

Overview - Medibank International

With the Australian Open a week off some players chose to play the exhibition tournament in Kooyong (Federer, Gonzalez, Verdasco) whilst others (Nadal, Murray, Roddick) opted for a period of training, practice and relaxation away from prying eyes. Either way it left this event with a solid rather than spectacular look.

However, there was still plenty of interesting action - starting in R1 with the demise of both Tomas Berdych (No.6) to the Aussie, Chris Guccione, and Mardy Fish (No.8) also lost early to Janko Tipsarevic.

Other matches saw former four-time champion, Lleyton Hewitt, just get the better of Julien Benneteau, Mario Ancic also won a close three-setter against Xavier Malisse and Richard Gasquet put out Dmitry Tursunov, the defending champion. We also saw Radek Stepanek, the previous week's winner in Brisbane, go out early as illness forced him to retire from his match.

The top four seeds entered the fray in R2. Djokovic (No.1), Tsonga (No.3) and Nalbandian (No.4) all won in straight sets but Gilles Simon (No.2) lost an all-French encounter with Richard Gasquet - a very tough first match for the second seed. Jeremy Chardy made the most of Stepanek's retirement in R1 to defeat Igor Andreev (No.5) and then Mario Ancic showed some of his best form to blow away Tommy Robredo (No.7) for the loss of just three games.

The QF's all went to form. Novak Djokovic saw off Ancic and Nalbandian edged out Hewitt (who had missed most of 2008 with a hip injury and was still very much on the comeback trail). Gasquet beat his fellow Frenchman, Chardy, with relative ease before Jarkko Nieminen was able to benefit from the withdrawal of Jo-Wilfried Tsonga. A back injury put paid to his chances - *'I hope it will not affect me for the Australian Open but I don't know.'* he said.

The SF's saw David Nalbandian ease into the final (beats Gasquet 7:0) with another solid win before Jarkko Nieminen shocked the top seed and tournament favourite, Djokovic, with a stunning performance. As he put it himself - *'today I came to the court with the attitude I had nothing to lose'* - that mindset clearly worked as he beat the Serb for the first time.

Nalbandian took the title with a three set win in 2'16" that should have been easier than the Argentine made it (he served for the match at 6-3 5-4). Credit though to the Dane as he fought back to force a deciding set before the No.4 puled away in the final set - *'he really deserved to win in the end'* said Nieminen. This win made Nalbandian 10:10 in tour finals but another loss in a championship match dropped Nieminen's record to 1:8.



Medibank International

January 12-17, 2009

Outdoor, Hard - ATP Tour World 250

R32	wc-Novak Djokovic [1]		R16	Novak Djokovic	66
R32	Bye		R16	Paul-Henri Mathieu	12
R32	Andreas Seppi	263	R16	Mario Ancic	66
R32	Paul-Henri Mathieu	626	R16	Tommy Robredo	21
R32	Mario Ancic	476	R16	Jo-Wilfried Tsonga	66
R32	Xavier Malisse	663	R16	Simone Bolelli	41
R32	Jurgen Melzer	34	R16	Jarkko Nieminen	76
R32	Tommy Robredo [7]	66	R16	Chris Guccione	63
R32	Jo-Wilfried Tsonga [3]		R16	Janko Tipsarevic	54
R32	Bye		R16	Lleyton Hewitt	76
R32	Simone Bolelli	76	R16	Michael Llodra	13
R32	LL-Potito Starace	64	R16	David Nalbandian	66
R32	Jarkko Nieminen	67	R16	Igor Andreev	464
R32	Feliciano Lopez	26	R16	Jeremy Chardy	646
R32	Chris Guccione	66	R16	Richard Gasquet	66
R32	Tomas Berdych [6]	34	R16	Gilles Simon	44
R32	Mardy Fish [8]	464	QF	Novak Djokovic	66
R32	Janko Tipsarevic	636	QF	Mario Ancic	34
R32	Julien Benneteau	724	QF	Jo-Wilfried Tsonga	w/o
R32	wc-Lleyton Hewitt	566	QF	Jarkko Nieminen	
R32	Q-Denis Gremelmayr	02	QF	Lleyton Hewitt	65
R32	Michael Llodra	66	QF	David Nalbandian	77
R32	Bye		QF	Jeremy Chardy	26
R32	David Nalbandian [4]		QF	Richard Gasquet	67
R32	Igor Andreev [5]	76			
R32	Q-Frank Dancevic	63	SF	Novak Djokovic	46
R32	Q-Jeremy Chardy	63	SF	Jarkko Nieminen	67
R32	Radek Stepanek	retd. 40	SF	David Nalbandian	66
R32	Dmitry Tursunov	64	SF	Richard Gasquet	43
R32	Richard Gasquet	76			
R32	Bye		RU	Jarkko Nieminen	372
R32	Gilles Simon [2]		W	David Nalbandian	666

