

FIFA WORLD CUP 2018

KICKOFF



AP Photo/Martin Meissner
Belgium coach Roberto Martinez watches the semi-final match between France and Belgium.

The 2018 World Cup heads into final stages

Associated Press

MOSCOW — Here’s a look at what’s coming up at the World Cup, which is down to its last two matches: the third-place game Saturday in St. Petersburg between Belgium and England, and the final the following day in Moscow between France and Croatia.

KEEP KICKING AND CARRY ON

Gareth Southgate and Roberto Martinez are looking for ways to motivate their squads for the third-place match between England and Belgium. Really, really looking. For Southgate, it’s about continuing the maturation of his young England side, which exceeded expectations by getting this far and even had the lead on Croatia for much of its semifinal before falling in gutting fashion on an extra-time goal. Securing England’s second-best finish at the tournament would be nothing to sneeze at, either, said Southgate, who wore the England shirt himself and never reached the title game. For Martinez, it’s about salvaging “that winning feeling” despite the disappointment among players and fans of a team that had been a fashionable pick to win it all until it failed to score against France.

UNDER OATH

Croatia’s star midfielder Luka Modric might find it easier on the field than at the mic when he finally answers questions from media Saturday. Modric was charged with perjury by Croatian authorities in March. The charge stems from his testimony at the tax fraud trial of a former executive director at Dinamo Zagreb, Zdravko Mamic. The 2017 trial

concerned Modric’s 2008 transfer from Dinamo to Tottenham in the Premier League.

POLITICS, POLITICS

Leaders of several of the European nations that made it to the knockout stage have had a few good-natured exchanges over their teams’ encounters. Now the politics are getting as serious as the soccer. French President Emmanuel Macron is due to meet with Russian President Vladimir Putin this weekend before attending the final, a game in which fans again are likely to jeer Croatian defender Domagoj Vida for his appearance in a pro-Ukraine video posted in recent days. Putin is headed to Finland the day after that match to meet U.S. President Donald Trump, who spent Friday being pilloried by protesters in London during an official visit to the United Kingdom. As that was happening, the U.S. was busy bringing charges against a dozen Russian intelligence officers accused of hacking into Democratic accounts during the 2016 U.S. presidential election. And British leaders have essentially boycotted the World Cup over the poisonings of two British citizens and a former Russian spy and his daughter living in the United Kingdom, which British officials blame on the Russian government, a claim the Kremlin rejects. FIFA typically has enough trouble policing its stance on keeping politics out of the tournament, but for the next 48 hours, the two will be tough to disentangle.

No class-action status for ex-NHLer case

Associated Press

ST. PAUL, Minn. — The federal judge overseeing the NHL concussion case has denied class-action status for the former players suing the league over head injuries. U.S. District Judge Susan Richard Nelson issued her 46-page order on Friday, the first significant victory for the league in a landmark lawsuit that was filed almost five years ago. Nelson wrote that “widespread differences” in state laws about medical monitoring, which the retired players are seeking, would “present significant case management difficulties.” The judge declined to certify either of the proposed classes by the ex-players. They sought to create one group of all living former NHL play-

ers and one group of all retired players diagnosed with a neurological disease, disorder or condition. Had they succeeded, more than 5,000 former players would have been allowed to join the case. The last hearing on the class-action status was held in March in Nelson’s courtroom in St. Paul. More than 100 former players have added their names to the case. The retirees have accused the NHL of failing to better prevent head trauma or warn players of such risks while promoting violent play that led to their injuries. An attorney for the players, Charles Zimmerman, said Friday the judge’s ruling was procedural, and that the hundreds of players are prepared to try their cases individually. Zimmerman said it was too soon to know if there would be an appeal.

WIMBLEDON

Anderson tops Isner in longest semifinal, suspends other match



AP Photo/Kirsty Wigglesworth
Spectators applaud as the scoreboard displays the final score in the men’s singles semifinals match in which John Isner of the United States was defeated by South Africa’s Kevin Anderson, at the Wimbledon Tennis Championships on Friday in London.

