

Overview - BMW Open

After his exertions in Rome the week before, the defending champion, Fernando Gonzalez chose not to return to Munich in order to defend his title, citing an ankle injury as the reason for his absence. His withdrawal still left a competitive looking field but certainly took some edge off the amount of real clay-court quality on show this week.

That lack of quality that was best illustrated by the surprise R1 exits of both Rainer Schuettler (No.5) and Igor Kunitsyn (No.8) - although the Russian probably pulled the short straw in playing the useful Italian, Potito Starace, first up. Nicolas Kiefer (No.6) was also pushed to a deciding set before seeing off the young Latvian, Ernests Gulbis.

Marin Cilic (No.2), Nicolas Almagro (No.3), Tomas Berdych (No.4) and Paul-Henri Mathieu (No.7) did at least win in straight sets - albeit against very moderate opposition - and Lleyton Hewitt saved two match points en route to defeating Philipp Petzschner ... for his 500th career win on the ATP Tour.

R2 saw the loss of two seeds, Almagro and Kiefer, but Cilic recorded a good win by defeating the 2007 champion, Philipp Kohlschreiber, in double-quick time and Mathieu easily saw off Denis Gremelmayr. However, Berdych got embroiled in a 2'30" battle with Andreas Beck before eventually making the QF's. Notable wins also came for Potito Starace and Lleyton Hewitt.

Each QF provided a story. A hamstring injury forced Starace to default against Daniel Brands, allowing the German wildcard to make his first career SF and then the No.2 seed, Marin Cilic, was ousted by Chardy in a near two hour match. Mikhail Youzhny saw off Paul-Henri Mathieu after 2'17" and finally Tomas Berdych squeezed past Lleyton Hewitt by the narrowest of margins courtesy of a third set tie-break.

Both SF's went to the favourites as Youzhny, who came back from losing the first set, defeated Brands and Tomas Berdych, also taken to a deciding set, just had to much power (on serve) in the end to oust Jeremy Chardy.

Youzhny and Berdych contested a great final, won by the Czech player ... but only just as he missed three match points at 6-5 in the third set before Youzhny forced a tie-break. Berdych was then 1-5 down in that tie-break before reeling off six straight points to win the title - *'it's just so amazing to win, especially after my chance seemed to have gone'* said the new champion.

With it the No.4 seed improved his career record to 5:4 in ATP finals whilst Youzhny, who so nearly won, dropped to 4:5 in deciders.



BMW Open

May 03-10, 2009

Outdoor, Clay - ATP Tour Masters 250

R32	Q-Alexander Peya	665	R16	Julien Benneteau	466
R32	Julien Benneteau	277	R16	Danile Brands	637
R32	wc-Daniel Brands	67	R16	Simone Bolelli	46
R32	Stefan Koubek	36	R16	Potito Starace	67
R32	LL-Stephane Bohli	623	R16	Nicolas Almagro	64
R32	Simone Bolelli	366	R16	Mikhail Youzhny	76
R32	Potito Starace	756	R16	Denis Gremelmayr	14
R32	Igor Kunitsyn [8]	573	R16	Paul-Henri Mathieu	66
R32	Nicolas Almagro [3]	66	R16	Thiemo De Bakker	34
R32	Jan Hernych	34	R16	Lleyton Hewitt	66
R32	Mikhail Youzhny	67	R16	Andreas Beck	646
R32	Ivo Minar	36	R16	Tomas Berdych	167
R32	Martin Vassallo Arguello <i>retd.</i>	1	R16	Nicolas Kiefer	46
R32	Denis Gremelmayr	5	R16	Jeremy Chardy	67
R32	LL-Lamine Ouahab	32	R16	Philipp Kohlschreiber	04
R32	Paul-Henri Mathieu [7]	66	R16	Marin Cilic	66
R32	Rainer Schuettler [5]	33	QF	Daniel Brands	61
R32	Q-Thiemo De Bakker	66	QF	Potito Starace <i>retd.</i>	41
R32	wc-Lleyton Hewitt	667	QF	Mikhail Youzhny	736
R32	Philipp Petzschner	276	QF	Paul-Henri Mathieu	563
R32	wc-Andreas Beck	66	QF	Lleyton Hewitt	636
R32	Mischa Zverev	34	QF	Tomas Berdych	467
R32	Q-Sascha Kloer	64	QF	Jeremy Chardy	376
R32	Tomas Berdych [4]	76	QF	Marin Cilic	654
R32	Nicolas Kiefer [6]	266			
R32	Ernests Gulbis	632	SF	Daniel Brands	634
R32	Evgeny Korolev	33	SF	Mikhail Youzhny	366
R32	Jeremy Chardy	66	SF	Tomas Berdych	656
R32	Philipp Kohlschreiber	62	SF	Jeremy Chardy	172
R32	Bjorn Phau <i>retd.</i>	21			
R32	Q-Dieter Kindlmann	32	RU	Mikhail Youzhny	466
R32	Marin Cilic [2]	66	W	Tomas Berdych	647

