

TENNIS | FRENCH OPEN**LE GRAND RETOUR***Federer wins return to Paris, Slam action***BY JOHN LEICESTER AND SAMUEL PETREQUIN**

AP Sports Writers

PARIS — They feted Roger Federer with as loud as applause gets from a crowd capped at 1,000 people in Court Philippe Chatrier — when he walked out with a wave, when he hit one of his 48 winners, even when he attempted a back-to-the-net 'tweener and hit the ball out.

This match bathed in sunshine Monday meant Federer finally was back at the French Open and back in Grand Slam action and he gave the excited fans what they wanted perhaps as much as he did: a victory.

Federer's first competition at any major tournament in 16

months ended with him on the right side of a 6-2, 6-4, 6-3 score against qualifier Denis Istomin at the French Open as fans chanted "Ro-ger! Ro-ger!"

It was a case of many happy returns — and serves, forehands, backhands, volleys and drop shots, too.

"What a pleasure to be back," Federer said.

Showing no signs of rust, really, or trouble with the right knee that needed two operations last year, Federer produced more than twice as many winners as his 20 unforced errors and never faced a break point while improving to 8-0 against Istomin over their careers.

"Always great to be on court with this legend. To play against him is always a big (deal)," Istomin said. "I was expecting all the spectators to

cheer for him."

They sure did, with one voice from the stands shouting, "A delight, Roger! A delight!" as Federer went up 4-2 in the third set.

Federer, whose 40th birthday is Aug. 8, hadn't appeared on the Grand Slam stage since Jan. 30, 2020, when he lost to Novak Djokovic in the Australian Open semifinals.

This was just Federer's second trip to the French Open since 2015. In addition to last year's absence because of the knee issues, he withdrew in 2016 citing a bad back, then sat out the clay-court circuit each of the next two years to focus on the grass-court portion of the season.

He acknowledged recently he has zero chance of claiming the trophy this time around in Paris; instead, he is hoping to

tune up his game to be ready to challenge for a championship at Wimbledon, where play begins in late June.

"In a way I like this situation — that I don't know what's next, how my next match will be. I don't even know who I play, to be honest," said Federer, whose second-round opponent will be 2014 U.S. Open champion Marin Cilic. "I take it round by round, match by match."

After rhythmic clapping accompanied Federer's trot to the baseline for the match's opening point, he got off to the perfect start against Istomin, who is ranked 204th and now is the owner of a seven-match Grand Slam losing streak.

Just 1 1/2 hours later, it was over for Federer, who won the 2009 French Open for one of his 20 Grand Slam titles.

DEAR ABBY

Write to Dear Abby online at dearabby.com or by mail at P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069



Dear Abby: I went to lunch with "Anita," who proceeded to question me about how I know my friend "Gail." It seems like an innocent question, but Gail and I met in Alcoholics Anonymous. I didn't tell Anita we met in AA because it would've destroyed Gail's anonymity, so I said we met through mutual friends.

I didn't mind one question, but Anita kept probing about "mutual friends." I wound up fibbing and saying, "folks at my church." It managed to change the direction of the conversation, but I wish people wouldn't pry like that.

This also happens when I'm at a party and someone asks me why I'm not drinking. It's easy to respond to one question with a general answer, but a lot of times I encounter folks who keep pushing.

I would like to encourage your readers to be sensitive to these kinds of situations and to allow people their privacy. Thanks, Abby.

— *Anonymous and Sober in the South*

Dear Anonymous: So would I, and you're welcome.

There is no shortage of nosy questions that people don't hesitate to ask these days, as anyone who has read this column is aware. However, to many people, membership in AA is a badge of honor.

When "pushed" to answer why they are not drinking alcohol they are in AA. Of course, one does not have to have a drinking problem to avoid alcohol. Some people refrain because they don't feel well when they drink; others do it because they are taking antibiotics or want to live a

healthier lifestyle. The bottom line is, you do not have to answer every question that's asked of you.

