

Pilot Pen Tennis - Overview

Last minute practice was very much order of the day in this final tour event before the US Open. Most of the players, no doubt happy with their form in Montreal and Cincinnati, were happy to sit this one out but enough players came here looking to 'find their game' that the event didn't have a totally threadbare ... even if it did seem to be wearing a little thin.

Given the draw of 48 players there was a need to give 16 seeds, not the customary 8, a bye in R2. As a result, what matches there were in R1 were hardly great spectacles with which to start the tournament - things could only get better!

Guys like the Portuguese player, Frederico Gil, in beating Marcos Baghdatis and Paul Capdeville, of Chile, who saw off Jarkko Nieminen did manage to take a couple of decent scalps in what meaningful action took place. There was also welcome success for Taylor Dent as the American, on the very long road back to recovery after suffering with severe back problems the past few years, managed to get the better of Ivan Ljubicic. It really was a good result to beat the Croat so easily.

Other good wins came for Leonardo Mayer over Denis Istomin, Pablo Cuevas who proved too strong for Andrey Golubev and Rajeev Ram, the recent Newport champion, who edged out the the veteran Ecuadorean player, Nicolas Lapentti, in three tough sets.

All the big guns then entered the action in R2. Easy wins came for the top seeds as Nikolay Davydenko (No.1) and Fernando Verdasco (No.2) found their way past Robert Kendrick and Paul Capdeville respectively but a double blow for Spanish hopes came with the loss of Tommy Robredo (No.3) to Jose Acasuso and the no-show of David Ferrer (No.4) through injury. Both players would have hoped for much better fortune this week.

Mardy Fish (No.5) then fared little better in losing to Ram in straight sets, a poor loss by the two-time finalist, but at least home hopes remained alive with Sam Querrey (No.6) winning along with both Igor Andreev (No.7) and Victor Hanesco (No.8).

They were joined in the last 16 by Igor Kunitsyn, a ready winner over Dent, Leonardo Mayer who brushed aside Olivier Rochus for the loss of just four games and Fabrice Santoro - who gave up only five games in seeing off the Italian, Potito Starace. The pick of the other results was Florent Serra getting the better of compatriot Jeremy Chardy in an all-French affair which lasted just over two hours.

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Only one of the top seeds lost in R3. The tall Romanian, Victor Hanescu, finding Jurgen Melzer too good as the Austrian closed out a three set win, comfortably as it happens, 6-1 in the deciding set.

Of the other main players remaining it was business as usual for the top two, Davydenko and Verdasco both winning in straight sets, and there were also two sets wins for Sam Querrey and Igor Andreev.

The young Argentine, Leonardo Mayer, made the QF's with a clear-cut win over Italy's Simone Bolelli whilst the last two places in the line-up were taken by fellow South American, Jose Acasuso, and Florent Serra. Both players had to dig deep in coming from behind to beat Igor Kunitsyn and Rajeev Ram in their respective ties.

The No.2 seed from Spain, Fernando Verdasco, had no problem in reaching the SF's as he defeated his Austrian opponent, Jurgen Melzer, in 57 minutes, and Jose Acasuso was also an easy winner over Serra.

The best matches of the round both went to three sets. Igor Andreev first had to fight off Mayer in their 2'21" encounter. The Russian missed a chance when serving for the match at 6-4 5-4 and almost paid for it as Mayer levelled but finally Andreev closed it out 6-3 in the third set. Sam Querrey then pulled off a major surprise in knocking out the No.1 seed, Davydenko, with a fine performance. In good form all Summer, the American almost blew his chance when 15/40 on his own serve at 4-4 in the decider but he managed to hold and then broke Davydenko to claim the win and make the SF's.

There was no stopping Querrey either in those SF's as the 21-year-old took just 63 minutes to see off Jose Acasuso. He would face the Spaniard, Verdasco, in the final as the second seed also progressed in straight sets although Andreev made him work much harder as both sets were settled by way of a tie-break.

