

Tennis

Williams within 1 win of 7th Australian Open title

Win on Saturday will tie record for Grand Slam singles

By JOHN PYE
AP Sports Writer

MELBOURNE, Australia — Serena Williams is one win away from another Grand Slam milestone after beating Agnieszka Radwanska 6-0, 6-4 in an Australian Open semifinal that was almost a non-contest between the players who'll be Nos. 1 and 3 in the next women's rankings.

If Williams wins Saturday's final against No. 7-seeded Angelique Kerber, she'll equal Steffi Graf's record of 22 Grand Slam singles title, a record in the Open era, and the second-most in history behind Margaret Court's 24.

Williams is the overwhelming favorite, and not just based on recent form. She continued her perfect streak in Australian Open semifinals, and she has won all six finals she's contested

at Melbourne Park. "I definitely block it out," Williams replied to a question about equaling Graf's mark. "I was one off last year, too!"

"If I don't win on Saturday, I'll still be one off." Despite all her success, it is a loss that is inspiring Williams in this tournament. She was two matches away from a calendar-year Grand Slam in 2015 when she lost to Roberta Vinci in the U.S. Open semifinals.

"Physically I'm feeling a lot better, mentally I needed that break after the Open," she said, but "I didn't think I would do this well this fast."

"I'm really excited to be in the final — it just kind of blows my mind right now." Kerber ended Sydney-born British player Johanna Konta's surprising run with a 7-5, 6-2 semifinal win to reach her first Grand Slam final. Konta was the first British woman since 1983 to reach a major semifinal.

Kerber has one win in six matches against Williams — in 2012. Graf was the last German



(AP Photo/Rick Rycroft)

Serena Williams of the United States plays a backhand return to Agnieszka Radwanska of Poland during their semifinal match at the Australian Open tennis championships in Melbourne, Australia on Thursday.

player to win the women's title in Australia, in 1994, and Kerber is asking for some advice.

"So Steffi, write me please," she said, laughing with the crowd on Rod Laver Arena.

Williams' win over fourth-seeded Radwanska provided another yet reminder of her dominance in the women's game. She has won 39 of her last 40 Grand Slam matches across

six major tournaments.

Williams hasn't played a left-hander so far this tournament and said that, combined with Kerber's win over two-time champion Victoria Azarenka in the quarterfinals, were making her wary.

"She took out a really tough opponent in Victoria. You can't underestimate Kerber," Williams said. "She's beaten me before, too, and pretty good. I know that

she brings a lot to the game." The first set of the semifinals was over in 20 minutes, with Williams hitting 18 winners and Radwanska, in her fifth major semifinal, registering one — in the fourth game.

The second set was closer, with Radwanska holding serve three times and breaking Serena's powerful serve once. But the 34-year-old Williams lifted again to finish it off, winning the last eight points and closing with three aces and a big forehand winner.

Williams remains unbeaten in nine matches against Radwanska, whom she beat in the 2012 Wimbledon final.

"She goes on court and she just wants to kill it. Going like full power for everything," Radwanska said. "So I don't think anyone can really play on that kind of level at all. She started unbelievable, with such a power and speed. I was just standing there kind of watching her playing."

With the roof on Rod Laver Arena closed because

of a thunderstorm closing in, the most obvious noise in the first set was the chirping of trapped birds who'd taken shelter in the stadium.

The chirping intensified as Williams served in the sixth game of the second set, and she looked up angrily after her off-balance forehand from the baseline conceding her only service break of the match.

Williams finished with eight aces — all in the second set — and has lost only 26 games in six rounds in a dominating run that included a 6-4, 6-1 win over No. 5 Maria Sharapova in the quarterfinals, a rematch of the 2015 final.

Jamie Murray and Brazil's Bruno Soares advanced to the doubles final with a 6-3, 6-1 win over Adrian Panariello and Lucas Pouille and will next meet Daniel Nestor and Radek Stepanek, who beat Pablo Cuevas and Marcel Granollers 7-6 (11), 6-4.

The first men's semifinal between defending champion Novak Djokovic and Roger Federer will open the night session Thursday.

SCOREBOARD

Local slate

PREP BOYS BASKETBALL

Today
Hermiston at Hood River, 7 p.m.
The Dalles at Pendleton, 7 p.m.
Friday
Riverside at Nyssa, 6 p.m.
Umatilla at Vale, 6 p.m.
Irrigon at Heppner, 6 p.m.
Culver at Weston-McEwen, 4 p.m.
Stanfield at Pilot Rock, 6 p.m.
Arlington at South Wasco, 7:30 p.m.
Sherman at Lone, 7:30 p.m.
Condon/Wheeler at Horizon Christian, 7:30 p.m.
Echo at Pine Eagle, 7:30 p.m.
Wallowa at Helix, 7:30 p.m.
Saturday
Umatilla at Nyssa, 3:30 p.m.
Riverside at Vale, 3:30 p.m.
Culver at Pilot Rock, 4 p.m.
Ontario at Mac-Hi, 4:30 p.m.
Heppner at Stanfield, 5:30 p.m.
Weston-McEwen at Irrigon, 5:30 p.m.
Mitchell/Spray at Arlington, 5:30 p.m.
Lone at Condon/Wheeler, 5:30 p.m.
Joseph at Echo, 5:30 p.m.
Nixyaawii at Powder Valley, 5:30 p.m.

