

Overview - Abierto Mexicano Telcel

Despite this being the fourth straight week of the 'South American swing' a good turnout was seen for this final clay event before the European season.

The loss of David Nalbandian (No.1) in R1 was the only big shock of R1 as all the other seeds made it through unscathed even if Tommy Robredo (No.3) and Carlos Moya (No.8) were both pushed to third sets. Juan Monaco did fall but that was through a leg injury sustained in his match with Kevin Kim.

It was in R2 that the main surprises came. Albert Montanes (No.6) lost again early, this time to Daniel Gimeno-Traver, and Martin Vassallo Arguello, who had saved match points in R1 against Ivan Navarro, used that reprieve to knock out Marcel Granollers (No.7). Carlos Moya was also dumped out by the little known Argentine, Leonardo Mayer.

Robredo trounced Kim for the loss of just two games, Jose Acasuso (No.5) eased past fello-countryman Juan Ignacio Chela and Gael Monfils (No.2) eventually saw off the challenge of Thomaz Bellucci. Match of the round was Nicolas Almagro's three set battle with Poito Starace, a 2'34" marathon which the defending champion, and No.4 seed, finally won by gaining the sole break of serve in the deciding set.

The QF's produced little real drama. Vassallo Arguello ended the fine run of Daniel Koellerer. The Austrian had beaten Nalbandian and Alberto Martin but found the Argentine too strong on this occasion. This was followed by Almagro easing past Gimeno-Traver in straight sets.

Acasuso then played Tommy Robredo for the fourth straight week and made it two wins apiece with a 87 minute victory. He would face Monfils in the SF's as the Frenchman won through after Mayer retired from their match after suffering with cramps.

Almagro was 4:0 on previous form with Vassallo Arguello and made it 5:0 with a straightforward win as he moved into the final for the second year running. He would face Gael Monfils who played well to beat Acasuso for the loss of just seven games.

The Spaniard defended his title with a comfortable win in 77 minutes. He moved to 5:2 in career finals and defended the crown he won in 2008.

As for Monfils, he lost another championship match (now 1:6 in finals) and commented afterwards *'I didn't play well today. When I get to the final I have a hard time. Today in particular I didn't handle it well'*.



Abierto Mexicano Telcel

February 23-28, 2009

Outdoor, Clay - ATP Tour World 500

| | | | | | |
|------------|------------------------------|-----------|------------|--------------------------|-------------|
| R32 | David Nalbandian [1] | 6 3 4 | R16 | Daniel Koellerer | 6 5 7 |
| R32 | q-Daniel Koellerer | 1 6 6 | R16 | Alberto Martin | 4 7 6 |
| R32 | Marcos Daniel | 4 5 | R16 | Martin Vassallo Arguello | 6 6 |
| R32 | Alberto Martin | 6 7 | R16 | Marcel Granollers | 4 3 |
| R32 | Martin Vassallo Arguello | 6 5 7 | R16 | Nicolas Almagro | 7 6 6 |
| R32 | Ivan Navarro | 3 7 6 | R16 | Potito Starace | 6 7 3 |
| R32 | Fabio Fognini | 6 5 | R16 | Daniel Gimeno-Traver | 7 7 |
| R32 | Marcel Granollers [7] | 7 7 | R16 | Albert Montanes | 6 6 |
| R32 | Nicolas Almagro [4] | 6 6 | R16 | Jose Acasuso | 7 6 |
| R32 | wc-Santiago Gonzalez | 4 2 | R16 | Juan Ignacio Chela | 5 3 |
| R32 | Oscar Hernandez | 4 2 | R16 | Kevin Kim | 2 0 |
| R32 | Potito Starace | 6 6 | R16 | Tommy Robredo | 6 6 |
| R32 | Nicolas Lapentti | 4 7 3 | R16 | Carlos Moya | 4 5 |
| R32 | Daniel Gimeno-Traver | 6 5 6 | R16 | Loenardo Mayer | 6 7 |
| R32 | wc-Bruno Echagaray | 1 4 | R16 | Thomaz Bellucci | 6 7 1 |
| R32 | Albert Montanes [6] | 6 6 | R16 | Gael Monfils | 7 6 6 |
| R32 | Jose Acasuso [5] | 6 7 | QF | Daniel Koellerer | 3 6 |
| R32 | Brian Dabul | 3 5 | QF | Martin Vassallo Arguello | 6 7 |
| R32 | wc-Juan Ignacio Chela | 2 6 6 | QF | Nicolas Almagro | 6 7 |
| R32 | q-Pablo Cuevas | 6 3 2 | QF | Daniel Gimeno-Traver | 2 6 |
| R32 | Juan Monaco | retd. 1 0 | QF | Jose Acasuso | 7 6 |
| R32 | Kevin Kim | 6 3 | QF | Tommy Robredo | 5 2 |
| R32 | q-Ruben Ramirez Hidalgo | 4 6 3 | QF | Leonardo Mayer | retd. 3 7 1 |
| R32 | Tommy Robredo [3] | 6 3 6 | QF | Gael Monfils | 6 6 4 |
| R32 | Carlos Moya [8] | 6 6 6 | SF | Martin Vassallo Arguello | 4 4 |
| R32 | Pablo Andujar | 4 7 2 | SF | Nicolas Almagro | 6 6 |
| R32 | Leonardo Mayer | 7 6 | SF | Jose Acasuso | 3 4 |
| R32 | Diego Junqueira | 6 3 | SF | Gael Monfils | 6 6 |
| R32 | Thomaz Bellucci | 3 6 6 | RU | Gael Monfils | 4 4 |
| R32 | Nicolas Devilder | 6 4 4 | W | Nicolas Almagro | 6 6 |
| R32 | q-Olivier Patience | 6 4 | | | |
| R32 | Gael Monfils [2] | 7 6 | | | |