By HOWARD FENDRICH
Associated Press

LONDON — To say that Kevin Anderson won this interminable Wimbledon semifinal, and that John Isner lost it, didn’t really seem fair. To Anderson, anyway. They had played on and on, through 6 1/2 hours of ho-hum hold after ho-hum hold, during the second-longest match in the history of a tournament that began in 1877, all the way until the never-ending serving marathon did, finally, end at 26-24 in the fifth set Friday, with Anderson claiming the most important of the 569 points — the last. So when Anderson left Centre Court, well aware that his 7-6 (6), 6-7 (5), 6-7 (9), 6-4, 26-24 victory earned him the chance to win his first Grand Slam title at age 32, the South African said: “At the end, you feel like this is a draw between the two of us.” Only one match at Wimbledon ever lasted longer: Isner’s 2010 first-round victory over Nicolas Mahut, the longest match in tennis history. It went more than 11 hours over three days and finished 70-68 in the fifth on

Court 18, which now bears a plaque commemorating it. Friday’s contest lasted so long, the day’s second semifinal didn’t finish. Novak Djokovic was leading Rafael Nadal 6-4, 3-6, 7-6 (9) in a compelling showdown filled with entertaining points that was suspended as soon as the third set concluded at just past 11 p.m., the curfew at the All England Club. Some people in the stands booed the decision to halt the match after a fantastic tiebreaker in which Nadal wasted three set points at 6-5, 7-6 and 8-7. Djokovic cashed in on his second when Nadal’s backhand found the net after an 18-stroke exchange. Because Nadal and Djokovic didn’t begin playing until after 8 p.m., the retractable roof above the main stadium was shut between the matches and the arena’s artificial lights were turned on. Now they’ll come back Saturday to figure out who will face Anderson in the final, resuming at 1 p.m. local time, under the roof. The women’s final between Serena Williams and Angelique Kerber will then follow. That creates an unusual situation: Instead of

a standard 2 p.m. start, Williams and Kerber won’t know exactly when their match will begin. Anderson will certainly appreciate the chance to put his feet up ahead of Sunday’s final, while Nadal and Djokovic — who have a combined 29 Grand Slam titles between them, five at Wimbledon — push each other some more. Anderson’s fifth set alone lasted nearly 3 hours as his semifinal became a test of endurance more than skill. “He stayed the course incredibly well,” said the No. 9 seed Isner, a 33-year-old American playing in his first major semifinal. “Just disappointed to lose. I was pretty close to making a Grand Slam final and it didn’t happen.” Anderson finally earned the must-have, go-ahead service break with the help of a point in which the right-hander tumbled to his backside, scrambled back to his feet and hit a shot lefty. “That definitely brings a smile to my face,” said Anderson, the runner-up to Nadal at last year’s U.S. Open. “At that stage, you’re just trying to fight in every single moment, and I was

like, ‘Just get up!’” Wimbledon doesn’t use tiebreakers in the fifth set for men, or third set for women, so there’s nothing to prevent a match from continuing ad infinitum. Both Isner and Anderson said they’d like to see that change. At one point in the fifth set, a spectator shouted, “Come on, guys! We want to see Rafa!” There wasn’t a whole lot of intrigue, or momentum shifts. The serving, though, was something else. Isner pounded his at up to 142 mph; Anderson reached 136 mph. They combined for 102 aces: 53 by Isner, 49 by Anderson.

The 10-all game ended with Isner hitting a forehand passing winner on the run to hold, then letting his momentum carry him directly to his sideline chair, where he plopped himself down. By the end, he was looking exhausted, leaning over to rest a hand on a knee between points. He never got a break point in the fifth set. Anderson finally came through on his sixth for a 25-24 lead, when Isner wearily put a backhand into the net.

