

Overview - Lyon Grand Prix

Events on France tend to be well contested but that generally relies on good quality home talent turning out, Jo-Wilfried Tsonga and Gilles Simon being a case in point here (along with 12 other Frenchmen in the 32-strong field).

However, both made hard work of getting past R1, struggling through via two tie-breaks apiece - Tsonga past Kevin Kim, Simon over Simone Bolelli. By contrast, all the other seeds safely negotiated their first matches with much more comfort than the top two seeds, all winning with a fair amount in hand.

Elsewhere, more competitive matches saw the German, Nicolas Kiefer, edge past Sebastien Grosjean and Kevin Anderson also required a third set tie-break to end the challenge of Simon Greul.

R2 saw Tsonga and Simon pick up the pace, both making very short work of their opponents (Tsonga won in 64 minutes, Simon took just 52 minutes to reach the QF's). They were joined in the last eight by Ivan Ljubicic (No.3) who defeated Kiefer in three sets and Julien Benneteau (No.5) who proved too good for the South African, Anderson, winning 7-5 6-2.

However, the four other seeds all lost - all to French players! Juan Monaco (No.4) fell to Michael Llodra, Paul-Henri Mathieu (No.6) fell to another home player, Marc Gicquel, Benjamin Becker (No.7) was comfortably beaten by Arnaud Clement and Florent Serra dispatched Albert Montanes (No.8).

Big shock in the QF's as Clement took out Tsonga. The No.1 seed had a match point at 8-7 in the deciding tie-break, missed it and Clement duly held his nerve to claim a deserved win. Gilles Simon did make the SF's with a straight sets win over Benneteau where he would play Llodra, who won another all-French QF with Gicquel. Only Ivan Ljubicic stopped it being a clean-sweep for home players as he posted a win over Florent Serra to make his first SF of the year.

From a first SF to a first final for Ljubicic as well. The Croat made short work of Clement, winning for the loss of just six games. Ljubicic would face Llodra in the final. The Frenchman upset compatriot, Gilles Simon, in a hard fought 1'47" three-setter which he won decisively in a third set tie-break, 7-1.

A first title in two years came for Ljubicic with another assured display. *'It's a really special feeling to win this title. Lyon means so much to me, it was where I won my first title in 2001'* - reflected the new champion afterwards. This overdue win lifted him to 9:12 in career finals whilst Llodra's defeat meant that the French player's record in deciders fell to 3:4 overall.



Lyon Grand Prix

October 26-01, 2009

Indoor, Hard - World Tour 250

R32 Jo-Wilfried Tsonga [1]	77	R16	Jo-Wilfried Tsonga	66
R32 Kevin Kim	66	R16	Olivier Rochus	32
R32 Olivier Rochus	66	R16	Arnaud Clement	66
R32 q-Vincent Millot	32	R16	Benjamin Becker	43
R32 Osker Hernandez	13	R16	Ivan Ljubicic	636
R32 wc-Arnaud Clement	66	R16	Nicolas Kiefer	363
R32 Paolo Lorenzi	22	R16	Florent Serra	76
R32 Benjamin Becker [7]	66	R16	Albert Montanes	53
R32 Ivan Ljubicic [3]	66	R16	Paul-Henri Mathieu	40
R32 Martin Vassallo Arguello	34	R16	Marc Gicquel	66
R32 Nicolas Kiefer	477	R16	Michael Llodra	66
R32 wc-Sebastien Grosjean	666	R16	Juan Monaco	34
R32 Christophe Rochus	33	R16	Julien Benneteau	76
R32 Florent Serra	66	R16	Kevin Anderson	52
R32 Fabrice Santoro	44	R16	David Guez	12
R32 Albert Montanes [8]	66	R16	Gilles Simon	66
R32 Paul-Henri Mathieu [6]	76	QF	Jo-Wilfried Tsonga	746
R32 Leonardo Mayer	62	QF	Arnaud Clement	567
R32 q-Jerome Haehnel	14	QF	Ivan Ljubicic	76
R32 Marc Gicquel	66	QF	Florent Serra	62
R32 Lamine Ouahab	12	QF	Marc Gicquel	64
R32 wc-Michael Llodra	66	QF	Michael Llodra	76
R32 Josselin Ouanna	32	QF	Julien Benneteau	63
R32 Juan Monaco [4]	66	QF	Gilles Simon	76
R32 Julien Benneteau [5]	76			
R32 Alberto Martin	61	SF	Arnaud Clement	24
R32 q-Kevin Anderson	647	SF	Ivan Ljubicic	66
R32 Simon Greul	466	SF	Michael Llodra	667
R32 q-David Guez	66	SF	Gilles Simon	736
R32 Rajeev Ram	24			
R32 Simone Bolelli	66	RU	Michael Llodra	53
R32 Gilles Simon [2]	77	W	Ivan Ljubicic	76

