

Overview - Dubai Tennis Championships

Despite the absence of some usual attenders, notably Nadal and Federer, this tournament was still a very well-contested affair.

As such, a number of dangerous players missed out on seedings and so created some competitive R1 contests. Novak Djokovic (No.1) along with Igor Andreev (No.6) were the only seeds to win in straight sets and we lost both Ivo Karlovic (No.7) to the world No.443, Marco Chiudinelli - the Croat wasting a match point in the third set tie-break - as well as Marat Safin (No.8) who was also made to suffer with a tough draw, losing to Richard Gasquet.

Andy Murray (No.2), Gilles Simon (No.3), David Ferrer (No.4) and Marin Cilic (No.5) all progressed but all did so after being taken to a deciding set.

No real let-up in R2 either as Djokovic came from a break down in the third set to beat Jan Hernych, Cilic took 2'23" to defeat Julien Benneteau and Andreev also went the distance before seeing off Dmitry Tursunov. We also saw Gasquet take over three hours to beat the Italian, Simone Bolelli.

However, Ferrer lost just six games in beating Philipp Kohlschreiber, Murray lost just five to Arnaud Clement and Simon a mere three as he convincingly outplayed Teimuraz Gabashvili to book his place in the QF's.

By contrast the QF's were most one-sided. Djokovic hit form to defeat Cilic in 98 minutes and Gilles Simon won an all-French tie with Fabrice Santoro in similar fashion. David Ferrer then brushed aside Andreev, also winning in straight sets, before Gasquet made the SF's as Andy Murray withdrew from the event suffering the effects of a virus.

It took Djokovic 164 minutes to reach the final, Ferrer just 75. The No.1 seed had to fight back against Gilles Simon, losing the first set but eventually taking the match 7-5 in the third set. No such troubles for the Spaniard, Ferrer, as the No.4 seed totally outplayed Gasquet to go through to the final in little over an hour.

Djokovic it was who took the title with a regulation win. The first set saw breaks of serve on both sides but once the No.1 seed got to 3-0 in the second set the match was over. He said *'Winning the tournament, any tournament, is a huge success, and especially here in Dubai, which has a history of being one of the strongest events in the Tour'*.

His first title of '09, the win moved Djokovic to 12:6 in career finals whereas Ferrer slipped back to 7:6 for championship matches.



Dubai Tennis Championships

February 23-28, 2009

Outdoor, Hard - ATP Tour World 500

| | | | | | |
|------------|---------------------------|-------------|------------|-----------------------|-------|
| R32 | Novak Djokovic [1] | 6 6 | R16 | Novak Djokovic | 6 3 6 |
| R32 | q-Flavio Cipolla | 3 2 | R16 | Jan Hernych | 3 6 4 |
| R32 | Jan Hernych | 4 6 6 | R16 | Julien Benneteau | 3 6 5 |
| R32 | Mikhail Youzhny | 6 1 4 | R16 | Marin Cilic | 6 4 7 |
| R32 | Jurgen Melzer | 6 3 3 | R16 | Gilles Simon | 6 6 |
| R32 | Julien Benneteau | 1 6 6 | R16 | Teimuraz Gabashvili | 1 2 |
| R32 | Janko Tipsarevic | 6 6 4 | R16 | Fabrice Santoro | 3 6 7 |
| R32 | Marin Cilic [5] | 2 7 6 | R16 | Marco Chiudinelli | 6 1 6 |
| R32 | Gilles Simon [3] | 5 6 6 | R16 | Igor Andreev | 5 6 6 |
| R32 | wc-Mohammed Ghareeb | 7 4 4 | R16 | Dmitry Tursunov | 7 4 3 |
| R32 | Teimuraz Gabashvili | 5 7 6 | R16 | Philipp Kohlschreiber | 4 2 |
| R32 | q-Laurent Recouderc | 7 6 3 | R16 | David Ferrer | 6 6 |
| R32 | Victor Hanescu | 4 2 | R16 | Richard Gasquet | 6 6 7 |
| R32 | Fabrice Santoro | 6 6 | R16 | Simone Bolelli | 7 3 6 |
| R32 | q-Marco Chiudinelli | 7 4 7 | R16 | Arnaud Clement | 2 3 |
| R32 | Ivo Karlovic [7] | 6 6 6 | R16 | Andy Murray | 6 6 |
| R32 | Igor Andreev [6] | 6 6 | QF | Novak Djokovic | 6 6 |
| R32 | Rik De Voest | 4 0 | QF | Marin Cilic | 3 4 |
| R32 | Dmitry Tursunov | 6 6 | QF | Gilles Simon | 7 6 |
| R32 | wc-Andreas Seppi | 1 4 | QF | Fabrice Santoro | 6 1 |
| R32 | Philipp Kohlschreiber | 6 6 | QF | Igor Andreev | 5 1 |
| R32 | q-Michael Lammer | 1 1 | QF | David Ferrer | 7 6 |
| R32 | Ivan Ljubicic | 6 2 1 | QF | Richard Gasquet | w/o |
| R32 | David Ferrer [4] | 3 6 6 | QF | Andy Murray | |
| R32 | wc-Marat Safin [8] | 3 7 3 | | | |
| R32 | Richard Gasquet | 6 5 6 | SF | Novak Djokovic | 3 7 7 |
| R32 | Viktor Troicki | 3 4 | SF | Gilles Simon | 6 5 5 |
| R32 | Simone Bolelli | 6 6 | SF | David Ferrer | 6 6 |
| R32 | Rainer Schuettler | 6 3 3 | SF | Richard Gasquet | 2 2 |
| R32 | Arnaud Clement | 1 6 6 | | | |
| R32 | Sergiy Stakhovsky | retd. 7 3 3 | RU | David Ferrer | 5 3 |
| R32 | Andy Murray [2] | 6 6 5 | W | Novak Djokovic | 7 6 |