Baseball

MLB				
AMERICAN LEAGUE				
East Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Boston	66	29	.695	—
New York	61	32	.656	4
Tampa Bay	48	45	.516	17
Toronto	42	50	.457	22½
Baltimore	26	69	.274	40
Central Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Cleveland	51	42	.548	—
Minnesota	42	49	.462	8
Detroit	40	55	.421	12
Chicago	31	61	.337	19½
Kansas City	26	66	.283	24½
West Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Houston	62	34	.646	—
Seattle	58	36	.617	3
Oakland	53	41	.564	8
Los Angeles	48	46	.511	13
Texas	41	54	.432	20½
Friday’s Games				
Texas 5, Baltimore 4				
Cleveland 6, N.Y. Yankees 5				
Toronto at Boston, late finish				
Detroit at Houston, late finish				
Kansas City at Chicago White Sox, late finish				
Tampa Bay at Minnesota, late finish				
Seattle at Colorado, late finish				
L.A. Angels at L.A. Dodgers, late finish				
Oakland at San Francisco, late finish				
Saturday’s Games				
Toronto (Gaviglio 2-3) at Boston (Rodriguez 11-3), 10:05 a.m.				
Kansas City (Duffy 4-8) at Chicago White Sox (Lopez 4-6), 4:15 p.m.				
Texas (Perez 2-3) at Baltimore (Ramirez 0-3), 4:15 p.m.				
Seattle (LeBlanc 5-0) at Colorado (Gray 7-7), 6:10 p.m.				
Oakland (Anderson 1-2) at San Francisco (Samardzija 1-5), 7:05 p.m.				
NATIONAL LEAGUE				
East Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Philadelphia	53	40	.570	—
Atlanta	51	41	.554	1½
Washington	47	47	.500	6½
New York	38	54	.413	14½
Miami	39	57	.406	15½
Central Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Milwaukee	55	40	.579	—
Chicago	52	38	.578	½
St. Louis	47	44	.516	6
Pittsburgh	45	49	.479	9½
Cincinnati	41	52	.441	13
West Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Los Angeles	51	42	.548	—
Arizona	52	43	.547	—
Colorado	48	45	.516	3
San Francisco	49	46	.516	3
San Diego	40	56	.417	12½
Friday’s Games				
Pittsburgh 7, Milwaukee 3				
N.Y. Mets 4, Washington 2				
Philadelphia 2, Miami 0				
Arizona 2, Atlanta 1				
Cincinnati at St. Louis, late finish				
Seattle at Colorado, late finish				
Chicago Cubs at San Diego, late finish				
L.A. Angels at L.A. Dodgers, late finish				



AP Photo/David Zalubowski
Seattle Mariners starting pitcher Christian Bergman reacts after giving up a two-run home run to Colorado Rockies’ Trevor Story in the third inning of an inter-league baseball game Friday in Denver. The final score from Game 1 of the three game series was not available at press time.

Sunday	
At Moscow	
France vs. Croatia, 8 a.m.	
MLS	
Friday’s Games	
No games scheduled.	
Saturday’s Games	
Columbus at New York City FC, 7 p.m.	
Sporting Kansas City at New York, 7 p.m.	
LA Galaxy at New England, 7:30 p.m.	
San Jose at Montreal, 7:30 p.m.	
Chicago at FC Dallas, 8 p.m.	
Real Salt Lake at Minnesota United, 8 p.m.	
Toronto FC at Orlando City, 8 p.m.	
Vancouver at D.C. United, 8 p.m.	
Houston at Colorado, 9 p.m.	
Tennis	
WIMBLEDON	
Men’s Singles Semifinal	
Kevin Anderson (8), South Africa, def. John Isner (9), United States, 7-6 (6), 6-7 (5), 6-7 (9), 6-4, 26-24.	
Novak Djokovic (12), Serbia, leads Rafael Nadal (2), Spain, 6-4, 3-6, 7-6 (9), susp., curfew.	
Women’s Doubles Semifinal	
Barbora Krejickova, Czech Republic and Katerina Siniakova (3), Czech Republic, def. Abigail Spears, United States and Alicja Rosolska, Poland, 7-5, 6-4.	
Kveta Peschke, Czech Republic and Nicole Melichar (12), United States, def. Xu Yifan, China and Gabriela Dabrowski (6), Canada, 6-3, 4-6, 7-5.	
Mixed Doubles Semifinal	
Victoria Azarenka, Belarus and Jamie Murray, Britain, def. Harriet Dart, Britain	

