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25, overwhelm New York Mets

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## United hold on to beat Real Madrid

Mourinho finally given something to smile about



MIAMI: Marcos Llorente #18 of Real Madrid in action during the International Champions Cup match against Manchester United at Hard Rock Stadium on July 31, 2018. — AFP

**MIAMI:** Jose Mourinho was finally given something to smile about as a tempestuous trip to the United States ended with Man United's 2-1 win over former club Real Madrid thanks to first-half strikes from Alexis Sanchez and Ander Herrera. Mourinho has cut a miserable figure during their two week trip to the United States, lashing out at a lack of transfer activity while reserving stinging criticism for a number of first team players.

But seeing his side establish a two goal lead in the first half was encouraging, as was holding Real at bay after Karim Benzema's goal just before the interval gave the Spanish side hope of mounting a comeback. "I didn't learn anything (from this tour)," said Mourinho. "I know what Ander Herrera, Juan Mata and Alexis Sanchez are. I know the kids are very young and need time to grow up. I know my players gave everything

and in the last 15 mins we are dead and they bring on Toni Kroos and Asensio and Isco and I thought we wouldn't resist but we did.

"That's the spirit we need because our first two or three weeks in the Premier League are going to be really hard for us because we didn't prepare for that." The Portuguese has been without 12 key players for most of the tour with many enjoying an extended break following the World Cup. In front of 64,141 at Miami's Hard Rock Stadium, United were finishing off their pre-season preparations against a Real Madrid side just starting theirs.

La Liga starts a week later than the Premier League so new Real manager Julen Lopetegui was able to name the likes of Gareth Bale to start while Germany star Toni Kroos was on the bench. Spanish international

David de Gea was making his first start since returning from the extra time given to him following the World Cup and he was almost beaten in the eighth minute - Bale starting a move which saw Benzema fire just wide from close range. Brazilian Fred, who was signed earlier this summer for £52 million, was making his first United start and looked comfortable in his new surroundings. And on 18 minutes, United were ahead. Herrera fed Matteo Darmian and teed up Sanchez who clinically swept the ball home.

### Taken superbly

It was Man United's first real opportunity - and it was taken superbly. "Alexis Sanchez is fresh, the way the man is running. I think he is in a fantastic condition," said Mourinho. The second goal which arrived on 27

minutes was equally impressive. Darmian lifted the ball to Mata and once the Spaniard had regained his composure he crossed for Sanchez who was able to divert the ball into the path of Herrera who made no mistake.

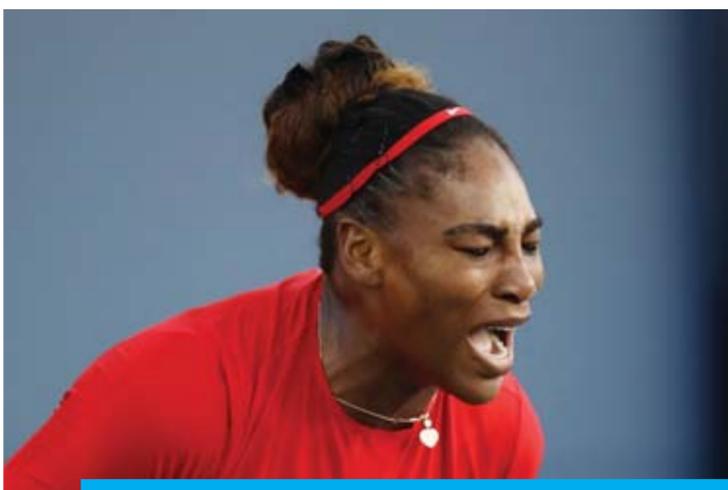
Bale curled wide soon after but just before the interval, Benzema tapped in an excellent Theo Hernandez cross to give the vast amounts of Madrid fans in Miami something to cheer. Bale, a one time target for Mourinho, was withdrawn for the second half as Lopetegui shuffled his pack and one of the substitutes, Martin Odegaard should have leveled on 56 minutes when he blazed over the bar from eight yards. The Norwegian saw a free-kick saved by De Gea late on but United held firm to lift Mourinho's mood. It was their first victory in regulation play this pre-season - AC Milan were defeated on penalties in Los Angeles last week. — AFP