	No. Matches	2 sets-3 sets	Ave. Sets/Match	Ave. Games/Match
R32	12 matches	8-4	2.33	22.50
R16	8 matches	7-1	2.12	19.62
QF	3 matches	3-0	2.00	21.66
SF	2 matches	2-0	2.00	21.00
F	1 match	0-1	3.00	30.00

Medibank International - Facts & Figures

Market Leaders	Odds
Novak Djokovic [1]	5/2
Jo-Wilfried Tsonga [3]	5/1
David Nalbandian [4]	6/1
Gilles Simon [2]	12/1
Richard Gasquet	14/1
Tomas Berdych [6]	16/1
Radek Stepanek	22/1
Igor Andreev [5]	25/1
Lleyton Hewitt	33/1
Dmitry Tursunov	33/1
Mardy Fish [8]	40/1
Paul-Henri Mathieu	40/1
Jarkko Nieminen	40/1
Feliciano Lopez	50/1
Tommy Robredo [7]	50/1

Performance Of The Seeded Players

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

Recent Winners/Leading Performers

	Winner	Runner-Up	Losing SF's
2009	David Nalbandian (6/1)	Jarkko Nieminen (40/1)	Gasquet-Djokovic
2008	Dmitry Tursunov (25/1)	Chris Guccione (80/1)	Santoro-Stepanek
2007	James Blake (6/1)	Carlos Moya (33/1)	Melzer-Gasquet
2006	James Blake (18/1)	Igor Andreev (150/1)	Davydenko-Seppi
2005	Lleyton Hewitt (2/1)	Ivo Minar (250/1)	Mirnyi-Stepanek
2004	Lleyton Hewitt (4/1)	Carlos Moya (8/1)	Verkerk-Ferreira

Betting - Medibank International

Pre-Tournament Briefing :-

The loss of Djokovic the week before in Brisbane did nothing to suggest his odds of 5/2 this time around were any better value. More so with a draw which presented potentially tough matches right through the event.

The Serb also had a losing record against Tsonga, so should the two meet in the SF's then the Frenchman, at odds of 5/1, seemed a viable alternative.

That pair aside, Berdych (16/1), Nieminen (40/1) and Mathieu (40/1) were all capable of mounting a challenge, as was Mario Ancic (50/1).

The bottom section was tough to call with players such as Hewitt, Gasquet and Tursnov all unseeded. What it did suggest was Simon (12/1) and Andreev (25/1), seeded in that fourth quarter, were up against it and possibly the option of Nalbandian (6/1) was a more sensible choice given that Hewitt was returning from a long lay-off and Mardy Fish (40/1) was difficult to win with - that third quarter looked a much easier section to predict ... even if Nalbandian is often a hard character to read.

Post-Tournament Review :-

Concerns over Djokovic were confirmed by his loss but the player was hardly value anyway. Tsonga looked in good nick until his back gave in whilst both Robredo and Berdych continued to show failings in their game. Fair play to Nieminen, who played very well all week, only to be undone by his usual failing in finals. A record of 1:8 is shocking and pegs him purely as each-way material.

In the bottom half, Nalbandian decided to play up to his potential this week (which would make him a top five player if he showed it regularly), Andreev gave more evidence of his ability (a) to get seedings but (b) never to win and Gasquet played to the form (just like in Brisbane) of a player who can't win.

Pointers for 2010 :-

Being the week before a Slam enough good players compete each year to ensure a 'name' player usually prevails. However, that timing also means one or two big names will have their eyes on Melbourne - so there are also plenty of examples of each-way value. Best to look for a guy in the top 20 who has a fair draw (not necessarily a bye) and a bit of previous form at this time of year. Dmitry Tursunov, Richard Gasquet and Tomas Berdych fit the bill and James Blake would be another obvious choice should he choose to return again in '10.