| | No. Matches | 2 sets-3 sets | Ave. Sets/Match | Ave. Games/Match |
|------------|-------------|---------------|-----------------|------------------|
| R32 | 16 matches | 9-7 | 2.43 | 23.75 |
| R16 | 8 matches | 5-3 | 2.37 | 25.62 |
| QF | 4 matches | 3-1 | 2.25 | 22.50 |
| SF | 2 matches | 2-0 | 2.00 | 19.50 |
| F | 1 match | 1-0 | 2.00 | 20.00 |

Abierto Mexicano Telcel - Facts & Figures

| Market Leaders | Odds |
|-----------------------|------|
| David Nalbandian [1] | 11/4 |
| Gael Monfils [2] | 5/1 |
| Nicolas Almagro [4] | 7/1 |
| Tommy Robredo [3] | 7/1 |
| Juan Monaco | 12/1 |
| Jose Acasuso [5] | 14/1 |
| Juan Ignacio Chela | 22/1 |
| Thomaz Bellucci | 25/1 |
| Carlos Moya [8] | 25/1 |
| Potito Starace | 33/1 |
| Marcel Granollers [7] | 40/1 |
| Oscar Hernandez | 40/1 |
| Pablo Cuevas | 66/1 |
| Fabio Fognini | 66/1 |
| Alber Montanes [6] | 66/1 |

Performance Of The Seeded Players

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
|-------------|----------|----|----|----------|----|----------|----|----------|
| 2009 | R1 | RU | QF | W | SF | R2 | R2 | R2 |
| 2008 | RU | R2 | R2 | R2 | R2 | W | R1 | QF |
| 2007 | SF | SF | QF | W | QF | QF | QF | RU |
| 2006 | R1 | SF | R2 | R1 | R2 | R1 | RU | R2 |
| 2005 | R2 | R1 | QF | R1 | QF | QF | R2 | W |
| 2004 | W | QF | R1 | R2 | R2 | R2 | SF | QF |

Recent Winners/Leading Performers

| | Winner | Runner-Up | Losing SF's |
|-------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| 2009 | Nicolas Almagro (7/1) | Gael Monfils (5/1) | Vassallo Arguello-Acasuso |
| 2008 | Nicolas Almagro (6/1) | David Nalbandian (11/4) | Acasuso-Horna |
| 2007 | Juan Ignacio Chela (10/1) | Carlos Moya (12/1) | Calleri-Ferrero |
| 2006 | Luis Horna (40/1) | Juan Ignacio Chela (25/1) | Gaudio-Almagro |
| 2005 | Rafael Nadal (11/2) | Albert Montanes (150/1) | Puerta-Calleri |
| 2004 | Carlos Moya (9/2) | Fernando Verdasco (150/1) | Chela-Canas |

Betting - Abierto Mexicano Telcel

Pre-Tournament Briefing :-

Nalbandian (11/4) was an obvious favourite seeing as though his quarter of the draw was far from taxing (or so it first appeared) and he had previous form at the venue. What's more, Almagro (7/1) hadn't shown much form over the recent weeks ... but, to be fair, the Spaniard had beaten him here in the final 12 months previously.

Those two aside the top half of the draw only offered Starace (33/1) and Vassallo Arguello (66/1) - but even these two were speculative choices - so the choice was probably between the Argentine and the Spaniard (for the record, Almagro led 2:0 on previous clay meetings including here in '08).

The bottom half was tough. A case could initially be made for Monfils (5/1) and Robredo (7/1) but the French player is very hard to win with and could the Spaniard really be expected to win for a third straight week?

Acasuso (7/1) was another option if Robredo ran out of steam, as was Monaco (12/1), with two former champions - Chela (22/1) and Moya (25/1) - also more than capable of mounting a challenge. In time, Bellucci (25/1) would also enter calculations but he still lacked experience compared to the others. So take your pick from any one of the seven!

Post-Tournament Review :-

Nalbandian proved once again that he is a real risk at short odds, the better the event the better he plays and this run-of-the-mill tournament produced a very poor showing.

Robredo did run out of gas, Acasuso continued his good run of form and Monfils did exactly what he does so well, flatter to deceive. As such, Almagro didn't beat a great deal to defend his title as the only seed he faced was the serial final loser, Monfils. Only other eye-catcher was Vassallo Arguello, at 29 he's no novice but this effort showed his late-developing talent.

Pointers for 2010 :-

At the end of four straight weeks of action, you should expect shocks - just two No.1 seeds have won in 10 years. Every finalist (bar Monfils) in that time has been either Spanish/South American but all have tended to be a '*name*'. Some form in previous weeks is a bonus but too much play leads to fatigue - e.g Robredo. It's a pick of the usual suspects in Almagro, Acasuso and Monaco with possibly Bellucci and Chela as alternatives. Generally look for the fittest most in-form player left after three gruelling weeks of action!