## Serena suffers career's worst loss to Konta

**CALIFORNIA:** Twenty-three times major champion Serena Williams suffered the worst loss of her storied career on Tuesday, falling 6-1 6-0 to Britain's Johanna Konta in the first round of the Silicon Valley Classic. After a routine hold to start the match, Williams lost the next 12 games in a one-sided affair that lasted less than an hour, stunning the partisan crowd of 3,000 at San Jose State University.

Those expecting to see Williams continue to battle back after a difficult child birth last year were left disappointed as the 36-year-old committed 25 unforced errors to Konta's nine and managed to put just 41 percent of her first serves into play. "I think she played well in the second set and I think I wasn't sharp at all in the first set and she got confident and she clearly ran away with it," the American said after the loss. Williams, who lost the Wimbledon final earlier this month to German Angelique Kerber, had never lost a match before where she did not win at least two games since turning pro in 1995.

As poorly as Williams played, the 27-year-old Konta was sharp, firing six aces and smacking 17



SAN JOSE: Serena Williams of the United States reacts during her match against Johanna Konta of Great Britain at Spartan Tennis Complex on July 31, 2018. — AFP

winner to Williams' nine while controlling the tempo of the match. "She obviously wasn't playing at her best level, nowhere near it, and I really just tried to play the match on my terms," said Konta, who won the tournament two years ago. "I tried to put aside the incredible champion she is and just play the player of the day," she said. "I

felt I did better than her on the day but it's still a humbling experience to be out here with her." With the loss Williams falls to 11-4 since returning to the tour and will look to bounce back when she competes in the Cincinnati Open next month, another hard court tune-up ahead of this year's US Open. — Reuters

## Wawrinka ousted by qualifier Young

**WASHINGTON:** Three-time Grand Slam champion Stan Wawrinka, struggling in his comeback from left knee surgery, was ousted by US qualifier Donald Young at the ATP and WTA Washington Open on Tuesday. Young, ranked 234th, outlasted the 33-year-old Swiss 6-4, 6-7 (5/7), 7-6 (7/3) and advanced to a second-round match with Japanese seventh seed Kei Nishikori. "It was a tough fight, a lot of nerves because he can hit any shot," Young said. "Stan at the top is totally different than when he's working his way back. I'm sure he'll be back. I won't want to play him when he's back." Wawrinka, ranked 198th, fell to 6-11 this year after missing most of nine months before returning in May.

"It's painful to lose in the first round here, especially 7-6 in the third,"

Wawrinka said. "I was missing a lot for sure. It's tough when you haven't played a lot of matches. Tough loss for sure." On the women's side, reigning US Open champion Sloane Stephens opened by beating fellow American Bethanie Mattek-Sands 7-5, 6-4. Third-ranked Stephens, who captured her first Grand Slam title last year in New York, rallied from 5-2 down in the first set to book a second-round match against Germany's Andrea Petkovic. "I'm super excited about the hardcourt season again," Stephens said. "It was good I was able to fight back and win."

Wawrinka, who began his career in 2002, won his first Grand Slam title at the 2014 Australian Open and added the 2015 French Open and 2016 US Open titles. He reached the Wimbledon quarter-finals in 2014 and 2015 but hasn't gotten past the second round since. Hard-learned patience over 12 years before his Slam breakthrough is paying dividends as Wawrinka tries to recapture top form. "There are different steps. Right now is to get back a little confidence and get rid of all the doubt you have in your game," Wawrinka said. "I feel like I'm really close, but sometimes really far. I'm sure I'll get back where I want to be. — AFP