

Aegon Championships - Overview

After the excitement of Roland Garros attention quickly turned to the short grass court season which preceded the third Grand Slam of the year, namely the Wimbledon championships.

In 2008 this event proved to be the launchpad for Rafael Nadal to hone his skills before going on to take his first title at SW19 but this year the defending champion was forced to miss out due to a knee injury sustained in Paris.

As it was Andy Murray headed a traditionally strong field which included a number of seasoned grass court players - several of whom featured in R1.

Four time former champion here, Lleyton Hewitt, started off with a 6-1 6-0 demolition of Eduardo Schwank in just 44 minutes, Ivo Karlovic eased past Teimuraz Gabashvili and there were straight set wins for Nicolas Mahut, Feliciano Lopez and Sam Querrey. In fact, most of the fancied players won through to R2 quite comfortably except for Ernests Gulbis, the one notable casualty, who fell to the Spaniard, Alberto Martin.

There was also a good win for Grigor Dimitrov. A player for the future, the Bulgarian won both Wimbledon and the US open as a junior, the 18-year-old started out with a three set win over Ivan Navarro.

R2 saw the big guns in action. Andy Murray (No.1) and Andy Roddick (No.2) both started with identical 6-1 6-4 wins, Gilles Simon (No.3) only just edged past the impressive Dimitrov and Gael Monfils (No.4) was pushed even further by Andrey Golubev - taking it 7-6 in the third.

We did lose Marin Cilic (No.5) as the Croat fell to the former finalist here, Mahut, on two tie-breaks but James Blake (No.6) proved too good for Ivan Ljubicic and Mardy Fish (No.8) came back well to see off Michael Llodra in three sets. The No.7 seed, Marat Safin, withdrew from the event with a back injury but his replacement, the South African Rik De Voest, was defeated by Xavier Malisse.

Elsewhere in the round, Lleyton Hewitt overcame a sluggish start to defeat the Portuguese player, Frederico Gil, in three sets and both Ivo Karlovic and Feliciano Lopez were forced to go the distance, by Julien Benneteau and Denis Istomin respectively.

Mikhail Youzhny knocked out Marcos Baghdatis - the Cypriot still very much on the comeback trail after a long spell out injured - and there were good wins for both Sam Querrey and Juan Carlos Ferrero (the Spaniard swiftly followed

Overview - Aegon Championships

up the 400th win of his career in R1 with the 401st in R2 as the Frenchman, Paul-Henri Mathieu, was dispatched in straight sets).

Into the last 16, Andy Murray eased moved into the QF's with a 69 minute win over Guillermo Garcia-Lopez, and he would next meet Mardy Fish - the American being equally impressive in brushing aside Feliciano Lopez for the loss of just five games.

Gael Monfils was forced to pull out of the tournament with a wrist injury to gift Steve Darcis a place in the last eight where he would face the ever-green Juan Carlos Ferrero who beat Xavier Malisse.

Some great matches in the bottom half of the draw saw Andy Roddick squeeze past Lleyton Hewitt in a very close match which included just one break point (which Hewitt wasted), James Blake also had to work hard to defeat his fellow-countryman, Sam Querrey. Mikhail Youzhny then caused an upset as he accounted for Gilles Simon and, finally, Ivo Karlovic set up a 'serve-fest' with Andy Roddick in the QF's by defeating Nicolas Mahut in straight sets.

The 1'47" encounter between Juan Carlos Ferrero and Steve Darcis was the only QF to go to a final set - Ferrero eventually taking it 6-4 in the third. All the other matches also went to form as Andy Murray rolled Mardy Fish for his third comfortable victory and James Blake was more than a match for Youzhny, seeing off the Russian in 76 minutes. Finally, Roddick and Karlovic shared 50 aces (Karlovic 26, Roddick 24) but no breaks of serve as their match was predictably settled on tie-breaks, both of which the American won.

Both SF's proved something of a let-down. Andy Murray was simply playing far too well for Juan Carlos Ferrero to seriously trouble the No.1 and the Scot duly recorded another routine straight sets win en route to the final - his fourth of the week so far. Blake and Roddick then lasted barely 20 minutes before the No.2 twisted his right ankle whilst chasing a ball a return - he battled on for another couple of games before the trainer advised him to retire.

In the final Murray continued his blistering form with another two set win in little over an hour. A first British winner of this tournament in 71 years, Murray said afterwards *'It's pretty special ...the names that are on the trophy, there's a lot of great, great players. So to be on that trophy is terrific'*.

The richly deserved win, his fourth of the year on tour, moved him to 12:6 in career finals whilst James Blake slipped to 10:14 in tournament deciders.