	No. Matches	2 sets-3 sets	Ave. Sets/Match	Ave. Games/Match
R32	16 matches	15-1	2.06	20.93
R16	8 matches	7-1	2.12	19.25
QF	4 matches	3-1	2.25	25.25
SF	2 matches	1-1	2.50	26.50
F	1 match	1-0	2.00	21.00

Lyon Grand Prix - Facts & Figures

Market Leaders	Odds
Jo-Wilfried Tsonga [1]	11/8
Gilles Simon [2]	3/1
Ivan Ljubicic [3]	10/1
Paul-Henri Mathieu [6]	12/1
Julien Benneteau [5]	25/1
Marc Gicquel	28/1
Juan Monaco [4]	33/1
Michael Llodra	40/1
Simone Bolelli	40/1
Nicolas Kiefer	40/1
Arnaud Clement	50/1
Olivier Rochus	50/1
Fabrice Santoro	50/1
Benjamin Becker [7]	66/1
Albert Montanes [8]	100/1

Performance Of The Seeded Players

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

Recent Winners/Leading Performers

	Winner	Runner-Up	Losing SF's
2009	Ivan Ljubicic (10/1)	Michael Llodra (40/1)	Clement-Simon
2008	Robin Soderling (10/1)	Julien Benneteau (66/1)	Simon-Tsonga
2007	Sebastien Grosjean (50/1)	Marc Gicquel (50/1)	Tsonga-Falla
2006	Richard Gasquet (8/1)	Marc Gicquel (50/1)	Clement-Malisse
2005	Andy Roddick (7/2)	Gael Monfils (33/1)	Santoro-Grosjean
2004	Robn Soderling (18/1)	Xavier Malisse (50/1)	Spadea-Ferrer

Betting - Lyon Grand Prix

Pre-Tournament Briefing :-

Jo-Wilfried Tsonga (11/8) presented a strong case for support. A proven winner, the highest ranked player in the field, a Frenchman playing on home soil and facing a draw, all the way to the SF's, which looked far from taxing.

Whether a subsequent SF against Ljubicic, quite possibly, or a potential final against Simon, would still represent value was the only question which needed to be answered.

Because, on the face of it, Ljubicic (10/1) looked the only viable alternative in the top half and even then the Croat hadn't won for two years and hadn't made a SF all year. A very good indoor player ... but a very good indoor player who brought very little winning form with him.

The bottom half had a strong French presence. Gilles Simon (3/1) was the obvious choice but each of Paul-Henri Mathieu (12/1) and Julien Benneteau (25/1) had to be considered - both had form in such events.

That trio aside, Monaco (33/1) still cuts little ice on hard courts and then there's more French interest with Gicqule (28/1) and of course Llodra (40/1).

Post-Tournament Review :-

Ljubicic didn't drop a set all week and won on merit. For sure, Clement's defeat of Tsonga was a major help but it was hardly the Croat's fault that the top seed put in a poor showing in the QF's. However, that win of Clement did flag up the fact that inter-French form can be hard to gauge - take Llodra beating Simon in the SF's as another example.

Overall a difficult event to assess as only one of the eight players in the QF line-up wasn't French - and he won! Hats off to Ljubicic for that long overdue success, as his career had been very much on the slide beforehand, but both Tsonga and Simon will rue a missed opportunity.

Pointers for 2010 :-

The strength in depth of the French game, added to a number of mediocre events staged in the country, means that home players must be considered here. Gilles Simon, Richard Gasquet, Paul-Henri Mathieu, Marc Gicquel - these are the type of players who tend to do well here. Twice champion Ljubicic (2001 & 2009) will surely return and mount a challenge but it's French names which always spring to mind here in Lyon as there are often more than 10 players in the field.