

## Overview - Brisbane International

Despite the growing reputation of Ernests Gulbis, few expected the Latvian to defeat the No.1 seed and tournament favourite, Novak Djokovic, in R1. In fairness, the win was well deserved and the Serb was most philosophical after the event - *'It's not a good to start the year with a loss ... but on bright side it's only start of year and there are more tournaments to come.'*

The demise of Djokovic, plus Mardy Fish (No.6), were the highlights of the opening round with all the other seeds progressing as only Gasquet (No.7) dropped a set. The other match of note saw the American, Taylor Dent, win his first tour match since February '06 since when a back injury had put his career on hold.

R2 saw a number of interesting match-ups. Just one seed, Berdych (No.5), was defeated - by the fast improving Japanese player, Kei Nishikori - but there were eye-catching wins for Verdasco (No.3) over Mario Ancic plus the smooth passage of Soderling (No.4), Gasquet and Radek Stepanek (No.8) who all won comfortably.

Best of all was Jo-Wilfried Tsonga (No.2) who lost the first set 0-6 to Jarkko Nieminen before fighting back to win courtesy of two tie-breaks in a three set match lasting 2'15".

The QF's were all keenly contested affairs with only the Mathieu-Nishikori match settled in straight sets. A good win for the Frenchman against the conqueror of Berdych in the previous round.

The other three matches all went the full distance with each of Stepanek, Gasquet and Verdasco battling back to win after dropping the first set. As the Spaniard, Verdasco, said afterwards - *'When I was playing today and it was the tough moments I was thinking 'I can come back - I came back in the Davis Cup, why can't I come back today?'* - a sign of his growing confidence.

The two SF's were starkly contrasting affairs. Verdasco brushed aside Mathieu in 76 minutes, losing only three games in the process and taking his career record against the Frenchman to 5:0. However, Stepanek again had to come from behind to defeat Richard Gasquet in a high quality match which lasted 2'12".

The final was another close affair. Verdasco took the first set before Stepanek, for the third straight match, rallied to claim the win in another match lasting over two hours. This improved the Czech's record to 3:5 in career finals whilst Verdasco slipped to 2:5.



## Brisbane International

January 4-11, 2009

Outdoor, Hard - ATP Tour World 250

<b>R32</b>	<b>Novak Djokovic [1]</b>	44	<b>R16</b>	Ernests Gulbis	34
<b>R32</b>	Ernests Gulbis	66	<b>R16</b>	Paul-Henri Mathieu	66
<b>R32</b>	q-Teimuraz Gabashvili	33	<b>R16</b>	Kei Nishikori	76
<b>R32</b>	Paul-Henri Mathieu	66	<b>R16</b>	Tomas Berdych	63
<b>R32</b>	q-Bobby Reynolds	32	<b>R16</b>	Fernando Verdasco	66
<b>R32</b>	Kei Nishikori	66	<b>R16</b>	Mario Ancic	23
<b>R32</b>	wc-Brydan Klein	04	<b>R16</b>	Florent Serra	66
<b>R32</b>	<b>Tomas Berdych [5]</b>	66	<b>R16</b>	Jurgen Melzer	43
<b>R32</b>	<b>Fernando Verdasco [3]</b>	66	<b>R16</b>	Radek Stepanek	76
<b>R32</b>	wc-Bernard Tomic	42	<b>R16</b>	Michael Llodra	63
<b>R32</b>	q-Amer Delic	676	<b>R16</b>	Julien Benneteau	33
<b>R32</b>	Mario Ancic	767	<b>R16</b>	Robin Soderling	66
<b>R32</b>	Juan-Carlos Ferrero	36	<b>R16</b>	Richard Gasquet	76
<b>R32</b>	Florent Serra	67	<b>R16</b>	Taylor Dent	54
<b>R32</b>	Jurgen Melzer	647	<b>R16</b>	Jarkko Nieminen	666
<b>R32</b>	<b>Mardy Fish [6]</b>	466	<b>R16</b>	Jo-Wilfried Tsonga	077
<b>R32</b>	<b>Radek Stepanek [8]</b>	66	<b>QF</b>	Paul-Henri Mathieu	66
<b>R32</b>	Igor Kunitsyn	22	<b>QF</b>	Kei Nishikori	34
<b>R32</b>	Michael Llodra	576	<b>QF</b>	Fernando Verdasco	466
<b>R32</b>	q-Joseph Sirianni	762	<b>QF</b>	Florent Serra	603
<b>R32</b>	Julien Benneteau	367	<b>QF</b>	Radek Stepanek	266
<b>R32</b>	Robby Ginepri	635	<b>QF</b>	Robin Soderling	643
<b>R32</b>	Sam Querrey	33	<b>QF</b>	Richard Gasquet	166
<b>R32</b>	<b>Robin Soderling [4]</b>	66	<b>QF</b>	Jo-Wilfried Tsonga	642
<b>R32</b>	<b>Richard Gasquet [7]</b>	466			
<b>R32</b>	Marc Gicquel	622	<b>SF</b>	Paul-Henri Mathieu	21
<b>R32</b>	Taylor Dent	76	<b>SF</b>	Fernando Verdasco	66
<b>R32</b>	Steve Darcis	62	<b>SF</b>	Radek Stepanek	266
<b>R32</b>	Jarkko Nieminen	566	<b>SF</b>	Richard Gasquet	624
<b>R32</b>	wc-Marcos Baghdatis	714			
<b>R32</b>	Agustin Calleri	25	<b>RU</b>	Fernando Verdasco	634
<b>R32</b>	<b>Jo-Wilfried Tsonga [2]</b>	67	<b>W</b>	Radek Stepanek	366

