

Barcelona Open - Overview

Any event which finds itself sandwiched between two Masters Series events might well struggle for quality but falling so early in the European clay court season, and being held in Spain, the home of so many decent players, this tournament certainly didn't lack for strength in depth.

Even allowing for the top eight seeds sitting out R1 there were some good looking match-ups to start proceedings. None more so that Juan Monaco knocking out the only seed to fall in this round, Marat Safin (No.11), and good wins were also recorded by his fellow Argentinians, Juan Ignacio Chela, over the young Brazilian, Thomaz Bellucci, and Gaston Gaudio.

In the case of Gaudio, a French Open winner in '04, he came back from a break down in the deciding set to beat Diego Junquiera, yet another Argentine, and so record his first ATP Tour win since May '07. Elsewhere, Nicolas Almagro (No.10) had to save two match points in his match with Victor Hanescu before the Romanian retired with cramp in the deciding set.

Recent winner in Casablanca, and home favourite, Juan Carlos Ferrero lost to Igor Kunitsyn in something of a shock but Potito Starace, Nicolas Lapentti and Arnaud Clement all won well against Ernests Gulbis, Paul-Henri Mathieu and Guillermo Canas respectively.

Moving into R2 we saw the arrival of the big guns and all progressed into the next round without incident. In fact, the only one of them to drop a set was David Ferrer (No.4) who was made to work hard by Mikhail Kukushkin prior to closing out the match 6-1 in the third set.

Nadal (No.1) brushed aside Frederico Gil, Fernando Verdasco (No.2) had little trouble in downing Lapentti and Nikolay Davydenko (No.3) eased past Clement. Fernando Gonzalez (No.5) got through a tough looking match with Jose Acasuso, Tommy Robredo (No.6) ended the renaissance of Gaudio and both Nalbandian (No.7) and Wawrinka (No.8) won easily enough.

Aside from the top seeds there were a number of entertaining matches with Nicolas Almagro and Juan Ignacio Chela fighting out a marathon 2'23" match before the Spaniard (Almagro) got through.

Potito Starace won a see-saw battle with Robin Soderling (No.14) and there were also eye-catching wins for Radek Stepanek (No.9) over Janko Tipsarevic and Christophe Rochus, with the Belgian ousting the rather unpredictable Frenchman, Richard Gasquet, in another match which went the distance.

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Moving into the last 16 and once again it was a case of the top seeds, for the most part, dominating once again. Only Stanislas Wawrinka (No.8) went out and his demise to Radek Stepanek (No.9), 7-5 in the third, was hardly the cause for great blame.

Nadal defeated Christophe Rochus in just 56 minutes for the loss of only two games, Nalbandian and Gonzalez also won in straight sets. The other three seeds were all winners but each had to dig deep in order to secure their wins - Verdasco edged out Berdych, Robredo came from a set down to beat Andreev and Nikolay Davydenko ousted the Spaniard, Feliciano Lopez, all in hard fought matches which lasted more than two hours.

As a result we had virtually the best possible QF line-up with 7 of the top 8 players making it to the latter stages. However, we were robbed of one potentially intriguing match when David Nalbandian was forced to pull out of the event with a hip injury, giving Rafael Nadal an easy passage into the SF's - as if Rafa needed any more help!

The other three matches proved entertaining affairs as Davydenko battled back well to eventually see off Radek Stepanek with some ease and there was a straight sets win for Tommy Robredo in his all-Spanish encounter David Ferrer. Finally, in the '*Battle Of The Fernandos*' it was Gonzalez who saw off Verdasco in their close 2'17" match.

Home fans got what they wanted, an all-Spanish final, as both Nadal and Ferrer won their SF's. It would in fact be a repeat of the 2008 final. Nadal's win over Davydenko was clear cut as the Russian failed to take any of his 6 break point opportunities (Nadal converted 4 of his 9 chances to break).

Ferrer won a great match with Gonzalez. Having shared the first two sets the Spaniard led 5-2 in the decider before Gonzalez fought back to level the match and then force a tie-break, only for Ferrer to nick it 7-5.

Nadal eased to title No.35 on tour (35:9 in finals) with a solid victory over Ferrer. This was his fifth consecutive title in Barcelona, after which he said - '*I never imagined anything like this. To win again here in Barcelona, in my home club and at such an important tournament is incredible*'. The world No.1 had now won 25 straight games on clay.

Ferrer played well this week, certainly wasn't disgraced in the final (breaking Nadal's serve three times) and upheld the fine Spanish record in one of their native tournaments. His overall record in finals was now 7:7.



