



Kansas City Royals' Salvador Perez hits a two-run home run against the Seattle Mariners in the 10th inning of a baseball game Wednesday, July 5, 2017, in Seattle.

MLB

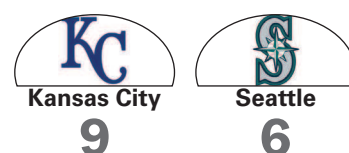
Perez homer downs M's

By TIM BOOTH
Associated Press

SEATTLE — Salvador Perez hit a two-run homer in the 10th, Alex Gordon added a two-out RBI single later in the inning and the Kansas City Royals completed a three-game sweep with a 9-6 win over the Seattle Mariners on Wednesday night.

Perez drove the second pitch from reliever James Pazos (2-2) out to right field for his 17th homer of the season. It was the third home run of the game for Kansas City, adding to earlier two-run shots by Mike Moustakas and Lorenzo Cain.

Mike Minor (5-1) pitched the ninth to get the victory and



Kelvin Herrera threw the 10th for his 19th save. Minor had a scare when Mike Zunino led off the ninth with a flyball to deep left field that Gordon caught one step in front of the wall.

Kansas City won for the sixth time in seven games and handed Seattle its seventh straight loss at home.

Nelson Cruz, Jean Segura and Zunino all homered off American League wins leader Jason Vargas for Seattle, but the

Mariners were held scoreless for the final seven innings after Cruz's homer leading off the third.

Headed to the All-Star Game for the first time, Vargas had his worst performance of the season against one of his former teams. He matched a season high by allowing six earned runs, and the three home runs equaled the number Vargas had allowed in his previous six starts combined.

Vargas was headed toward his first loss since May 22 until Cain's two-out, two-run homer in the fifth inning tied it at 6-all. Cain hit a 3-2 fastball from starter Ariel Miranda off the out-of-town scoreboard for his 11th homer of the season.

Tour de France

Aru beats Froome in first mountain stage of Tour

By JOHN LEICESTER &
ANDREW DAMPF
Associated Press

CHAMPAGNEY, France — After losing two of its biggest stars in one horror crash, the Tour de France needed a pick-me-up.

Italy's Fabio Aru answered the call.

On the first mountain climb of this 104th Tour, after the lower altitudes where Mark Cavendish and Peter Sagan were forced out of the race — the first with a broken shoulder, the second disqualified — Aru showed Wednesday he could be the man to beat by leaving three-time champion Chris Froome in his wake.

Making up for the bitterness in May of missing his home grand tour, the Giro d'Italia, Aru zoomed away from Froome and other top riders yearning to ride into Paris in the yellow jersey on July 23. The punishing climb to the Planches des Belles Filles ski station in eastern France's Vosges mountains was made to look like a mere speed bump.

Froome played down Aru's show of strength in winning Stage 5, noting there are still 16 more days of racing to go. But 32-year-old

veteran also acknowledged making a rookie's mistake by not reacting quickly enough when the 26-year-old Sardinian slammed on his pedals.

Along the steep crowd-lined hairpin bends through dense pines, Aru rose from his saddle and rocked powerfully from side to side as he gobbled up the mountain in his Italian national champion's jersey of green, white and red.

Froome got the message, loud and clear.

"This is going to be the hardest-fought battle I've had," he said. "We definitely cannot give Fabio that kind of space again."

Wednesday's 160.5-kilometer (100-mile) ride started in the spa town of Vittel which, like Froome, has seen better days — with shuttered hotels fallen into disrepair.

At the foot of the 5.9-kilometer (3.1-mile) finishing climb to an altitude of 1,035 meters (3,395 feet), everything seemed to be going to plan for Froome. His Sky teammates were powering up the ascent ahead of him, leading their champion up at a fierce pace aimed at dissuading other riders from attacking.

Aru hadn't read the script.



Italy's Fabio Aru celebrates as he crosses the finish line to win the fifth stage of the Tour de France cycling race over 160.5 kilometers (99.7 miles) with start in Vittel and finish in La Planche des Belles Filles, France, Wednesday, July 5, 2017.