Dear Abby: When my husband of 19 years died suddenly 15 months ago (we had no children), my financial situation changed considerably. I have had trouble paying bills, and my water was turned off this morning. When I told my siblings and their families, their answers ranged from "I can't help you," to "Gee, that sucks!" to "Come have meatloaf for dinner."

My niece, who is financially well-off, commented that it sucked. I told them all that I HAVE NO WATER. I do have a five-day-a-week job. I just don't have a lot of money because of so many things that have happened. I'll have the money in a week or so, but I can't live without water for that long.

Is it wrong to want them to offer to help me? Am I expecting too much? If the situation were reversed, I would offer help immediately.

— *In a Tough Spot in Kentucky*

Dear Tough Spot: Please accept my deepest sympathy for the loss of your husband. No, it's not wrong to want your relatives to offer to help you out with a bridge loan until the money you're expecting arrives. However, because they didn't offer, ASK them for one, and be willing to sign a note if they wish. Then cross your fingers that one of them agrees. If none of them do, approach your employer and ask for an advance on your salary, or contact the water company and ask if you can strike a deal. I wish you luck.

Lewis**Continued from A5**

He explained: the angler keeps the line high to lift the flies when they began to drag, sometimes skittering the flies upstream like caddis laying eggs. Trout are teased, enticed by a second look, by the action of the flies.

I heard him, understood him, but it was a bit of time before I "refloated" the two-fly cast properly.

It didn't matter. The trout were not looking up anyway. A low pressure system was blowing through and the temperature had dropped. If fish were bitin', they were bitin' each other.

The first part of the float down from Silver Creek to the Leaburg take-out is deceptively calm with easy riffles and a small assortment of sharp boulders to negotiate around. Helfrich pushed through quickly. There was afternoon rain to beat and better water to fish downstream.

On both sides of the river were reminders, fire-blackened trees and small crews salvaging timber. We heard chainsaws and nail guns — a few buildings already being rebuilt.

Late on the night of September 7, 2020, extreme east-west winds blew up a smaller fire that had started a few weeks prior and was burning between McKenzie Bridge and Vida. A month later, the fire had burned 173,000 acres and destroyed over 400 homes and businesses.

Randy Dersham's property at Nimrod was a total loss —



Ken Helfrich rows his driftboat down the McKenzie River during a recent 9-mile fishing trip.

boats, cars, homes, garages and everything inside them.

Helfrich handed me a nymphing rod with an indicator and two beadheads, including a No. 10 Prince Nymph. River left, Helfrich slipped the boat over a shoal and back-ferried in an eddy while I shook out line and made the first cast.

"Shorten up and cast again," Helfrich whispered. This time the indicator plunged and I set the hook. The fish somersaulted then plunged, fighting along the underwater cliff then streaking out toward the open river. With the long rod and the drag of the line, I was able to turn it and about five minutes later we were able to slide the net under 17 inches of hatchery holdover rainbow trout.

We passed the mouth of Bear Creek and floated Horsetail Rapids. At the tailout of a riffle, we saw a mink pull a

trout out of the river. Fierce, it glared our way then dragged its prize up the bank.

Into Marten Rapids Helfrich pointed the boat at a boulder then pulled away, now riding the fence of the eddy, now pulling to slow our momentum, now pushing, now swinging to pull off a rock, catching an eddy again. Wooden boats with flat bottoms and squared-off edges were built to negotiate these rapids and the style of boat came to be known as the McKenzie River drift boat. With subtle moves of his wrists, dipping the oars, pulling back, now powering ahead, Helfrich demonstrated why a wooden driftboat with its superior turning ability is the best choice for a river rock garden.

A salvage logging operation was underway in Ben and Kay Dorris State Park. A helicopter rose above the blackened trees.

Where the river split around a small island Helfrich pointed the squared-off end of the boat into a back channel. Using the nymphing rod, I set the hook into a 16-inch wild McKenzie River redband that took us down through the rapids.

