

Djokovic and Federer move onto Semis at French Open

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The best Parisian sunset on this Sunday night could very well have been overlooking the red clay at Roland Garros, where a few dozen rowdy fans waved the tricolor and a few thousand more shouted out "Allez Tsonga" - willing their beloved Frenchman Jo-Wilfried Tsonga to close out this unpredictable day of tennis with a win before the light ran out.

Tsonga couldn't quite do it, and his five-set match against Stanislas Wawrinka will be continued.

But that hardly did damage to a roller-coaster of a day at the French Open that included one big upset (of top-seeded Victoria Azarenka), one big comeback (by top-seeded Novak Djokovic) and a couple of young up-and-comers who fell a bit short but still walked away smiling (Sloane Stephens after her loss to Sam Stosur and David Goffin after he fell to Roger Federer).

Before Tsonga and his fan base took over, Philippe Chatrier Court was Djokovic's stage. For two sets, his play was as drab as the gray, windy weather but he fashioned the third comeback of his career from two sets down for a 4-6, 6-7 (5), 6-3, 7-5, 6-3 victory over 22nd-seeded Andreas Seppi of Italy.

Not one to put in the archives, but not one to complain too loudly over, either.

The top-seeded Serb won his 25th straight Grand Slam match, made his 12th straight Grand Slam quarterfinal and stayed alive in the quest to wrap up the career Grand Slam and hold all four major titles at once - the "Novak Slam."

"I'm not worried," Djokovic said. "I'm just hoping that I can wake up tomorrow morning knowing that I'm in the quarterfinals. Forget this match today. Take the best out of it, which is that I'm proud I've been fighting, coming from two sets down."

Across the way from Djokovic's match, at Court Suzanne Lenglen, a quite different scene played out. Azarenka got off to a similarly bad start, except she never recovered - and wound up with a 6-2, 7-6 (4) loss to No. 15 Dominika Cibulkova that made her grumpy.

Azarenka bashed her racket into the ground during a second-set changeover and received a warning for racket abuse.

Her frustration was still showing after the match, when, asked what she would do to recover from the loss, she answered sarcastically.

"I'm going to kill myself," she said. "This tournament is over for me. What's to recover from? It's (time) to really look forward and improve. That's it."

Goffin, in the draw as a "lucky loser" after falling in qualifying, found himself with a one-set lead against none other than his childhood favorite, Federer, before losing 5-7, 7-5, 6-2, 6-4. At the end, the 21-year-old, 109th-ranked Goffin got a hug from the 16-time major champion that left him smiling.

"I've had an extraordinary week," he said. "I went through the quallies with a bit of luck. Then I played my best tennis. I played three great matches. The icing on the cake was to play here with Roger."

Third-seeded Federer said the whipping wind was a factor in his match, but gave most of the credit for his troubles to his opponent.

"He's got great potential in terms of his touch and the way he reads the game," Federer said. "I thought it was an interesting match."

Hours later, Stephens fell 7-5, 6-4 to U.S. Open champion Sam Stosur, but she, too, was talking about successes not failures. It was the unseeded 19-year-old's deepest run in a major, the capper of a spring in which she has climbed to 70th in the rankings.

"People play well with confidence, and when you're having fun and you're doing the right things, everything's all good," Stephens said. "So even though I lost today, I played pretty well."

Stephens conceded it was strange playing in front of nearly empty stands. It was equally empty at the match between Juan Martin del Potro and Tomas Berdych, whose match was suspended by darkness with del Potro up two sets to one.

By then, the fans - pretty much all of them - were waving their flags, cheering on Tsonga, who slept on a 4-2 lead in the fifth set after play was called Sunday night. After Wawrinka held serve to make it 4-2, he walked directly to the umpire's

chair and play was halted a few minutes past 9:30 p.m. The fans hooted and whistled, not wanting it to end.

Others, most notably Djokovic on this day, were simply glad they got through it.

"It's one of those days where nothing is working," he said. "I couldn't get into the rhythm. I was fighting, though, and I think because of the fight, I won the match."