

Overview - Malaysian Open

The start of the first proper 'Asian swing' on the ATP Tour had a number of top players heading to the Far East in advance of the upcoming events in Beijing, Tokyo and the Shanghai Masters - meaning this inaugural World Tour 250 tournament was filled with plenty of talent, even despite a field of just 28.

Something illustrated by the R1 defeats of both David Ferrer (No.7) and Lleyton Hewitt (No.8) by top quality opponents, Mikhail Youzhny and Joachim Johansson - the Swede playing his first match in a year after a longstanding shoulder injury had already forced him to retire from the sport once!

There were also good wins for Marcos Baghdatis who saw off Yen-Hsun Lu after 2'49" on court, Taylor Dent over Andrey Golubev, another two hour plus battle, and Richard Gasquet who trounced Victor Crivoi in 67 minutes!

The top four seeds entered in R2 with only Gonzalez (No.4) struggling, the Chilean pushed to three sets by the Indian qualifier, Rohan Bopanna, but each of Davydenko (No.1), Verdasco (No.2) and Soderling (No.3) cruised into the QF's with straight sets victories.

Gael Monfils (No.5), fresh from victory in Metz, won a second straight match to progress to the last eight where he was joined by the Russian, Youzhny, who dispatched Marcos Baghdatis with ease. The line-up was completed by Tomas Berdych, who had a job to defeat Simon Greul, and Gasquet who gunned down 26 aces (to Johansson's 24) to eventually defeat the wild card 6-2 in the third set.

The four leading players then underlined their status in the event with four more straight sets wins in the QF matches. Verdasco had the hardest test to see off Gasquet but each of Gonzalez, Soderling and Davydenko made short work of their opponents to reach the SF's with any amount in hand.

Davydenko was first into the final. The top seed reversed previous defeats to Soderling in both the French Open and US Open, and came back from losing the first set 1-6, to run out an easy winner 6-2 in the deciding set. In the other match Verdasco beat Gonzalez, breaking serve once in each set.

It was the Russian who took the title with a worthy victory - 'In the semi-finals I played a good match and today was my best match in the week' he said after the match. A third title of 2009 which moved his overall record to 17:5 in finals. Verdasco, for his part, did little wrong all week, he just met a better player on the day - however, that has become the norm for the Spaniard in finals as his record is now 3:6 in ATP championship matches.



Malaysian Open

September 28-04, 2009

Indoor, Hard - ATP World Tour 250

R32	Nikolay Davydenko [1]		R16	Nikolay Davydenko	67
R32	Bye		R16	Taylor Dent	36
R32	Andrey Golubev	636	R16	Martin Vassallo Arguello	42
R32	wc-Taylor Dent	467	R16	Gael Monfils	66
R32	Feliciano Lopez	33	R16	Robin Soderling	66
R32	Martin Vassallo Arguello	66	R16	Brendan Evans	11
R32	Denis Istomin	66	R16	Simon Greul	363
R32	Gael Monfils [5]	77	R16	Tomas Berdych	646
R32	Robin Soderling [3]		R16	Mikhail Youzhny	66
R32	Bye		R16	Marcos Baghdatis	23
R32	q-Michael Yani	34	R16	Rohan Bopanna	464
R32	q-Brendan Evans	66	R16	Fernando Gonzalez	636
R32	Simon Greul	636	R16	Joachim Johansson	662
R32	Christophe Rochus	462	R16	Richard Gasquet	476
R32	Igor Kunitsyn	162	R16	Karol Beck	40
R32	Tomas Berdych [6]	636	R16	Fernando Verdasco	66
R32	David Ferrer [7]	62	QF	Nikolay Davydenko	66
R32	Mikhail Youzhny	76	QF	Gael Monfils	33
R32	Yen-Hsun Lu	636	QF	Robin Soderling	66
R32	wc-Marcos Baghdatis	467	QF	Tomas Berdych	22
R32	Jose Acasuso	634	QF	Mikhail Youzhny	34
R32	q-Rohan Bopanna	466	QF	Fernando Gonzalez	66
R32	Bye		QF	Richard Gasquet	54
R32	Fernando Gonzalez [4]		QF	Fernando Verdasco	76
R32	Lleyton Hewitt [8]	63			
R32	wc-Joachim Johansson	76	SF	Nikolay Davydenko	176
R32	Richard Gasquet	66	SF	Robin Soderling	662
R32	Victor Crivoi	12	SF	Fernando Gonzalez	45
R32	q-Mikhail Kukushkin	663	SF	Fernando Verdasco	67
R32	Karol Beck	176			
R32	Bye		RU	Fernando Verdasco	45
R32	Fernando Verdasco [2]		W	Nikolay Davydenko	67