Both matches were played indoors due to bad weather and later the same day the players returned for the final. Verdasco it was who came out on top, winning narrowly (Querrey had set points in the second set) to record a first win on hard courts. *'I think I was just a bit lucky today. Also not only now the final, the semifinals against Andreev, two tie-breaks. I had a good day in the tie-breaks, and that helped me so much to win'* - that was how Verdasco put it later. He moved to 3:6 in career finals, surprisingly poor given his top ten ranking, but Querrey's fourth loss in his fifth final of 2009 did his record no favours either as he slipped to 2:4 in championship matches.



Pilot Pen Tennis

August 24-30, 2009

Outdoor, Hard - ATP World Tour 250

R48 Nikolay Davydenko [1]		R48 Igor Andreev [7]	
R48 Bye		R48 Bye	
R48 q-Frederik Nielsen	3 5	R48 Kevin Kim	6 5 6
R48 Robert Kendrick	6 7	R48 Teimuraz Gabashvili	4 7 3
R48 Mischa Zverev	3 6 3	R48 q-Frederico Gil	6 6
R48 Potito Starace	6 2 6	R48 wc-Marcos Baghdatis	4 3
R48 Bye		R48 Bye	
R48 Fabrice Santoro [15]		R48 Philipp Petzschner [12]	
R48 Nicolas Almagro [9]		R48 Andreas Beck [13]	
R48 Bye		R48 Bye	
R48 Bjorn Phau	2 6 6	R48 Simone Bolelli	6 6
R48 Benjamin Becker	6 2 3	R48 Christophe Rochus	3 4
R48 Marc Gicquel	6 6	R48 Denis Istomin	2 4
R48 Martin Vassallo Arguello	3 4	R48 Leonardo Mayer	6 6
R48 Bye		R48 Bye	
R48 Sam Querrey [6]		R48 LL-Olivier Rochus	
R48 Tommy Robredo [3]		R48 Victor Hanescu [8]	
R48 Bye		R48 Bye	
R48 Maximo Gonzalez	1 7 2	R48 Janko Tipsarevic	7 2
R48 Jose Acasuso	6 6 6	R48 Fabio Fognini	ret'd. 5 0
R48 Ivan Ljubicic	3 4	R48 Andrey Golubev	3 4
R48 wc-Taylor Dent	6 6	R48 q-Pablo Cuevas	6 6
R48 Bye		R48 Bye	
R48 Igor Kunitsyn [14]		R48 Jurgen Melzer [11]	
R48 Jeremy Chardy [10]		R48 Andreas Seppi [16]	
R48 Bye		R48 Bye	
R48 Steve Darcis	3 3	R48 Yen-Hsun Lu	6 6
R48 Florent Serra	6 6	R48 Guillermo Garcia-Lopez	2 2
R48 q-Nicolas Lapentti	5 6 6	R48 Jarkko Nieminen	5 3
R48 wc-Rajeev Ram	7 1 7	R48 Paul Capdeville	7 6
R48 Bye		R48 Bye	
R48 Mardy Fish [5]		R48 wc-Fernando Verdasco [2]	

	No. Matches	2 sets-3 sets	Ave. Sets/Match	Ave. Games/Match
R64	16 matches	11-5	2.31	21.56
R32	16 matches	9-7	2.43	23.93
R16	8 matches	5-3	2.37	24.62

