

Madrid Masters - Overview

This was a new tournament for 2009. Not the fact that it was (a) a Masters Series event or (b) it was being held in Madrid - such a tournament had been held in the Spanish capital for many years - but for the fact that the event had been moved forward in the annual schedule and, more importantly, switched to clay as opposed to hard courts.

The tournament effectively replaced the Masters Series event which was normally played at this time in Hamburg with that event now being held later in the year (and being demoted to World Tour 500 status).

As such, after the recent big events in Monte Carlo, Rome and Barcelona, the tournament still provided the top players with a final run-out before the French Open, due to be played the week after next.

All the major players duly attended with the top eight seeds getting a bye into R2. This still left the players seeded 9-16 to enter the fray in R1 and all made it safely through their opening matches apart from Radek Stepanek (No.15) who retired from his match with Sam Querrey due to a knee injury.

Being a Masters Series event there were a number of high quality matches early on with Philipp Kohlschreiber defeating Nicolas Almagro, Juan Monaco seeing off Feliciano Lopez and Tommy Haas edging past Ernests Gulbis all catching the eye. Elsewhere, Jeremy Chardy brushed aside Jose Acasuso with some ease, Mardy Fish shaded a close match with Janko Tipsarevic and Ivo Karlovic eventually downed Julien Benneteau after an absorbing 2'12" contest full of high-powered, big-serving action.

R2 saw the entry of the top eight seeds and all eight found their way into the last 16, dropping only one set between them in the process. That one slip came from Andy Roddick (No.6) as he came from behind to defeat Haas 6-4 in the third set.

All the other seeds swept to easy victories with Nadal (No.1), Federer (No.2), and Del Potro (No.5) looking in the best form as they saw off Melzer, Soderling and Berdych respectively - all decent yardsticks - for the collective loss of just 13 games. Berdych, to be fair, was badly hampered by a leg injury which ultimately forced the Czech player to retire.

Elsewhere, Juan Monaco kept up his good form in beating David Ferrer, Fernando Verdasco won an all-Spanish battle with Juan Carlos Ferrero and we also saw two nail-biting finishes as Philipp Kohlschreiber got the better of Marin Cilic and James Blake ousted Ivo Karlovic, both 7-6 in the third set.

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The tournament entered R3 with all eight top seeds still in the thick of the action but one was to fall in this round as Ivan Ljubicic fought back from losing the first set to see off the Frenchman, Gilles Simon (No.8), in three close sets.

Two other seeds, Nadal and Roddick, had it much easier though as both progressed to the QF's without needing to play a shot - both their opponents, Kohlschreiber and Davydenko, failed to make it on court due to leg injuries.

Of those who did play, Roger Federer was barely extended by James Blake, Novak Djokovic, Andy Murray and Fernando Verdasco all won in straight sets and only Juan Martin Del Potro was made to work. Stanislas Wawrinka pushed the Argentine all the way before Del Potro finally won it 4-6 6-4 6-4.

With only Simon falling by the wayside en route to the QF's we were guaranteed a number of decent encounters as the remaining players battled for a place in the last four.

First up Rafael Nadal moved to 9:0 against his fellow countryman Verdasco despite overcoming a second set wobble that saw the world No.1 trail 0-4 at one stage before levelling at 4-4 and closing out the match by breaking Verdasco's serve again to seal a 6-4 7-5 victory. Nadal would next face Novak Djokovic after the Serb defeated the game Ivan Ljubicic courtesy of one service break in each set.

The other SF would see Roger Federer take on Juan Martin Del Potro after the Swiss player overcame the stubborn challenge of Andy Roddick whilst Del Potro shocked the No.3 seed, Andy Murray, in straight sets.

In what is thought to be the longest three set match ever played on the ATP Tour, a marathon encounter in excess of four hours, Nadal defeated Djokovic. The Spaniard saved three match points in the process and proved once again just what a competitor he is and how he is virtually invincible on clay - but due merit must go to Djokovic - *'I think I've played my best tennis on this surface today'* he said afterwards - he gave it everything in this classic match. By contrast Federer's win over Del Potro was little more than routine.

Nadal went into the final on a 33 match winning streak on clay, plus a 13:6 career lead over Federer (9:1 on clay) ... however, this was to be Federer's title. Possibly due to fatigue, maybe mentally drained after his SF win, Nadal failed to show his best form as Federer won his first title of the year with an ultimately dominant performance. A win that took Federer to 58:22 in four sets whilst Nadal dropped to 36:10.