	No. Matches	2 sets-3 sets	Ave. Sets/Match	Ave. Games/Match
<b>R32</b>	16 matches	10-6	2.37	23.50
<b>R16</b>	8 matches	7-1	2.12	21.37
<b>QF</b>	4 matches	1-3	2.75	24.00
<b>SF</b>	2 matches	1-1	2.50	20.50
<b>F</b>	1 match	0-1	3.00	28.00

## Brisbane International - Facts & Figures

Market Leaders	Odds
Novak Djokovic <b>[1]</b>	11/5
Jo-Wilfried Tsonga <b>[2]</b>	9/2
Robin Soderling <b>[4]</b>	10/1
Richard Gasquet <b>[7]</b>	12/1
Tomas Berdych <b>[5]</b>	14/1
Fernando Verdasco <b>[3]</b>	25/1
Mario Ancic	28/1
Marcos Baghdatis	28/1
Mardy Fish <b>[6]</b>	33/1
Ernests Gulbis	33/1
Radek Stepanek <b>[8]</b>	33/1
Paul-Henri Mathieu	40/1
Jarkko Nieminen	40/1
Juan Carlos Ferrero	50/1
Kei Nishikori	50/1

### Performance Of The Seeded Players

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
<b>2009*</b>	R1	QF	RU	QF	R2	R1	SF	<b>W</b>
<b>2008</b>	QF	QF	RU	R1	R1	SF	R1	R1
<b>2007</b>	<b>W</b>	QF	RR	RR	RR	RR	RR	RR
<b>2006</b>	R2	SF	R2	R2	R2	SF	QF	R1
<b>2005</b>	QF	<b>W</b>	QF	SF	RU	R2	R2	QF
<b>2004</b>	R1	QF	R2	R1	SF	SF	R2	R2

### Recent Winners/Leading Performers

	Winner	Runner-Up	Losing SF's
<b>2009*</b>	Radek Stepanek (33/1)	Fernando Verdasco (25/1)	Gasquet-Mathieu
<b>2008</b>	Michael Llodra (80/1)	Jarkko Nieminen (20/1)	Sirianni-Tsonga
<b>2007</b>	Novak Djokovic (5/1)	Chris Guccione (80/1)	J.Johansson-Del Potro
<b>2006</b>	Florent Serra (150/1)	Xavier Malisse (50/1)	O.Rochus-Chela
<b>2005</b>	Joachim Johansson (5/1)	Michael Llodra (80/1)	Nieminen-Dent
<b>2004</b>	Dominik Hrbaty (33/1)	Kristof Vliegen (150/1)	Voinea-Krajicek

*\* Prior to 2009 this event was held in Adelaide*

## Betting - Brisbane International

### Pre-Tournament Briefing :-

Although Djokovic won the Masters Cup to end the previous season on a high, there still remained doubts about the Serb at odds of 11/5. Gulbis in R1 was no mug and the top half of the draw also included a few more potentially tough matches with Berdych (14/1), Verdasco (25/1) and Mathieu (40/1).

Any one of those three had claims in the top section and you could even include the likes of Mario Ancic and Mardy Fish (both 33/1).

The bottom half was very tough to call. Each of the seeds Tsonga (9/2), Soderling (10/1), Gasquet (12/1) and Stepanek (33/1) could be considered whilst outside claims for Querrey, Baghdatis and Llodra were by no means groundless. Overall, in terms of ability and consistency of performance, the prices were about right but the potential for a few 50/50 matches in the later rounds made outright selections hard to make with confidence.

### Post-Tournament Review :-

Naturally the loss of Djokovic opened up the event. Thereafter, in the top section, Verdasco simply played to form in making the final. Possibly he was inspired by his recent winning exploits in the Davis Cup but, then again, he failed to win the title and a 2:5 final record is beginning to bring his true winning mentality into question. He's good ... but is he that good?

Stepanek clearly has such mental strength based upon three successive comeback wins - he showed guts to win this event.

Of the rest Soderling and Tsonga played to form and Gasquet produced his customary mercurial best - brilliant at times but failing, yet again, to win a title that was very much up for grabs.

The only others to note were Nishikori and Gulbis - both ones for the future.

### Pointers for 2010 :-

Expect surprises. The early season timing and the Down Under location are both reasons for numerous big priced winners/finalists. It can pay to back players at any price given that many fancied players come here severely 'under-done'. The clay courters, generally, fail to make much of an impact but solid hard court performers (anywhere in the top 50) stand a chance. Ones to note would include Richard Gasquet and Paul-Henri Mathieu plus Mario Ancic and Fernando Verdasco.