

Overview - Croatia Open

This tournament attracts a strong turnout amongst the clay court fraternity, making for a traditionally competitive event - and this year was no different.

Two seeds went out in R1 to prove the point as Viktor Troicki (No.3) was beaten by Maximo Gonzalez in a tight three-setter and Mischa Zverev (No.8) also lost in a deciding set to Fabio Fognini. And why Troicki was seeded so high in the first place ... ask the seeding committee.

Elsewhere all the other seeds progressed to R2 with only David Ferrer (No.2) and Andreas Seppi (No.7) dropping a set. Nikolay Davydenko (No.1) and Nicolas Almagro (No.6) being the most impressive winners, dropping a mere four games each in their matches.

Ominous signs for the rest of the field followed as Davydenko then moved into the QF's with a 69 minute demolition of Alberto Martin in R2 - and his chances of back-to-back ATP wins were further boosted by the loss of both Ferrer and Almagro. The two Spanish seeds were undone in close matches as Nicolas Massu did for the No.2 seed 6-4 in the third set and Ljubicic saw off the No.6 seed by virtue of a 7-5 7-6 scoreline.

Jurgen Melzer (No.4) did make the last eight with a good win over Pablo Cuevas and was joined there by Juan Carlos Ferrero (No.5) who followed up a solid R1 win over Christophe Rochus with an impressive come-from-behind victory over Potito Starace. The QF's were completed by Maximo Gonzalez, who also made the SF's here in 2008, and two Italians Simone Bolelli and Andreas Seppi.

In the QF's Davydenko was finally pushed, for all of a set, before he swept aside Bolelli and there were clear cut wins for Ferrero and Seppi over Gonzalez and Massu respectively. Match of the round, if not the tournament, then saw Jurgen Melzer save 4 match points as he eventually recovered to beat Ivan Ljubicic in a 2'28 minute encounter.

Melzer heroics sadly made little difference in the grand scheme of things as Davydenko beat him 6-1 6-1 in just 50 minutes to make the final! Some contrast to the Ferrero/Seppi match, a 2'38" battle which the Spaniard just managed to edge 7-5 in the deciding set.

'I played really good in the semi-final and final here, I don't know why, maybe it is luck' said Davydenko after he battered Ferrero in 70 minutes to claim a second title in consecutive weeks. The win took him to 16:5 in ATP finals whilst Ferrero, well beaten on the day, dropped to 12:17 in title deciders.



Croatia Open

July 27-02, 2009

Outdoor, Clay - ATP World Tour 250

R32	Nikolay Davydenko [1]	66	R16	Nikolay Davydenko	66
R32	Daniel Gimeno-Traver	22	R16	Alberto Martin	23
R32	Alberto Martin	66	R16	Simone Bolelli	66
R32	q-Martin Klizan	44	R16	Fabio Fognini	34
R32	Simone Bolelli	736	R16	Jurgen Melzer	66
R32	q-Ruben Ramirez-Hidalgo	660	R16	Pablo Cuevas	43
R32	Fabio Fognini	266	R16	Ivan Ljubicic	77
R32	Mischa Zverev [8]	634	R16	Nicolas Almagro	56
R32	Jurgen Melzer [4]	67	R16	Juan Carlos Ferrero	166
R32	Brian Dabul	35	R16	Potito Starace	632
R32	q-Ivan Dodig	31	R16	Oscar Hernandez	44
R32	Pablo Cuevas	66	R16	Maximo Gonzalez	66
R32	Ivan Ljubicic	66	R16	Andreas Seppi	77
R32	wc-Filippo Volandri	14	R16	Frederico Gil	56
R32	q-Marcel Granollers	13	R16	Nicolas Massu	466
R32	Nicolas Almagro [6]	66	R16	David Ferrer	624
R32	Juan Carlos Ferrero [5]	66	QF	Nikolay Davydenko	76
R32	Christophe Rochus	23	QF	Simone Bolelli	61
R32	Grega Zemlja	13	QF	Jurgen Melzer	476
R32	Potito Starace	66	QF	Ivan Ljubicic	663
R32	Sergiy Stakhovsky	61	QF	Juan Carlos Ferrero	76
R32	Oscar Hernandez	76	QF	Maximo Gonzalez	52
R32	Maximo Gonzalez	637	QF	Andreas Seppi	66
R32	Viktor Troicki [3]	466	QF	Nicolas Massu	44
R32	Andreas Seppi [7]	626			
R32	q-Juan Ignacio Chela	463	SF	Nikolay Davydenko	66
R32	Frederico Gil	76	SF	Jurgen Melzer	11
R32	Sergio Roitman	52	SF	Juan Carlos Ferrero	667
R32	Nicolas Massu	566	SF	Andreas Seppi	175
R32	wc-Blaz Kavcic	732			
R32	Daniel Koellerer	173	RU	Juan Carlos Ferrero	30
R32	David Ferrer [2]	666	W	Nikolay Davydenko	66