	No. Matches	2 sets-3 sets	Ave. Sets/Match	Ave. Games/Match
R32	16 matches	11-5	2.31	21.43
R16	8 matches	6-2	2.25	22.87
QF	4 matches	1-3	2.75	26.25
SF	2 matches	0-2	3.00	27.50
F	1 match	0-1	3.00	33.00

BMW Open - Bookmaker's Odds

Market Leaders	Odds
Nicolas Almagro [3]	5/1
Philipp Kohlschreiber	6/1
Marin Cilic [2]	8/1
Tomas Berdych [4]	8/1
Lleyton Hewitt	10/1
Paul-Henri Mathieu [7]	12/1
Mischa Zverev	12/1
Simone Bolelli	14/1
Ernests Gulbis	20/1
Mikhail Youzhny	22/1
Potito Starace	22/1
Nicolas Kiefer [6]	33/1
Martin Vassallo-Arguello	33/1
Jeremy Chardy	40/1
Evgeny Korolev	40/1

Performance Of The Seeded Players

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

Recent Winners/Leading Performers

	Winner	Runner-Up	Losing SF's
2009	Tomas Berdych (8/1)	Mikhail Youzhny (22/1)	Chardy-Brands
2008	Fernando Gonzalez (9/2)	Simone Bolelli (40/1)	Al Aynaoui-Mathieu
2007	Philipp Kohlschreiber (28/1)	Mikhail Youzhny (9/1)	Baghdatis-Berdych
2006	Olivier Rochus (25/1)	Kristof Vliegen (25/1)	Melzer-Nieminen
2005	David Nalbandian (11/2)	Andrei Pavel (20/1)	Nieminen-Haas
2004	Nikolay Davydenko (12/1)	Martin Verkerk (12/1)	Horna-O.Rochus

Betting - BMW Open

Pre-Tournament Briefing :-

Gonzalez would have been a clear and worthy favourite in this tournament - his late withdrawal, therefore, made this a very open looking event.

With Igor Kunitsyn (66/1) being a very weak seed indeed and guys like Starace, Koubek and even the former RU, Bolelli (14/1), being infrequent and/or non-winners the focus in the top half of the draw would have to fall on Almagro (5/1), Mathieu (12/1) and Youzhny (22/1).

All, however, were in the same quarter of the draw so the selection would be a tough one. Mathieu and Youzhny had the pick of the tournament form, Almagro the better clay-court pedigree.

The bottom section had a similar pattern. Schuettler (66/1) barely deserved a seeding, Kiefer (33/1) likewise only justified his ranking on the grounds of a *'home seeding'*. Kohlschreiber (6/1) won the previous year but had little form in 2009 and looked a tad short, Cilic (8/1) had the best world ranking in the field but was unproven on clay, Berdych (8/1) was a bit like Kohlschreiber in that his recent form was a worry. Of the rest, Hewitt (10/1) could hardly be classed as a natural on clay. The rest didn't really appeal on any grounds.

Post-Tournament Review :-

Berdych won four straight three-setters to win the title, including three tie-break deciders. He either showed great battling qualities or was lucky - and his general profile and the pattern of the final suggests the latter.

Youzhny played well, the Russian has talent and should have won more times on tour, whilst all of Chardy, Cilic, Hewitt and Mathieu lost little in defeat on a surface that neither would probably class as their favourite.

Almagro was disappointing - this event was at the mercy of a clay-courter once Gonzalez didn't show up - and we saw little too from Ernests Gulbis.

Pointers for 2010 :-

The very good players will focus on the Masters Series events prior to the French Open so this tournament always gets a moderate field. As such it's an event of reasonable quality, usually won by a seed, from Europe, who has won an event before, probably on clay. South Americans have won just 4 of the last 20 events here in Germany. Event form seems to count for something hence players to note must be Youzhny, Mathieu, Berdych and Philipp Kohlschreiber all deserving of a close market check.