

WIMBLEDON: Murray, Nadal advance easily in men’s bracket

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with her older sister, Isha, before returning. When the proceedings resumed, the moderator asked that the topic of the crash be avoided, saying, “Venus is willing to take a couple more questions about other things. Tennis, perhaps.”

The 10th-seeded Williams’ return to action, and difficulty in addressing the off-court matters with the media — just last week, the police report was released, and a day later, the estate of the man who died sued her — were the most noteworthy happenings on Day 1 at the grass-court Grand Slam tournament.

There was, though, on-court news, too, of course, starting with this: No. 3-ranked Stan Wawrinka, a three-time major champion and the runner-up at the French Open just three weeks ago, dealt with a bothersome left knee and bowed out 6-4, 3-6, 6-4, 6-1 to Daniil Medvedev, a 21-year-old Russian ranked 49th who had never won so much as one Grand Slam match in his career.

“For sure, I wasn’t feeling the way I wanted to feel,” Wawrinka said.

“Apparently,” he said with a grin, “grass is not the best surface for my knee.”

Wawrinka has won each of the other majors once apiece but Wimbledon has given him fits over the years.



Britain’s Andy Murray celebrates after beating Kazakhstan’s Alexander Bublik in their Men’s Singles Match on the opening day at the Wimbledon Tennis Championships in London Monday, July 3, 2017.

AP Photo/Kirsty Wigglesworth



AP Photo/Tim Ireland

Spain’s Rafael Nadal serves to Australia’s John Millman during their Men’s Singles Match on the opening day at the Wimbledon Tennis Championships in London Monday, July 3, 2017.

He has yet to get past the quarterfinals and this was his sixth exit in the first round.

Another seeded man hobbled by an injury departed when No. 20 Nick Kyrgios, a talented if temperamental Australian, stopped playing because of a hip problem. He dropped the first two sets against Pierre-Hugues Herbert of France before calling it quits.

Two of the four men who have divvied up the past 14 Wimbledon trophies won easily Monday: Andy Murray and Rafael Nadal.

Murray was asked about what advice he might give

Williams.

“I don’t know exactly what happened. I just read kind of more, like, headlines, rather than the whole stories about it. But it’s obviously horrific when anything like that happens,” he said. “I’m sure it must be tough for her to focus on her tennis just now. But I don’t know how you advise someone on that. ... Unless you’ve been through it, you don’t know. You don’t know what to do.”

Williams has not been cited or charged, and police say she was not drunk, on drugs or texting, but that she drove her SUV into the path

of a car carrying a married couple. Williams, who owns a home near the crash site, told investigators her light was green when she entered the six-lane intersection but she got stopped midpoint by traffic and didn’t see the other car before she crossed their lane.

“I mean, obviously, I think it would weigh on any human being, and Venus is no different,” said Williams’ coach, David Witt. “Venus is the nicest person, and (this is) just some random thing that could happen to anybody, any day. But she’s looking to focus on the tennis. I’m sure it’s weighing on her but we’re

going day by day and getting good practice in. Once she enters the court, I think her mind’s on the match and tennis and winning here at Wimbledon.”

Asked Monday how difficult the recent weeks have been, Williams replied: “Tennis is still the love of my life. You know, it gives me joy.”

She is a former No. 1 and the owner of seven major singles titles, along with 14 Grand Slam doubles titles, all won with her younger sister, Serena.

Against Mertens, whom she beat 6-3, 6-1 on red clay at the French Open last

month, Williams played unevenly.

She took a 3-0 lead, then let that evaporate. She led 6-3 in the tiebreaker, then needed five set points to close it. She fell behind 2-0 in the second set, then took five of the next six games. She failed to convert two match points at 5-3, before a 33-minute rain delay. She needed three more match points to finally end the first match of her 20th Wimbledon appearance.

“I have no idea what tomorrow will bring. That’s all I can say about it,” Williams said. “That’s what I’ve learned.”

ANTHEM: Red Sox first to pair ‘The Star Spangled Banner’ with flag presentation

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Red Sox. The Chicago games were played at Comiskey Park, the home of the White Sox, instead of their new home at Wrigley Field, what was called Weegham Park at the time, because it held more fans. But in a city jittery over the bombing and weary from the war, Game 1 that day attracted fewer than 20,000 fans, the smallest World Series crowd in years.