PREP GIRLS BASKETBALL

Friday
Stanfield at Pilot Rock, 3 p.m.
Riverside at Nyssa, 5 p.m.
Umatilla at Vale, 5 p.m.
Culver at Weston-McEwen, 5:30 p.m.
Arlington at South Wasco, 6 p.m.
Condon/Wheeler at Horizon Christian, 6 p.m.
Sherman at Lone, 6 p.m.
Wallowa at Helix, 6 p.m.
Irrigon at Heppner, 6 p.m.
Echo at Pine Eagle, 6 p.m.
Pendleton at The Dalles, 7 p.m.
Hood River at Hermiston, 7 p.m.
Irrigon at Heppner, 7:30 p.m.
Saturday
Riverside at Vale, 2 p.m.
Culver at Pilot Rock, 2:30 p.m.
Ontario at Mac-Hi, 3 p.m.
Umatilla at Nyssa, 3 p.m.
Heppner at Stanfield, 4 p.m.
Weston-McEwen at Irrigon, 4 p.m.
Mitchell/Spray at Arlington, 4 p.m.
Lone at Condon/Wheeler, 4 p.m.
Joseph at Echo, 4 p.m.
Nixyaawii at Powder Valley, 4 p.m.

PREP WRESTLING

Today
Hermiston at The Dalles, TBD
Friday
Mountain View at Pendleton, 6 p.m.
Bonanza at Irrigon, 6 p.m.
Saturday
Mac-Hi, Riverside, Heppner, Irrigon at BEO Invite, 10 a.m.

PREP SWIMMING

Saturday

COLLEGE MEN'S BASKETBALL

Friday
Eastern Oregon at Evergreen State, 7:30 p.m.
Saturday
Treasure Valley at Blue Mountain, 4 p.m.
Eastern Oregon at Northwest (WA), 7:30 p.m.

COLLEGE WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

Friday
Eastern Oregon at Evergreen State, 5:30 p.m.
Saturday
Treasure Valley at Blue Mountain, 2 p.m.
Eastern Oregon at Northwest (WA), 5:30 p.m.

Prep standings

BOYS BASKETBALL			
Columbia River Conference (5A)	Conf.Ovr.	PS	PARnk
Pendleton	1-0-8-6	911	773
Hermiston	1-0-8-8	978	979
The Dalles	0-13-12	795	1168
Hood River	0-11-12	731	871

Greater Oregon League (4A)			
Ovr.	Conf.	PS	PARnk
Baker	3-09-10	1006	1053
Mac-Hi	1-16-13	789	896
La Grande	1-1-5-7	615	570
Ontario	0-35-11	853	981

Eastern Oregon League (3A)			
Conf.Ovr.	PS	PARnk	
Nyssa	4-09-10	952	945
Riverside	3-17-10	739	728
Umatilla	1-39-10	937	977
Vale	0-43-14	702	928

Columbia Basin Conference (2A)			
Conf.Ovr.	PS	PARnk	
Heppner	5-016-1	917	706
Stanfield	4-112-4	1039	826
Irrigon	3-212-5	958	712
Wes-McE	2-3-7-9	821	878
Pilot Rock	1-47-12	817	926
Culver	0-55-12	687	947

Big Sky League (1A)			
Conf.Ovr.	PS	PARnk	
Sherman	7-013-4	1154	884
S. Wasco	5-214-3	925	599
Dufur	5-2-8-7	787	721
Horizon Chr.	4-3-7-9	748	816
Con./Whe.	3-4-7-8	714	814
Wes-McE	2-53-12	446	821
Arlington	1-67-11	789	806
Mitchell	1-66-10	598	791

Old Oregon League (1A)			
Conf.Ovr.	PS	PARnk	
Nixyaawii	7-017-1	978	564
Helix	5-113-4	734	613
Powder Val.	5-210-7	781	592
Joseph	3-3-7-8	719	607
Echo	2-59-10	742	664
Pine Eagle	1-61-14	295	765
Wallowa	0-71-15	260	818

Old Oregon League (1A)			
Conf.Ovr.	PS	PARnk	
Nixyaawii	7-017-1	1334	857
Powder Val.	6-113-3	931	602