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May 11-17, 2009

Outdoor, Clay - ATP Tour Masters 1000

R64 Rafael Nadal [1]		R64 Juan Martin Del Potro [5]	
R64 Bye		R64 Bye	
R64 Jurgen Melzer	4 7 6	R64 Guillermo Garcia-Lopez	0 6
R64 Albert Montanes	6 5 3	R64 Tomas Berdych	6 7
R64 Philipp Kohlschreiber	6 6	R64 Jeremy Chardy	6 6
R64 Nicolas Almagro	3 4	R64 Jose Acasuso	3 2
R64 Marcel Granollers	2 7 1	R64 q-Marco Crugnola	2 0
R64 Marin Cilic [13]	6 6 6	R64 Stanislas Wawrinka [11]	6 6
R64 David Ferrer [12]	6 6	R64 Tommy Robredo [16]	3 6 6
R64 q-Guillermo Canas	2 2	R64 Nicolas Kiefer	6 2 2
R64 Feliciano Lopez	4 5	R64 Janko Tipsarevic	6 4
R64 wc-Juan Monaco	6 7	R64 Mardy Fish	7 6
R64 Igor Kunitsyn	3 6 4	R64 Simone Bolelli	7 7
R64 wc-Juan Carlos Ferrero	6 4 6	R64 Juan Ignacio Chela	5 6
R64 Bye		R64 Bye	
R64 Fernando Verdasco [7]		R64 Andy Murray [4]	
R64 Novak Djokovic [3]		R64 Andy Roddick [6]	
R64 Bye		R64 Bye	
R64 Oscar Hernandez	6 6	R64 q-Tommy Haas	6 5 7
R64 Martin Vassallo Arguello	3 3	R64 Ernests Gulbis	2 7 5
R64 Andreas Seppi	7 6	R64 Rainer Schuettler	2 4
R64 q-Eduardo Schwank	5 4	R64 Florent Serra	6 6
R64 Sam Querrey	7 5	R64 Viktor Troicki	2 2
R64 Radek Stepanek [15] retd.	6 2	R64 Nikolay Davydenko [10]	6 6
R64 Jo-Wilfried Tsonga [9]	6 7	R64 James Blake [14]	6 6
R64 Marat Safin	4 5	R64 Victor Hanescu	2 4
R64 wc-Ivan Ljubicic	6 6	R64 Ivo Karlovic	3 7 6
R64 q-Teimuraz Gabashvili	3 2	R64 Julien Benneteau	6 6 4
R64 Pual-Henri Mathieu retd.	7 4 0	R64 Robin Soderling	6 6
R64 q-Fabio Fognini	6 6 3	R64 LL-Ivan Navarro	4 2
R64 Bye		R64 Bye	
R64 Gilles Simon [8]		R64 Roger Federer [2]	

	No. Matches	2 sets-3 sets	Ave. Sets/Match	Ave. Games/Match
R64	24 matches	17-7	2.29	21.95
R32	16 matches	11-5	2.31	22.87
R16	6 matches	4-2	2.33	22.50

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R32 Rafael Nadal	66	R16 Rafael Nadal	w/o
R32 Jurgen Melzer	31	R16 Philipp Kohlschreiber	
R32 Philipp Kohlschreiber	667	R16 Juan Monaco	52
R32 Marin Cilic	176	R16 Fernando Verdasco	76
R32 David Ferrer	44	R16 Novak Djokovic	66
R32 Juan Monaco	66	R16 Andreas Seppi	44
R32 Juan Carlos Ferrero	32	R16 Ivan Ljubicic	366
R32 Fernando Verdasco	66	R16 Gilles Simon	643
R32 Novak Djokovic	66	R16 Juan Martin Del Potro	466
R32 Oscar Hernandez	33	R16 Stanislas Wawrinka	644
R32 Andreas Seppi	646	R16 Tommy Robredo	51
R32 Sam Querrey	364	R16 Andy Murray	76
R32 Jo-Wilfried Tsonga	45	R16 Andy Roddick	w/o
R32 Ivan Ljubicic	67	R16 Nikolay Davydenko	
R32 Fabio Fognini	32	R16 James Blake	24
R32 Gilles Simon	66	R16 Roger Federer	66
R32 Juan Martin Del Potro	64	QF Rafael Nadal	67
R32 Tomas Berdych	retd. 21	QF Fernando Verdasco	45
R32 Jeremy Chardy	45	QF Novak Djokovic	66
R32 Stanislas Wawrinka	67	QF Ivan Ljubicic	44
R32 Tommy Robredo	376	QF Juan Martin Del Potro	76
R32 Maryd Fish	662	QF Andy Murray	63
R32 Simone Bolelli	64	QF Andy Roddick	571
R32 Andy Murray	76	QF Roger Federer	766
R32 Andy Roddick	176		
R32 Tommy Haas	664	SF Rafael Nadal	377
R32 Florent Serra	53	SF Novak Djokovic	666
R32 Nikolay Davydenko	76	SF Juan Martin Del Potro	34
R32 James Blake	667	SF Roger Federer	66
R32 Ivo Karlovic	746		
R32 Robin Soderling	15	RU Rafael Nadal	44
R32 Roger Federer	67	W Roger Federer	66