Barcelona Open

April 20-26, 2009

Outdoor, Clay - ATP Tour Masters 500

R64 Rafael Nadal [1]		R64 Tommy Robredo [6]	
R64 Bye		R64 Bye	
R64 q-Frederico Gil	6 6	R64 Diego Junquiera	4 6 4
R64 Yen-Hsun Lu	2 1	R64 wc-Gaston Gaudio	6 3 6
R64 Christophe Rochus	6 6	R64 Marc Gicquel	3 4
R64 Nicolas Devilder	4 4	R64 wc-Alberto Martin	6 6
R64 Jan Hernych	6 3 2	R64 Andreas Seppi	3 6 5
R64 Richard Gasquet [13]	4 6 6	R64 Igor Andreev [12]	6 3 7
R64 Nicolas Almagro [10]	3 7 2	R64 Robin Soderling [14]	6 6
R64 Victor Hanescu	retd. 6 6 2	R64 Teimuraz Gabashvili	1 4
R64 Juan Ignacio Chela	6 3 6	R64 Ernests Gulbis	6 3 3
R64 Thomaz Bellucci	2 6 4	R64 Potito Starace	4 6 6
R64 wc-Juan Carlos Ferrero	5 6	R64 q-Pere Riba-Madrid	2 6
R64 Igor Kunitsyn	7 7	R64 q-Mikhail Kukushkin	6 7
R64 Bye		R64 Bye	
R64 David Nalbandian [7]		R64 David Ferrer [4]	
R64 Nikolay Davydenko [3]		R64 wc-Fernando Gonzalez [5]	
R64 Bye		R64 Bye	
R64 Guillermo Canas	6 3	R64 Dudi Sela	4 5
R64 Arnaud Clement	7 6	R64 Jose Acasuso	6 7
R64 Marcel Granollers	6 3	R64 q-Fabio Fognini	1 3
R64 q-Santiago Ventura	7 6	R64 q-Daniel Gimeno-Traver	6 6
R64 Jarkko Nieminen	2 1	R64 Juan Monaco	6 6
R64 Feliciano Lopez [16]	6 6	R64 wc-Marat Safin [11]	4 1
R64 Radek Stepanek [9]	6 2 6	R64 Tomas Berdych [15]	5
R64 Guillermo Garcia-Lopez	4 6 4	R64 Martin Vassallo Arguello	retd. 2
R64 Albert Montanes	4 6	R64 Oscar Hernandez	6 6
R64 Janko Tipsarevic	6 7	R64 Eduardo Schwank	2 4
R64 Mikhail Youzhny	6 7 6	R64 q-Nicolas Lapentti	6 2 6
R64 Viktor Troicki	7 6 3	R64 Paul-Henri Mathieu	4 6 2
R64 Bye		R64 Bye	
R64 Stanislas Wawrinka [8]		R64 Fernando Verdasco [2]	

	No. Matches	2 sets-3 sets	Ave. Sets/Match	Ave. Games/Match
R64	24 matches	15-9	2.37	22.29
R32	16 matches	10-6	2.37	22.75
R16	8 matches	3-5	2.62	25.87

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R32	Rafael Nadal	6 6	R16	Rafael Nadal	6 6
R32	Frederico Gil	2 2	R16	Christophe Rochus	2 0
R32	Christophe Rochus	6 6 6	R16	Nicolas Almagro	3 4
R32	Richard Gasquet	1 7 3	R16	David Nalbandian	6 6
R32	Nicolas Almagro	3 7 6	R16	Nikolay Davydenko	7 3 6
R32	Juan Ignacio Chela	6 6 3	R16	Feliciano Lopez	6 6 4
R32	Igor Kunitsyn	5 4	R16	Radek Stepanek	6 1 7
R32	David Nalbandian	7 6	R16	Stanislav Wawrinka	4 6 5
R32	Nikolay Davydenko	7 6	R16	Tommy Robredo	4 6 6
R32	Arnaud Clement	6 2	R16	Igor Andreev	6 2 3
R32	Santiago Ventura	6 4 3	R16	Potito Starace	6 5 2
R32	Feliciano Lopez	2 6 6	R16	David Ferrer	4 7 6
R32	Radek Stepanek	7 6	R16	Fernando Gonzalez	7 6
R32	Janko Tipsarevic	6 0	R16	Juan Monaco	6 3
R32	Mikhail Youzhny	5 1	R16	Tomas Berdych	5 7 4
R32	Stanislav Wawrinka	7 6	R16	Fernando Verdasco	7 5 6
R32	Tommy Robredo	7 6	QF	Rafael Nadal	
R32	Gaston Gaudio	6 1	QF	David Nalbandian	w/o
R32	Alberto Martin	2 2	QF	Nikolay Davydenko	6 6 6
R32	Igor Andreev	6 6	QF	Radek Stepanek	7 2 2
R32	Robin Soderling	6 6 2	QF	Tommy Robredo	3 4
R32	Potito Starace	7 2 6	QF	David Ferrer	6 6
R32	Mikhail Kukushkin	3 6 1	QF	Fernando Gonzalez	6 4 6
R32	David Ferrer	6 3 6	QF	Fernando Verdasco	3 6 4
R32	Fernando Gonzalez	6 6			
R32	Jose Acasuso	4 4	SF	Rafael Nadal	6 6
R32	Daniel Gimeno-Traver	5 4	SF	Nikolay Davydenko	3 2
R32	Juan Monaco	7 6	SF	David Ferrer	2 6 7
R32	Tomas Berdych	6 4 6	SF	Fernando Gonzalez	6 2 6
R32	Oscar Hernandez	2 6 3			
R32	Nicolas Lapentti	5 3	RU	David Ferrer	2 5
R32	Fernando Verdasco	7 6	W	Rafael Nadal	6 7