and Jay Clarke, Britain, 6-2, 6-2.
Alexander Paya, Austria and Nicole Melichar (11), United States, def. Michael Venus, New Zealand and Katarina Srebotnik (9), Slovenia, 6-4, 6-4.

Basketball

WNBA	
Friday’s Games	
Connecticut 91, Phoenix 87	
Washington 88, Chicago 72	
Atlanta 98, Indiana 74	
Las Vegas 85, Minnesota 77	
Saturday’s Games	
Dallas at Seattle, 9 p.m.	

Cycling

TOUR DE FRANCE	
Friday	
At Chantres, France	
Seventh Stage	
A 143.5-mile flat ride, the longest of this year’s Tour, from Fougeres to Chantres, with a single Category 4 climb midway	
1. Dylan Groenewegen, Netherlands, LottoNL-Jumbo, 5:43:42.	
2. Fernando Gaviria, Colombia, Quick-Step Floors, same time	
3. Peter Sagan, Slovakia, Bora-Hansgrohe, same time	
4. Arnaud Demare, France, Groupama-FDJ, same time	
5. Christophe Laporte, France, Cofidis, same time	
6. John Degenkolb, Germany, Trek-Segafredo, same time	
7. Daryl Impey, South Africa, Mitchelton-Scott, same time	
8. Andre Greipel, Germany, Lotto Soudal, same time	
9. Andrea Pasqualon, Italy, Wanty-Groupe Gobert, same time	
10. Mark Cavendish, Britain, Dimension Data, same time	

Auto Racing

NASCAR CUP SERIES	
Quaker State 400 Lineup	
After Friday qualifying: race Saturday, 4:30 p.m. (TV: NBCSN)	
At Kentucky Speedway	
Sparta, Ky.	
Lap length: 1.5 miles	
(Car number in parentheses)	
1. (78) Martin Truex Jr., Toyota.	
2. (20) Erik Jones, Toyota.	
3. (4) Kevin Harvick, Ford.	
4. (2) Brad Keselowski, Ford.	
5. (18) Kyle Busch, Toyota.	
6. (21) Paul Menard, Ford.	
7. (12) Ryan Blaney, Ford.	
8. (14) Clint Bowyer, Ford.	
9. (41) Kurt Busch, Ford.	
10. (31) Ryan Newman, Chevrolet.	
11. (19) Daniel Suarez, Toyota.	
12. (10) Aric Almirola, Ford.	
13. (3) Austin Dillon, Chevrolet.	
14. (17) Ricky Stenhouse Jr., Ford.	
15. (88) Alex Bowman, Chevrolet.	
16. (9) Chase Elliott, Chevrolet.	
17. (6) Matt Kenseth, Ford.	
18. (42) Kyle Larson, Chevrolet.	
19. (22) Joey Logano, Ford.	
20. (37) Chris Buescher, Chevrolet.	
21. (24) William Byron, Chevrolet.	
22. (1) Jamie McMurray, Chevrolet.	
23. (34) Michael McDowell, Ford.	
24. (38) David Ragan, Ford.	
25. (43) Bubba Wallace, Chevrolet.	
26. (47) AJ Allmendinger, Chevrolet.	
27. (44) Jimmie Johnson, Chevrolet.	
28. (13) Ty Dillon, Chevrolet.	
29. (95) Kasey Kahne, Chevrolet.	
30. (15) Ross Chastain, Chevrolet.	