutes into the second half to spark the Bengals victory.

Lewis Temple, Ben Klumbers, Garth Banton and Justin Soonteins each added a goal for the Bengals and Butch Forbes made two saves.

MMA's Joshua Reeks finished with eight saves.

St. Joseph's 1, UNE 0

At Biddeford, Jesse Ramirez scored with 18 seconds remaining to provide the Saint Joseph's College Monks with the win over the University of New England in a non-conference men's soccer match.

With the win, the Monks remain unbeaten (1-0-1), while the Nor'easters dip 1-1.

Senior captain Nate Fox found Ramirez open at the top of the box, and the rookie forward took one touch after receiving the feed and drove a low shot that grazed off the left post and over the goal line.

Scott Benner finished with eight saves for the Monks, who led 16-12 in shots. UNE senior goalkeeper Nate Diffin had four saves, including a nice stop in the 83rd minute to keep the game scoreless.