| | No. Matches | 2 sets-3 sets | Ave. Sets/Match | Ave. Games/Match |
|------------|-------------|---------------|-----------------|------------------|
| R32 | 16 matches | 6-10 | 2.62 | 24.68 |
| R16 | 8 matches | 3-5 | 2.62 | 25.50 |
| QF | 3 matches | 3-0 | 2.00 | 19.33 |
| SF | 2 matches | 1-1 | 2.50 | 24.50 |
| F | 1 match | 1-0 | 2.00 | 21.00 |

Dubai Tennis Championships - Facts & Figures

Market Leaders Odds

| | |
|---------------------------|-------|
| Andy Murray [2] | 5/4 |
| Novak Djokovic [1] | 3/1 |
| Gilles Simon [3] | 8/1 |
| Marin Cilic [5] | 12/1 |
| Richard Gasquet | 25/1 |
| David Ferrer [4] | 33/1 |
| Feliciano Lopez | 33/1 |
| Mikhail Youzhny | 33/1 |
| Ivo Karlovic [7] | 33/1 |
| Philipp Kohlschreiber | 40/1 |
| Marat Safin [8] | 50/1 |
| Igor Andreev [6] | 100/1 |
| Dmitry Tursunov | 100/1 |
| Ivan Ljubicic | 100/1 |
| Viktor Troicki | 100/1 |

Performance Of The Seeded Players

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

Recent Winners/Leading Performers

| | Winner | Runner-Up | Losing SF's |
|-------------|----------------------|-------------------------|--------------------|
| 2009 | Novak Djokovic (3/1) | David Ferrer (33/1) | Simon-Gasquet |
| 2008 | Andy Roddick(25/1) | Feliciano Lopez (200/1) | Djokovic-Davydenko |
| 2007 | Roger Federer (8/15) | Mikhail Youzhny (25/1) | Haas-Soderling |
| 2006 | Rafael Nadal (6/1) | Roger Federer (8/15) | Schuettler-Youzhny |
| 2005 | Roger Federer (8/11) | Ivan Ljubicic (22/1) | Agassi-Robredo |
| 2004 | Roger Federer (5/2) | Feliciano Lopez (66/1) | Nieminen-Youzhny |

Betting - Dubai Tennis Championship

Pre-Tournament Briefing :-

Even despite the recent good form of Andy Murray (5/4), the No.2 seed didn't exactly scream value at barely odds-against. His recent form had been the best of the field but a potential draw of Clement-Gasquet-Ferrer-Djokovic was no formality for the Scot.

Djokovic (3/1) was a better price but his form had been moderate up to this point in the year. Marin Cilic (12/1) and Mikhail Youzhny (33/1) made his quarter competitive enough and a SF against Simon (8/1) or Karlovic (33/1) would also take some winning.

A case could well be made for David Ferrer (33/1) on the pick of his form and possibly Richard Gasquet (25/1).

Ultimately, the decision would fall between the form of Murray, the class of Djokovic and the each-way claims of players such as Cilic and Simon in the top half and Ferrer and Gasquet in the bottom section. Overall, a tough draw!

Post-Tournament Review :-

Djokovic took time to warm to the task but eventually won well. The demise of Murray certainly cleared the way for the Serb but his wins of Cilic, Simon and Ferrer were all signs of his general good play throughout the week.

The croats, Cilic and Karlovic, were both disappointments but Simon again proved his evident, if under-rated, ability.

In the bottom section, Ferrer played well. Ljubicic, Kohlschreiber, Andreev and Gasquet are all notable scalps. When he's good the Spaniard is a worthy top ten performer. Both Andreev and Gasquet, in losing to the No.4 seed, again showed their fundamental lack of fighting spirit.

As for Murray, it's hard to know. If fit he surely would have gone well here.

Pointers for 2010 :-

We may well see either/both Nadal and Federer back here in '10 - if so, both can continue the pattern of top seeds doing well here. In recent years this tournament has been the property of quality, Masters Series winning, players. However, it is competitive here so the top seeds face no easy ride to the final and enough decent priced players have made the frame to show that outsiders are worth a look. Preferences would be Nadal and Murray along with another couple of regulars, the Russian pair, Nikolay Davydenko and Mikhail Youzhny.