Despite the effort of his sudden acceleration with more than 2 kilometers (1 1/2 miles) left to climb, he was lucid enough when powering away to yell at a roadside spectator who got too close to him and to toss a water bottle at the feet of another. He still had energy to spare at the top to finish with a sprint.

When Froome finally reacted, upping his tempo, it was already too late: Aru was gone.

"When he left, I stayed with my team and waited for the attack from the others," Froome said. "But no one

moved. I thought, 'OK, I have to go, what can I do?'"

"There's a flat before the last climb and perhaps we waited too long there."

A consolation: Froome took the race leader's yellow jersey off the shoulders of his teammate Geraint Thomas, who couldn't stay with the leaders on the climb made doubly punishing by searing summer temperatures.

Irish rider Dan Martin of the Quickstep team was second to the top, surprising Froome with his own burst of speed on a very steep section near the finish. Froome came

in third, 20 seconds behind Aru — who had never climbed the ascent before but watched video of Froome winning the first time the Tour climbed it in 2012.

"It's extraordinary for me to win this stage," said Aru, a two-time podium finisher at the Tour of Italy and winner of the 2015 Tour of Spain. He was devastated not to have been there when this year's Giro started from his home island of Sardinia, having injured a knee in a training crash.

"I'm someone who prefers to maintain a low profile. It's not necessary to say that I'm extremely happy. A victory in the Tour is something fantastic after difficult months with my injury," he said.

"Only my family and the people close to me know what I went through," he said. "Having the Giro in Sardinia is not something that happens every year. Fortunately my home fans embraced me anyhow and I was able to focus on the Tour immediately."

"Getting back in the saddle gave me my smile back."

The last person to win at the Planches des Belles Filles, Vincenzo Nibali in 2014, also was Italian and went

on to win the Tour that year. Although not as monstrous as those to come in the Pyrenees and Alps, the climb is tough enough to offer an early gauge of who the strongest riders are this year.

Two-time champion Alberto Contador doesn't seem to be among them. He placed eighth on the climb, 26 seconds slower than Aru and six seconds behind Froome. Three-time podium finisher Nairo Quintana also struggled, possibly paying the price for riding the Giro in May. The Colombian placed ninth, 34 seconds behind Aru and 14 behind Froome.

"We got a little preview of just where everyone's at in terms of their condition," said Froome. But the Briton advised against jumping too quickly to conclusions on the basis of this first climb.

"It's still very open, we've got a lot of racing ahead of us."

Overall, Froome leads Thomas by 12 seconds. Aru jumped from 25th to third in the standings, and is 14 seconds behind Froome. Stage 6 on Thursday cuts through Champagne country from Vesoul to Troyes and is flat enough for sprinters encouraged by the departure of Cavendish and Sagan to go for the win.

Wimbledon

Britain's Konta reaches third round for first time

By CHRIS LEHOURITES
Associated Press

LONDON — Britain's biggest hope for a women's champion at Wimbledon worked her way into the third round on Wednesday.

Johanna Konta trailed early but managed to come back and hang on for a 7-6 (4), 4-6, 10-8 victory over Donna Vekic on Centre Court.

"It's a nice feeling not to have to keep going out there," Konta said. "We were out there a long time and both of us battled incredibly hard."

"Whoever was going to draw the short straw was going to be hurting."

Konta, seeded sixth, is in the third round at the All England Club for the first time in six appearances. She reached the final at a grass-court warm-up tournament in Birmingham last month, but lost to Vekic.

"I think I overall trusted my game a bit more this time," said Konta, who is trying to become the first British woman to win the Wimbledon title since Virginia Wade in 1977. "I'm definitely here



Britain's Johanna Konta celebrates after winning the Women's Singles Match against Croatia's Donna Vekic on day three at the Wimbledon Tennis Championships in London Wednesday, July 5, 2017.

with the intention of wanting to be a part of the event for the full two weeks."

Stan Wawrinka, a three-time Grand Slam champion who lost in the first round at Wimbledon,

is dating Vekic and was at Centre Court watching the match.

On Court 16, Daniil Medvedev expressed his anger after losing his match by throwing some coins at the foot of the chair umpire's chair.

Medvedev, an unseeded Russian who beat Stan Wawrinka in the first round, lost to Ruben Bemelmans 6-4, 6-2, 3-6, 2-6, 6-3 in the second round.