With two great trout and several smaller ones to our credit, I switched to the dry fly rod. We saw yellow mayflies, gray drakes and green caddis. I practiced the McKenzie River refloat and caught half a dozen trout in spite of myself.

Bruised and sullen clouds loomed over Leaburg and we knew the storm was going to hit us. Still we fished.

"Re-cast, closer to the boat," Helfrich whispered. "Let the flies ride that slick."

He didn't have to tell me when to refloat. I lifted the rod, picked up the two-fly cast, dropped it back in. Behind me, Helfrich rolled his left oar one way and the right paddle the other. I felt the boat move, saw the flies pick up again and a trout picked the green caddis dropper off the top of the slick. It was a beautiful thing, oarsman and fly-rodder in perfect sync. And it only took a 9-mile float.

In June sometimes the trout are so competitive, the fish looking up, the trout will clear the water for a fly 6 or 8 inches above the surface. Float and refloat the McKenzie this summer and see it like you have never seen it before.

■ *Gary Lewis is the host of "Frontier Unlimited TV" and author of "Fishing Central Oregon," "Fishing Mount Hood Country" and other titles. Contact Gary at www.garylewisoutdoors.com*

Denali**Continued from A5**

Experts recommend taking 17 to 21 days to climb Denali. That includes rest days and extra days to wait out extreme weather. Many expeditions get "desperation, impatience and summit fever" when they are running out of days and take risks, rangers said.

Officials at Denali also are seeing people leave their original climbing groups after reaching the final base camp at 14,000 feet when the groups are reluctant to go for the summit. Instead, the climbers join other groups or individuals they just met.

Sometimes those people get too sick to keep going and are crammed into tents with other more prepared climbers, using their water and fuel. "A num-



Sightseeing buses and tourists are seen at a popular pullout, in 2016, with views of North America's tallest peak, Denali, in Alaska.

ber of climbing teams have had their own summit bids disrupted or ruined by the need to care for these climbers," the statement said.

The statement also reminded climbers that the National Park Service rescues people only when their lives, limbs or eyesight are at risk.

"Anything that we deem falls outside these categories, we will leave you to figure out on your own, and this year we have already turned down rescue requests that don't meet these criteria," they said.

The Park Service limits the number of people who can climb Denali to less than 1,500 per year. In 2019, 726 people made the summit, according to the agency.

The busiest time for climbing Denali is May and June. The cold weather is a problem in the spring, and storms become more frequent in the summer.

The forecast for the summit Sunday called for a 40% chance of snow with temperatures from minus 10 to 0 Fahrenheit and winds up to 35 mph, according to the National Weather Service.

Blazers**Continued from A5**

While the Nuggets have produced remarkable comebacks in the playoffs, Malone is clearly not comfortable with the team constantly testing fate.

"As great as last year was, being down 3-1 twice — you don't want to constantly put yourself in that position if you don't have to," Malone said. "I think it's a dangerous proposition to think that we will always

handle adversity, face adversity and find a way to succeed."

An irritated Malone called out his starters and said the Nuggets "played soft" in Game 4. He said the team must win the "intangible battle" to increase their chance of success in Game 5.

The intangibles begin with the Nuggets playing far better defense than they did in Game 4. The Blazers pushed the Nuggets around and made 50 percent of their shots over-

all. Portland star guard Damian Lillard scored just 10 points, but Norman Powell's 29 points led five Blazers scoring in double figures.

Another intangible is the Nuggets' seemed to shrink from the Blazers bullying them on defense.

The Nuggets shot a series-low 34.9 percent overall in Game 4. Center Nikola Jokic, pushed around by Blazers' center Jusuf Nurkic, was held to 16 points after averaging 36

points a game through the first three games. Forward Michael Porter Jr. didn't respond at all to the Blazers' aggressiveness and disappeared, taking just three shots in the game.

"We came out soft. We've got to come out strong. It's gonna be a dogfight," forward JaMychal Green said. "We know we gotta finish. This is a team that you can't play around with. They make a lot of big shots, a lot of tough shots. This is a team that you gotta put away."