	No. Matches	2 sets-3 sets	Ave. Sets/Match	Ave. Games/Match
QF	4 matches	3-1	2.25	24.00
SF	2 matches	1-1	2.50	27.00
F	1 match	1-0	2.00	20.00

Madrid Masters - Facts & Figures

Market Leaders	Odds
Rafael Nadal [1]	1/3
Roger Federer [2]	9/1
Novak Djokovic [3]	10/1
Andy Murray [4]	12/1
Nikolay Davydenko	28/1
Juan Martin Del Potro [5]	33/1
Fernando Verdasco [7]	40/1
David Ferrer	66/1
Stanislas Wawrinka	80/1
Andy Roddick [6]	150/1
Juan Monaco	150/1
Tommy Robredo	150/1
Robin Soderling	200/1
Gilles Simon [8]	200/1
Igor Andreev	200/1

Performance Of The Seeded Players

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
2009	RU	W	SF	QF	SF	QF	QF	R3
2008	No event held							
2007	No event held							
2006	No event held							
2005	No event held							
2004	No event held							

Recent Winners/Leading Performers

	Winner	Runner-Up	Losing SF's
2009	Roger Federer (9/1)	Rafael Nadal (1/3)	Del Potro-Djokovic
2008	No event held		
2007	No event held		
2006	No event held		
2005	No event held		
2004	No event held		

Betting - Madrid Masters

Pre-Tournament Briefing :-

Nadal (1/3) came into this event on the back of a 29 match unbeaten run on clay having just won in each of Monte Carlo, Barcelona and Rome. There seemed little doubts as to his fitness as well and so, playing once again in his native Spain, could he really be opposed?

Not on the grounds of form but possibly on account of value. Even in his pomp Roger Federer was never anywhere near this short for a tournament of this stature and there was a view that the Spaniard was fast approaching the 'tipping point' of value.

Of course, that view has to be balanced with the consideration of who would actually beat the favourite. Federer (9/1), Djokovic (10/1) and Murray (12/1) were the obvious alternatives but all three had a history of playing second fiddle to the Spaniard, at least on this surface.

Faced with such a short price logic suggests that you look for an each-way bet in the opposing half of the draw so Federer and Murray had to be viewed as potential bets along with Del Potro (33/1) and Davdyenko (28/1) provided you were happy to take the Russian's fitness on trust.

Post-Tournament Review :-

The formbook was very much in evidence here, as you might expect for a top quality event, with most seeds making it to the QF's and the No.1 and No.2 players meeting in the final.

Yes, the final did produce a shock but how much of that can be put down to Nadal's titanic SF encounter with Djokovic can't be under-estimated. It's the same as when Federer beat Nadal in Hamburg in 2007, the feeling is that it said more about Nadal's weakness on the day, not Federer's strength.

Of the rest, Djokovic obviously takes most plaudits along with Del Potro but overall this was a tournament which produced few surprises ... until the final!

Pointers for 2010 :-

The loss of Nadal highlights the fact that in a short run-up to the French Open be wary of players burning themselves out by trying to play too often, too quickly - we may even find one or two players missing Masters Series events as a result, a big risk of course with so many ranking points on offer. Nadal, for now, remains an option on home soil but guys like Djokovic, Del Potro and Murray are all likely winners at this level.