After the match ended, both players shook hands with chair umpire Mariana Alves. Medvedev then grabbed his wallet and pulled out some coins and tossed them toward the chair.

"In the heat of the moment I did a bad thing and I apologize for this," said Medvedev, who denied he was implying the chair umpire was paid off. "I was just frustrated. It had no meaning."

When the Wimbledon gates opened Wednesday morning, the race was on to get the best spot on Mount Murray.

The hill next to No. 1 Court at Wimbledon, formerly known as Henman Hill and also referred to as Murray Mound, was a coveted spot for Day 3 at the All England Club because Konta and Andy Murray were scheduled to play their second-round matches on Centre Court.

Thousands of fans on the grounds

and without tickets to the main stadium often gather on the hill to watch the action on a giant TV screen.

The area was named Henman Hill in honor of Tim Henman, another British player but one who never was able to win the title. The nickname shifted to Murray when he came on the scene and eventually ended the country's 77-year wait for a homegrown men's winner when he won the title in 2013.

Following Konta's victory, Murray beat Dustin Brown of Germany 6-3, 6-2, 6-2.

Rafael Nadal, a two-time Wimbledon champion, followed Murray on Centre Court against Donald Young.

Other women's winners on Wednesday include five-time champion Venus Williams, former No. 1 Victoria Azarenka and eighth-seeded Dominika Cibulkova. For the men, seventh-seeded Marin Cilic, ninth-seeded Kei Nishikori, 12th-seeded Jo-Wilfried Tsonga, 16th-seeded Gilles Muller and 24th-seeded Sam Querrey advanced.

Flying ants invade Wimbledon on warmest day of tournament

By HOWARD FENDRICH
Associated Press

LONDON — They were buggin' out at Wimbledon on Wednesday.

Hundreds of flying ants swarmed around various courts at the All England Club, distracting players during their matches, as the temperature warmed up considerably, from the low 70s (20s Celsius) to nearly 85 degrees (nearly 30 Celsius).

It left the racket-wielders swatting the bugs instead of tennis balls, at times.

Steve Johnson, an American seeded 26th, was startled when one of the critters buzzed its way into his right ear at the precise moment that he came up with a forehand winner during what would become a 6-3, 6-3, 4-6, 6-3 victory over Radu Albot of Moldova.

Johnson did a little dance while he extracted the invader.

"Thankfully, I ended the point right there, because I wouldn't have run for the next ball. It just got in there. Eventu-

ally it got out, but I didn't want it to get any further than it did," Johnson said.

"They were everywhere," he said. "It was a mess out there. I've never seen that here before."

Local media have reported about a wave of flying ants across Britain this week, a migration of sorts that is a result of just the right combination of heat, humidity and wind.

"Well," Johnson said, "they migrated to Wimbledon."

Especially during the early afternoon on Day 3 of the grass-court Grand Slam tournament.

Before Johnson headed out to Court 18, 24th-seeded American Sam Querrey played his match there, and dealt with the same type of issues created by the little winged things.

"If it got much worse," Querrey said after beating Nikoloz Basilashvili of Georgia 6-4, 4-6, 6-3, 6-3, "I almost wanted to stop, because they were hitting you in the face when you were

trying to hit balls."

The rules would allow Querrey to ask the chair umpire to consider halting play, at which point a Grand Slam supervisor might head to the court to weigh in.

It never reached that point Wednesday, although things did get particularly bad for about a half-hour that included the end of the second set, the only one Querrey dropped.

"If I had won that set," he said, "probably wouldn't have bugged me as much."

Johanna Konta, Britain's best chance for its first female champion at Wimbledon in 40 years, fretted about swallowing some of the ants during her 7-6 (4), 4-6, 10-8 victory over Donna Vekic at Centre Court.

"I definitely have taken home a few — both in my belly and in my bags," the No. 6-seeded Konta said.

A reporter asked her whether the insects were tasty.

"I didn't think about it," came the reply. "I'd rather not."



Steve Johnson of the United States gestures to get rid of flying ants during the Men's Singles Match against Moldova's Radu Albot on day three at the Wimbledon Tennis Championships in London Wednesday, July 5, 2017.