	No. Matches	2 sets-3 sets	Ave. Sets/Match	Ave. Games/Match
R32	12 matches	6-6	2.50	24.25
R16	8 matches	5-3	2.37	21.87
QF	4 matches	4-0	2.00	18.75
SF	2 matches	1-1	2.50	25.00
F	1 match	1-0	2.00	22.00

Malaysian Open - Facts & Figures

Market Leaders	Odds
Robin Soderling [3]	3/1
Fernando Verdasco [2]	7/2
Nikolay Davydenko [1]	8/1
Fernando Gonzalez [4]	12/1
Gael Monfils [5]	12/1
Tomas Berdych [6]	20/1
David Ferrer [7]	20/1
Lleyton Hewitt [8]	20/1
Richard Gasquet	33/1
Marcos Baghdatis	40/1
Mikhail Youzhny	40/1
Feliciano Lopez	40/1
Taylor Dent	40/1
Jose Acasuso	40/1
Karol Beck	66/1

Performance Of The Seeded Players

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
2009	W	RU	SF	SF	QF	QF	R1	R1
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	Nikolay Davydenko (8/1)	Fernando Verdasco (7/2)	Soderling-Gonzalez
2008	No event held		
2007	No event held		
2006	No event held		
2005	No event held		
2004	No event held		

Betting - Malaysian Open

Pre-Tournament Briefing :-

A strong field. Soderling (3/1) was favourite due to a good recent run but his win ratio in tournaments - 4 titles in 8 years - made the odds a bit skinny in this good a field. Davydenko (8/1), by comparison, looked better value even if Soderling had won their last four meetings.

Monfils (12/1) was in good form but fatigue might play a part given the fact he had so little time to acclimatise but Berdych (20/1) certainly had each-way claims in a half of the draw where the non-seeds posed no great threat.

For good, evenly matches seeds in the bottom section. Verdasco (7/2) had won already in 2009 but has the worst record of all the top players in finals - so could the Spaniard be trusted? Hewitt (20/1) was a fighter if being below his best in 2009, much like the off-colour Ferrer (20/1) who could be very good on his day but had suffered a winless season to date.

Gonzalez (12/1) was probably of most interest, almost by default. The South American could play on hard courts, was relatively fresh and already had a bye into R2.

Post-Tournament Review :-

Davydenko barely put a foot wrong and proved that on his day he's a very smart performer indeed. Verdasco did the hard part in beating Gasquet and Gonzalez but had no answers in the final to the Russian - so maybe this defeat in a final was forgivable.

Soderling and Gonzalez played to form, Monfils clearly suffered due to jetlag and the likes of Berdych, Gasquet and Youzhny all re-inforced their top 30 credentials without finding quite enough to topple the big guns.

Good to see Johansson back in action but for his R1 opponent, Hewitt, and Ferrer, early exits were a shade disappointing.

Pointers for 2010 :-

It's hard to be too confident about what pointers can be drawn from a first tournament in a new city/country. It's clear, however, that money will attract a good turnout so look to quality first and foremost. Also, if the first event in the Far East, look to guys who are fresh and not in action the weeke before - so they can get used to conditions. Davydenko has pledged to return in 2010 and, if he does, the Russian should go well, but the defending champion aside look for solid hard court performers like Gonzalez, Roddick and Cilic.