	No. Matches	2 sets-3 sets	Ave. Sets/Match	Ave. Games/Match
QF	3 matches	1-2	2.66	25.66
SF	2 matches	1-1	2.50	23.00
F	1 match	1-0	2.00	20.00

Barcelona Open - Facts & Figures

Market Leaders	Odds
Rafael Nadal [1]	1/5
Fernando Verdasco [2]	11/1
David Ferrer [4]	16/1
Fernando Gonzalez [5]	16/1
Nikolay Davydenko [3]	25/1
Tommy Robredo [6]	33/1
David Nalbandian [7]	33/1
Juan Monaco	50/1
Stanislas Wawrinka [8]	50/1
Nicolas Almagro	50/1
Juan Carlos Ferrero	66/1
Tomas Berdych	66/1
Richard Gasquet	80/1
Igor Andreev	80/1
Marat Safin	100/1

Performance Of The Seeded Players

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

Recent Winners/Leading Performers

	Winner	Runner-Up	Losing SF's
2009	Rafael Nadal (1/5)	David Ferrer (16/1)	Davydenko-Gonzalez
2008	Rafael Nadal (4/11)	David Ferrer (10/1)	Gremelmayr-Wawrinka
2007	Rafael Nadal (4/9)	Guillermo Canas (10/1)	Ferrer-Calleri
2006	Rafael Nadal (4/6)	Tommy Robredo (22/1)	Almagro-Wawrinka
2005	Rafael Nadal (4/1)	Juan Carlos Ferrero (9/1)	Stepanek-Davydenko
2004	Tommy Robredo (25/1)	Gaston Gaudio (251)	Vliegen-Montanes

Betting - Barcelona Open

Pre-Tournament Briefing :-

Given the manner Nadal's win in Monte Carlo the week before, the weaker field assembled here in Spain and the incentive of a fifth straight domestic title even the very short odds of 1/5 could be seen as something approaching 'value' - after all, the only risk, it seemed, was the fitness of the world No.1.

Guys like Davydenko (25/1) and Nalbandian (33/1) were his main dangers in the top half but, given the fact this event was on clay, neither could be backed in terms of form - merely a big priced flutter on players who might surprise.

The bottom section was much more attractive. Verdasco (11/1) was playing well and had to be considered but the concern was that the Spaniard still has a poor record of making finals. No better, worse in fact, to players such as Ferrer (16/1), Gonzalez (16/1) and Robredo (33/1).

Any one of that trio looked better value with Gonzalez's often erratic form making the two Spaniards the best of the each-way alternatives to Nadal - and who knows, Rafa might just have an off day in the final.

Post-Tournament Review :-

It came as little surprise that Nadal won. The fact that he won the whole event for the loss of just 18 games simply re-inforced his standing as clay's No.1 player ... by some considerable margin!

Ferrer, added to the other two SF's Davydenko and Gonzalez, all furthered this reputations during the week but doubts still remain over Verdasco's winning ability. As such his odds need closely monitoring.

Robredo, Stepanek and Nalbandian (until his injury) played solidly but a few other players, notably Almagro and Gasquet, proved a little disappointing and Juan Monaco still seemed in search of his good form of '07 when the Argentine was a three time tour winner on clay.

Pointers for 2010 :-

On form you simply can't oppose Nadal - a top seed, native Spaniard with a truly incredible tournament record. His price can be the only concern with regards to future support. Overall, the formbook shows this to be another clay-courters event with players like David Ferrer, Tommy Robredo and Nicolas Almagro all worthy of close consideration (as opposed to other clay specialists from South America). Wild-card considerations would be Stanislas Wawrinka or possibly Nikolay Davydenko.