

Oudin stuns Jankovic; Venus, Roddick, Murray win

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WIMBLEDON, England (AP) - As a tyke growing up in Marietta, Ga., Melanie Oudin would watch Venus and Serena Williams on TV and tell anyone who would listen that she was going to play at Wimbledon, too, one day.

Who knew she'd be right? And do so well, so quickly?

Making her Wimbledon debut at age 17 after getting through qualifying, the 124th-ranked Oudin joined the Williams sisters in the fourth round at the All England Club by beating former No. 1 Jelena Jankovic 6-7 (8), 7-5, 6-2 Saturday in the most startling result of the tournament's opening week.

"Was just thinking that she was any other player, and this was any other match, and I was at any other tournament — you know, not, like, on the biggest stage, at Wimbledon, playing my first top-10 player," Oudin said. "I mean, I go into every match the exact same, you know, like, no matter who I play. It's not, like, 'Oh, my gosh, I'm playing the No. 1 player in the world.'"

Another U.S. qualifier, 133rd-ranked Jesse Levine of Boca Raton, Fla., couldn't extend his run in the men's tournament, losing to No. 19 Stanislas Wawrinka 5-7, 7-5, 6-3, 6-3. That leaves No. 6 Andy Roddick as the last American man in the tournament.

The only time Oudin really lost her way was when her match ended and it was time to leave Court 3, a patch of grass known as "The Graveyard of Champions," because of the long list of stars upset there. She wasn't quite sure where to go and asked someone to direct her toward the exit.



American teenager Melanie Oudin upset Jelena Jankovic on Saturday.
(Ian Walton / Getty Images)

Not all that surprising, when you consider that a year ago, Oudin entered the junior event at Wimbledon — seeded No. 1 among the girls — and failed to make it out of the second round, losing 6-1, 6-3 to eventual champion Laura Robson of Britain.

Yet there Oudin was Saturday, outlasting 2008 U.S. Open runner-up Jankovic over nearly 3 hours, then calling Mom and Dad back home to share in the revelry.

"My emotions are all over the place," Oudin's father, John, said in a telephone interview. "When I think about watching Bjorn Borg and Boris Becker in their starched whites at Wimbledon, I just can't believe Melanie is there. It's hardly any words other than, 'Wow!' We've been saying a lot of that. Just, 'Wow!'"

Shortly after his daughter's victory, he and Oudin's mother, Leslie, began scouring the Internet for flights. Even Grandma — who encouraged Melanie and twin sister Katherine to take up tennis — might make the overseas trip to see Oudin face No. 11 Agnieszka Radwanska of Poland on Monday with a quarterfinal berth at stake, heady stuff for someone who was 0-2 at Grand Slam tournaments until this week.

Then again, Oudin — it's pronounced "oo-DAN," on account of her father's French ancestry — long has shown ambition.

"My goal has always been, since I was little, to become No. 1 in the world one day," she said.

The only time Oudin showed signs of nerves during the most important match of her nascent career came in the opening set. She held four set points, and blew them all with unforced errors.

"Rushed them. Played undisciplined tennis," said Oudin's coach, Brian de Villiers. "She played the occasion, rather than the point. But, hey, it's understandable."

When that 66-minute set ended, Jankovic had the lead, but she clearly was in trouble on a sunny day with the temperature in the 80s. A trainer and doctor came out to measure her pulse and blood pressure, and she began to cry. They put bags of ice on Jankovic's legs and abdomen, then the back of her neck, and gave her an energy drink to sip.

"I felt really dizzy, and I thought that I was just going to end up in the hospital. I started to shake," said Jankovic, who blamed her difficulty partly on what she called "woman problems."

"I was feeling quite weak. No power," Jankovic said. "I wasn't the same player."

While Oudin was working on her big win, five-time Wimbledon Venus Williams was enjoying a matter-of-fact contest on Centre Court, winning the first eight games en route to a 6-0, 6-4 victory over 34th-ranked Carla Suarez Navarro of Spain. The only other time they played, on a hard court at the Australian Open in January, Suarez Navarro knocked off Williams in the second round.

"Completely different circumstances," noted the third-seeded Williams, whose younger sister Serena advanced Friday.

At Wimbledon, the elder Williams has won 17 consecutive matches and 29 straight sets, and is trying to become the first woman since Steffi Graf in 1991-93 to win three consecutive titles. Next up: 2008 French Open champion and former No. 1 Ana Ivanovic, who is seeded 13th and eliminated No. 18 Samantha Stosur 7-5, 6-2.

Williams was pleased to have an American not named Williams stick around for Week 2.

"Super-good news," said Williams, who called Oudin "so enthusiastic about tennis and about life, enjoying herself, very well-adjusted."

Oudin's parents and her 11-year-old sister, Christina, gathered with about 30 other people at the Racquet Club of the South in suburban Atlanta to eat breakfast while watching Saturday's match — although because U.S. TV coverage didn't begin until an hour in, they had to follow most of the first set on the Web.

"No strawberries and cream," John Oudin said, "but it was still delightful fun."

Oudin lost the first set of her opening qualifying match, and also dropped the first set in each of her first two main-draw matches, against 29th-seeded Sybille Bammer and 74th-ranked Yaroslava Shvedova. So overcoming a deficit against Jankovic didn't seem impossible.

"I was right there with her every single point," said Oudin, who during changeovers munched on raisins plucked from those little red boxes kids use for school lunches. "So I knew I could do it if I just kept trying and kept fighting."

She wasn't the only teen who turned in a significant win: 19-year-old Sabine Lisicki of Germany beat two-time major champion Svetlana Kuznetsova 6-2, 7-5. When the match ended, as her parents and best friend watched from the stands, Lisicki sat in her chair, her body shaking as she sobbed.

The 41st-ranked Lisicki now meets yet another teen, No. 9-seeded Caroline Wozniacki, and No. 1 Dinara Safina will play 2006 Wimbledon champion Amelie Mauresmo.

Williams has won five of six previous matches against Ivanovic, who nonetheless said: "Very dangerous opponent, but I think I have a great chance."

Sometimes, such head-to-head records are irrelevant, and sometimes past is prologue: No. 6 Roddick entered Saturday 8-0 against No. 26 Jurgen Melzer and now is 9-0 after a 7-6 (2), 7-6 (2), 4-6, 6-3 victory. But No. 20 Tomas Berdych improved from 0-8 to 1-8 against No. 12 Nikolay Davydenko by winning 6-2, 6-3, 6-2.

Elsewhere, No. 3 Andy Murray's bid to end Britain's 73-year wait for a male champion continued with a straight-set win against No. 30 Viktor Troicki; No. 24 Tommy Haas and No. 29 Igor Andreev wrapped up victories in matches suspended Friday because of darkness; and 2002 champion Lleyton Hewitt, No. 8 Gilles Simon, No. 23 Radek Stepanek and 2003 French Open Juan Carlos Ferrero also advanced. Ferrero, a former No. 1 now ranked 70th, needed a wild-card invitation to get into the field, but he beat No. 10 Fernando Gonzalez 4-6, 7-5, 6-4, 4-6, 6-4 on Court 1 as a light rain fell.

There was some consideration given to moving the conclusion of that match to Centre Court, where the new retractable roof was closed, just in case. But Ferrero and Gonzalez finished, and the roof has yet to be used as a barrier against wet weather.