Aegon Championships

June 08-14, 2009

Outdoor, Grass - ATP World Tour 250

R64 Andy Murray [1]		R64 James Blake [6]	
R64 Bye		R64 Bye	
R64 Andreas Seppi	5 7 6	R64 Ivan Ljubicic	4 6 6
R64 Robby Ginepri	7 6 3	R64 Sergiy Stakhovsky	6 4 4
R64 Gilles Muller	6 7	R64 Kevin Anderson	6 7
R64 wc-Joshua Goodall	3 6	R64 Fabio Fognini	3 6
R64 Yen-Hsun Lu	1 1	R64 Sam Querrey	7 6
R64 Guillermo Garcia-Lopez [16]	6 6	R64 Jeremy Chardy [12]	6 4
R64 Feliciano Lopez [10]	7 7	R64 Mikhail Youzhny [14]	6 6
R64 Robert Kendrick	6 6	R64 Oscar Hernandez	4 2
R64 Denis Istomin	3 6 6	R64 wc-James Ward	2 3
R64 Ivo Minar	6 1 2	R64 wc-Marcos Baghdatis	6 6
R64 Michael Llodra	6 6	R64 wc-Grigor Dimitrov	6 4 6
R64 Evgeny Korolev	3 4	R64 Ivan Navarro	4 6 3
R64 Bye		R64 Bye	
R64 Mardy Fish [8]		R64 Gilles Simon [3]	
R64 Gael Monfils [4]		R64 Marin Cilic [5]	
R64 Bye		R64 Bye	
R64 Andrey Golubev	6 4 7	R64 Janko Tipsarevic	0 4
R64 Bobby Reynolds	2 6 6	R64 Nicolas Mahut	6 6
R64 Steve Darcis	3 6 6	R64 Julien Benneteau	6 6
R64 Paul Capdeville	6 3 4	R64 Daniel Koellerer	3 4
R64 Alberto Martin	7 6	R64 Teimuraz Gabashvili	3 6
R64 Ernests Gulbis [13]	6 4	R64 Ivo Karlovic [9]	6 7
R64 Paul-Henri Mathieu [11]	6 7	R64 Lleyton Hewitt [15]	6 6
R64 Andrei Pavel	4 6	R64 Eduardo Schwank	1 0
R64 wc-Sebastien Grosjean	2 1	R64 Frederico Gil	6 6
R64 Juan Carlos Ferrero	retd. 6 2	R64 Daniel Gimeno-Traver	1 3
R64 q-Xavier Malisse	5	R64 Leonardo Mayer	6 4
R64 Pablo Andujar	retd. 0	R64 Kristof Vliegen	7 6
R64 Bye		R64 Bye	
R64 LL-Rik de Voest		R64 Andy Roddick [2]	

	No. Matches	2 sets-3 sets	Ave. Sets/Match	Ave. Games/Match
R64	24 matches	18-6	2.25	21.66
R32	16 matches	11-5	2.31	24.81
R16	7 matches	5-2	2.71	22.42

Aegon Championships

June 08-14, 2009

Outdoor, Grass - ATP World Tour 250



R32	Andy Murray	66	R16	Andy Murray	66
R32	Andreas Seppi	14	R16	Guillermo Garcia-Lopez	44
R32	Gilles Muller	63	R16	Feliciano Lopez	14
R32	Guillermo Garcia-Lopez	76	R16	Mardy Fish	66
R32	Feliciano Lopez	747	R16	Gael Monfils	
R32	Denis Istomin	666	R16	Steve Darcis	w/o
R32	Michael Llodra	763	R16	Juan Carlos Ferrero	67
R32	Mardy Fish	576	R16	Xavier Malisse	46
R32	Gael Monfils	637	R16	James Blake	646
R32	Andrey Golubev	366	R16	Sam Querrey	463
R32	Steve Darcis	66	R16	Mikhail Youzhny	626
R32	Alberto Martin	24	R16	Gilles Simon	162
R32	Paul-Henri Mathieu	44	R16	Nicolas Mahut	34
R32	Juan Carlos Ferrero	66	R16	Ivo Karlovic	66
R32	Xavier Malisse	77	R16	Lleyton Hewitt	66
R32	Rik De Voest	66	R16	Andy Roddick	77
R32	Jame Blake	67	QF	Andy Murray	76
R32	Ivan Ljubicic	26	QF	Mardy Fish	53
R32	Kevin Anderson	53	QF	Steve Darcis	634
R32	Sam Querrey	76	QF	Juan Carlos Ferrero	466
R32	Mikhail Youzhny	67	QF	James Blake	76
R32	Marcos Baghdatis	46	QF	Mikhail Youzhny	63
R32	Grigor Dimitrov	66	QF	Ivo Karlovic	66
R32	Gilles Simon	77	QF	Andy Roddick	77
R32	Marin Cilic	66			
R32	Nicolas Mahut	77	SF	Andy Murray	66
R32	Julien Benneteau	672	SF	Juan Carlos Ferrero	24
R32	Ivo Karlovic	766	SF	James Blake	4
R32	Lleyton Hewitt	366	SF	Andy Roddick	retd. 4
R32	Frederico Gil	622			
R32	Kristof Vliegen	14	RU	James Blake	54
R32	Andy Roddick	66	W	Andy Murray	76