	No. Matches	2 sets-3 sets	Ave. Sets/Match	Ave. Games/Match
R32	16 matches	10-6	2.37	21.93
R16	8 matches	6-2	2.25	22.12
QF	4 matches	4-0	2.00	23.00
SF	2 matches	1-1	2.50	23.00
F	1 match	1-0	2.00	15.00

Croatia Open - Facts & Figures

Market Leaders	Odds
Nikolay Davydenko [1]	5/2
David Ferrer [2]	4/1
Juan Carlos Ferrero [5]	8/1
Nicolas Almagro [6]	8/1
Jurgen Melzer [4]	20/1
Pablo Cuevas	20/1
Andreas Seppi [7]	25/1
Ivan Ljubicic	25/1
Fabio Fognini	33/1
Potito Starace	33/1
Mischa Zverev [8]	40/1
Simone Bolelli	40/1
Viktor Troicki [3]	40/1
Oscar Hernandez	50/1
Maximo Gonzalez	50/1

Performance Of The Seeded Players

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

Recent Winners/Leading Performers

	Winner	Runner-Up	Losing SF's
2009	Nikolay Davydenko (5/2)	Juan Carlos Ferrero (8/1)	Melzer-Seppi
2008	Fernando Verdasco (11/4)	Igor Andreev (9/2)	Fognini-M.Gonzalez
2007	Carlos Moya (8/1)	Andrei Pavel (100/1)	Canas-Troicki
2006	Stanislas Wawrinka (18/1)	Novak Djokovic (4/1)	Volandri-Moya
2005	Guillermo Coria (7/2)	Carlos Moya (12/1)	Volandri-Novak
2004	Guillermo Canas (8/1)	Filippo Volandri (8/1)	Garcia-Lopez-Moya

Betting - Croatia Open

Pre-Tournament Briefing :-

Davydenko (5/2) was only a point shorter than when winning in Hamburg the week before. Clearly in form, with a clear passage to the SF's, the only concern was the fact that the Russian had never won back-to-back titles before in his career.

The Russian looked a very solid choice in the top half with only Almagro (8/1) providing an alternative option. The Spaniard was another proven clay court winner but was 8/1 (and a tougher draw) better value than Davydenko?

The bottom section was more interesting with Ferrer (4/1) and Ferrero (8/1) being the most obvious choices but each of Seppi (25/1), Starace (33/1) and possibly Troicki (40/1) could be considered. However, given the lack of career success for that trio, preference would have to be for one of the Spanish players - Ferrero had won this year (Casablanca) but that was a first tour win for 6 years, making Ferrer the better choice albeit at half the odds.

Overall, it looked a tournament where the favourites had the draw, the ability and the proven clay court credentials to make most other bets, even at much bigger prices, seem speculative - at best.

Post-Tournament Review :-

Davydenko was in imperious form and proved himself to be head and shoulders above this field. His draw wasn't severe but the players he faced were all dispatched in clinical fashion.

Ferrero proved himself still fit for the battle in coming through a couple of three set matches to make the final. He lost little in defeat to the No.1 seed whereas his fellow countrymen, Ferrer and Almagro, were disappointing in losing before the QF's.

Seppi again showed enough talent to suggest he could win one day, Melzer, Ljubicic and Massu all play to a level - good but no longer quite *that* good.

Pointers for 2010 :-

A decent standard of player tends to win here. Often seeded, almost always a previous tour winner (the last maiden winner here was 1991) and a solid clay-courter. Davydenko's win was a shade out of character in that Spanish and Italian players have a fine record here and South Americans deserve note as well. The likes of Nicolas Almagro and David Ferrer merit a look plus Seppi or Bolelli from Italy and, from nearby Serbia, Viktor Troicki.