When they got there, they didn’t make much noise, though that could have had something to do with the 1-0 masterpiece Ruth was pitching — yes, pitching — for the Red Sox.

“There was no cheering during the contest, nor was there anything like the usual umpire baiting,” reported one Boston newspaper.

Then, in the seventh inning, a band from the Navy training station north of Chicago started to play “The Star-Spangled Banner.”

The song had been played before at major league

games, from at least 1862 and on opening day in 1897, in Philadelphia, Thorn said. But this time, reported The New York Times, something happened that was “far different from any incident that has ever occurred in the history of baseball.”

Players took off their caps as they faced a flag that fluttered atop a pole in right field as the 12-piece band began to play.

All of them except Red Sox infielder Fred Thomas .

Thomas was in the Navy during the series — he played on the team fielded by the Great Lakes station that was also home to the band — but was granted furlough so he could play. When the Wisconsin native heard the music, “he turned toward the flag, kept his hat on and gave a military salute,” said Jim Leeke, author of “From the Dugouts to the Trenches: Baseball During the Great War.”

A few fans began to sing. Then others joined in “and when the final notes came,

a great volume of melody rolled across the field,” the Times reported. And when it ended, “onlookers exploded into thunderous applause and rent the air with a cheer that marked the highest point of the day’s enthusiasm.” The Red Sox went on to win the game and the series, part of a Cubs’ championship drought that ended up lasting 108 years but was a mere decade old in 1918.

Not everyone thought what happened was a big deal. Chicago sportswriter Ring Lardner mentioned it, but only as a punch line as he reported that Thomas had stood at attention three times during the game, once during the anthem and twice when the umpire was calling him out on strikes.

The leader of the Navy band at the time was conductor and composer John Philip Sousa. He was not at the game, but had recently arranged the standardized version of the song that is still played today The 1918 World Series

would have been one of the first times the band could test drive the new version, according to Mike Bayes, senior chief musician for the Navy Band in Washington.

“It was a very important thing for him to put the anthem on a national stage in its new form,” Bayes said.

It wasn’t until 1931 that Congress and President Herbert Hoover officially designated the song as the national anthem. Still, it was clear the song was on its way after that day in Chicago.

For one thing, it was played when the series got back to Boston. And as one story goes, Red Sox owner Harry Frazee was so impressed with the way the song quieted rowdy fans that the next season that he ordered the band to play it while the flag was presented on the field.

“It was a turning point and from then on it was played at all opening days and World Series games,” Leeke said.

The song was played just on holidays or special

occasions for years, in part because ballparks didn’t have the kind of sound systems they do today and owners were loath to pay for a band more than they had to. It wasn’t until the 1940s during World War II that major league teams started playing it every day. Ironically, Cubs owner P.K. Wrigley decided the song would be played only on major holidays and for special events.

“Wrigley thought it cheapened the anthem to play it every day,” said Marc Ferris, author of “Star-Spangled Banner: The Unlikely Story of America’s National Anthem.” In 1967, the Cubs put the song on the daily playlist, a patriotic gesture during yet another war, this one in Vietnam.

On a recent day at Wrigley, fans stood as one for the anthem.

“It still sends a chill down my back,” said 90-year-old Victor Holliday of Champaign, Illinois, his time as a Marine during World War II written right there on his red cap.

The respect for the song was not lost on his son, who recalled the Vietnam war era when the anthem was not always warmly received.

“It changed radically after 9/11,” said Shawn Holliday, 58. “And even today, with so many differences in the country, so much division, I think we again are falling back for comfort on these kinds of symbols.”

And if anyone did not show the proper respect for the song, others in the stadium were ready.

“Come on, they can cool it for a minute and a half and put down their phones,” said Wayne Messmer, who has sung the anthem nearly 5,000 times over more than three decades of performing, most notably before Cubs games at Wrigley. “I will stare people down if they are talking when I’m singing.”

AP 360 degree video of an anthem at Wrigley Field: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xi7H5GnTGaQ&feature=youtu.be>

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