	No. Matches	2 sets-3 sets	Ave. Sets/Match	Ave. Games/Match
QF	4 matches	3-1	2.25	24.50
SF	2 matches	2-0	2.00	13.00
F	1 match	1-0	2.00	22.00

Aegon Championships - Facts & Figures

Market Leaders	Odds
Andy Murray [1]	13/8
Andy Roddick [2]	7/2
Marin Cilic [5]	14/1
Gael Monfils [4]	16/1
Ivo Karlovic	25/1
Lleyton Hewitt	25/1
Gilles Simon [3]	33/1
Marat Safin [7]	33/1
James Blake [6]	40/1
Mardy Fish [8]	40/1
Mikhail Youzhny	50/1
Ernests Gulbis	50/1
Feliciano Lopez	50/1
Janko Tipsarevic	50/1
Jeremy Chardy	50/1

Performance Of The Seeded Players

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
2009	W	SF	R3	R3	R2	RU	-	QF
2008	W	RU	SF	SF	QF	QF	R3	QF
2007	QF	W	QF	R3	R3	R2	SF	R3
2006	QF	R3	SF	R2	RU	QF	R2	W
2005	QF	W	QF	SF	R3	SF	QF	R2
2004	W	R2	R2	R2	RU	SF	QF	R3

Recent Winners/Leading Performers

	Winner	Runner-Up	Losing SF's
2009	Andy Murray (13/8)	James Blake (40/1)	Ferrero-Roddick
2008	Rafael Nadal (9/2)	Novak Djokovic (5/2)	Roddick-Nalbandian
2007	Andy Roddick (9/2)	Nicolas Mahut (150/1)	Tursunov-Clement
2006	Lleyton Hewitt (9/2)	James Blake (16/1)	Henman-Roddick
2005	Andy Roddick (5/2)	Ivo Karlovic (66/1)	Stepanek-Johansson
2004	Andy Roddick (3/1)	Sebastien Grosjean (22/1)	Hewitt-Lee

Betting - Aegon Championships

Pre-Tournament Briefing :-

Despite lacking Nadal this was still an interesting event - with so many strong performers on this surface and a welter of 'course form' to work on.

In some respects Murray (13/8) had quite modest credentials on grass but a very, very good draw - away from Roddick, Hewitt, Karlovic and Cilic - made him the clear pick in the top section.

Price was the only factor but even that was negated by the fact that whoever he met in the final (probably even Roddick) the Scot would still go off as the odds-on favourite. As such he was banker 'saver' material should a more speculative bet, or not, be fancied in the minefield which was the bottom half.

In this section, Roddick (7/2) had the tournament form and the best current ability but was a shortish price given a tough draw. Hewitt (25/1) had the price, the history but, sadly, not the legs any more whilst Cilic (14/1) was still a bit of an unknown on this surface and couldn't be backed with confidence.

That left, arguably, Blake (40/1) who had a good draw and past form here and Karlovic (25/1) who was a big price given his noted ability on grass.

Post-Tournament Review :-

Murray proved head and shoulders above this field however it would have been some final had Roddick not injured himself in the SF's. That said, the American would still have had his work cut out to beat the top seed.

Jame Blake and Juan Carlos Ferrero both played well, Karlovic and Hewitt lost little in defeat and both Mikhail Youzhny and Mardy Fish played well.

Gilles Simon still struggled to convince as a *bona fide* top ten player, whilst Marin Cilic, and especially Ernests Gulbis, showed up badly.

Pointers for 2010 :-

Outside of the Slams and Masters Series this is one of the top events - the roll of honour reading like a *who's who* of Slam champions and finalists. Even if players lack a proven history on grass they tend to require either a great serve or good return, preferably both! Given his injuries, Nadal might not be a certainty to play (check his French Open form) but the usual suspects like Andy Roddick, Ivo Karlovic and now Andy Murray must be noted ... and one other name to throw into the mix would be Marin Cilic. The Croat looks the type to do well on grass and should definitely improve with age.