Joseph	4-2	8-7	663	663	25
Echo	4-36	12	797	852	42
Wallowa	2-53	12	487	743	40
Pine Eagle	1-62	13	511	851	50
Helix	0-72	15	511	875	63

GIRLS BASKETBALL

Columbia River Conference (5A)			
Conf.Ovr.	PS	PARnk	
Hermiston	1-013-3	886	709
Pendleton	1-06-10	783	787
The Dalles	0-1-8-7	691	627
Hood River	0-13-11	479	683

Greater Oregon League (4A)			
Conf.Ovr.	PS	PARnk	
La Grande	2-013-4	997	773
Baker	2-1-9-9	781	954
Mac-Hi	1-11-7	715	721
Ontario	0-32-12	401	663

Eastern Oregon League (3A)			
Conf.Ovr.	PS	PARnk	
Umatilla	4-015-4	886	615
Nyssa	2-21-7	766	657
Vale	2-210-8	752	107
Riverside	0-43-13	468	691

Columbia Basin Conference (2A)			
Conf.Ovr.	PS	PARnk	
Wes.-McE.	5-0-9-8	747	668
Pilot Rock	4-113-6	887	729
Culver	2-310-7	659	556
Stanfield	2-3-7-9	610	598
Irrigon	2-36-10	619	623
Heppner	0-52-14	425	680

Big Sky League (1A)			
Conf.Ovr.	PS	PARnk	
Con./Whe.	6-115-2	771	543
Lone	6-1-9-6	646	648
Arlington	5-212-6	771	579
S. Wasco	3-4-8-10	535	615
Horizon Chr.	3-46-10	483	653
Sherman	3-43-12	504	742
Dufur	2-53-12	522	704
Mitchell	0-73-13	491	646

Old Oregon League (1A)			
Conf.Ovr.	PS	PARnk	
Nixyaawii	7-017-1	978	564
Helix	5-113-4	734	613
Powder Val.	5-210-7	781	592
Joseph	3-3-7-8	719	607
Echo	2-59-10	742	664
Pine Eagle	1-61-14	295	765
Wallowa	0-71-15	260	818

Old Oregon League (1A)			
Conf.Ovr.	PS	PARnk	
Nixyaawii	7-017-1	1334	857
Powder Val.	6-113-3	931	602

Football

NFL	
Pro Bowl	Sunday, Jan. 31
	At Honolulu
	Team Rice vs. Team Irvin, 4 p.m. (ESPN)
Super Bowl	Sunday, Feb. 7
	At Santa Clara, Calif.

Denver vs. Carolina, 3:30 p.m. (CBS)

Basketball

NBA

Atlantic Division			
W	L	Pct	GB
Toronto	30	15	667
Boston	26	21	553
New York	22	25	468
Brooklyn	12	34	261
Philadelphia	7	40	149

Southeast Division			
W	L	Pct	GB
Atlanta	27	20	574
Miami	25	21	543
Charlotte	22	24	478
Washington	20	23	465
Orlando	20	24	455

Central Division			
W	L	Pct	GB
Cleveland	32	12	727
Chicago	25	19	568
Detroit	25	21	543
Indiana	23	22	511
Milwaukee	20	27	426

Western Conference			
Southwest Division			
W	L	Pct	GB
San Antonio	39	7	848
Memphis	26	20	565
Dallas	26	22	542
Houston	25	23	521
New Orleans	16	28	364

Northwest Division			
W	L	Pct	GB
Oklahoma City	35	13	729
Portland	21	26	447
Utah	20	25	444
Denver	17	29	370
Minnesota	14	33	298

Pacific Division			
W	L	Pct	GB
Golden State	42	4	913
L.A. Clippers	30	16	652
Sacramento	20	25	444
Phoenix	14	33	298
L.A. Lakers	9	38	191

Wednesday's Games			
Cleveland 115,	Phoenix 93		
Boston 111,	Denver 103		
Detroit 110,	Philadelphia 97		
Oklahoma City 126,	Minnesota 123		
San Antonio 130,	Houston 99		
L.A. Clippers 85,	Atlanta 83		
Utah 102,	Charlotte 73		
Golden State 127,	Dallas 107		

Thursday's Games			
Atlanta at Indiana,	4 p.m.		
Denver at Washington,	4 p.m.		
Sacramento at New Orleans,	5 p.m.		
Milwaukee at Memphis,	5 p.m.		
New York at Toronto,	5 p.m.		
Chicago at L.A. Lakers,	7:30 p.m.		

Men's Top 25			
Chicago	53	33	16
Dallas	50	31	14
St. Louis	52	28	16
Colorado	52	27	22
Nashville	50	24	18
Minnesota	49	23	17
Winnipeg	49	22	24