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R32	Nikolay Davydenko	76	R16	Nikolay Davydenko	76
R32	Robert Kendrick	63	R16	Fabrice Santoro	53
R32	Potito Starace	50	R16	Bjorn Phau	53
R32	Fabrice Santoro	76	R16	Sam Querrey	76
R32	Nicolas Pietrangeli	635	R16	Jose Acasuso	376
R32	Bjorn Phau	267	R16	Igor Kunitsyn	663
R32	Marc Gicquel	472	R16	Florent Serra	477
R32	Sam Querrey	666	R16	Rajeev Ram	665
R32	Tommy Robredo	656	R16	Igor Andreev	66
R32	Jose Acasuso	377	R16	Frederico Gil	44
R32	Taylor Dent	34	R16	Simone Bolelli	24
R32	Igor Kunitsyn	66	R16	Leonardo Mayer	66
R32	Jeremy Chardy	761	R16	Victor Hanesu	661
R32	Florent Serra	676	R16	Jurgen Melzer	746
R32	Rajeev Ram	66	R16	Andreas Seppi	62
R32	Mardy Fish	33	R16	Fernando Verdasco	76
R32	Igor Andreev	66	QF	Nikolay Davydenko	364
R32	Kevin Kim	31	QF	Sam Querrey	636
R32	Frederico Gil	676	QF	Jose Acasuso	76
R32	Philipp Petzschner	763	QF	Florent Serra	54
R32	Andreas Beck	44	QF	Igor Andreev	666
R32	Simone Bolelli	66	QF	Leonardo Mayer	473
R32	Leonardo Mayer	66	QF	Jurgen Melzer	31
R32	Olivier Rochus	04	QF	Fernando Verdasco	66
R32	Victor Hanesu	666			
R32	Janko Tipsarevic	473	SF	Sam Querrey	66
R32	Pablo Cuevas	ret'd. 20	SF	Jose Acasuso	34
R32	Jurgen Melzer	63	SF	Igor Andreev	66
R32	Andreas Seppi	667	SF	Fernando Verdasco	77
R32	Yen-Hsun Lu	735			
R32	Paul Capdeville	03	RU	Sam Querrey	46
R32	Fernando Verdasco	66	W	Fernando Verdasco	67

	No. Matches	2 sets-3 sets	Ave. Sets/Match	Ave. Games/Match
QF	4 matches	2-2	2.50	24.50
SF	2 matches	2-0	2.00	22.50
F	1 match	1-0	2.00	23.00

Pilot Pen Tennis - Facts & Figures

Market Leaders	Odds
Nikolay Davydenko [1]	9/2
Fernando Verdsaco [2]	13/2
David Ferrer	13/2
Sam Querrey [6]	13/2
Mardy Fish [5]	14/1
Jeremy Chardy	20/1
Igor Andreev [7]	28/1
Tommy Robredo [3]	33/1
Ivan Ljubicic	33/1
Philipp Petzschnr	33/1
Jurgen Melzer	40/1
Marcos Baghdatis	40/1
Victor Hanesu [8]	40/1
Andreas Seppi	50/1
Guillermo Garcia-Lopez	50/1

Performance Of The Seeded Players

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
2009	QF	W	R2	-	R2	RU	SF	R3
2008	SF	R3	-	QF	R2	W	QF	RU
2007	R3	R3	W	R3	SF	R3	R2	R2
2006	R2	W	R3	R3	R3	R3	R3	QF
2005	R2	R3	SF	QF	RU	R3	R3	R2
2004	No event held							

Recent Winners/Leading Performers

	Winner	Runner-Up	Losing SF's
2009	Fernando Verdasco (13/2)	Sam Querrey (13/2)	Andreev-Acasuso
2008	Marin Cilic (14/1)	Mardy Fish (25/1)	Gregorc-Verdasco
2007	James Blake (4/1)	Mardy Fish (66/1)	Mathieu-Karlovic
2006	Nikolay Davydenko (14/1)	Agustin Calleri (50/1)	Soderling-Malisse
2005	James Blake (16/1)	Feliciano Lopez (16/1)	Hanesu-Ferrer
2004	No event held		

Betting - Pilot Pen Tennis

Pre-Tournament Briefing :-

As one of the busier players on tour, there were no great worries about Davydenko's motivation. As such, 9/2 was a decent looking price for the best player in what was a pretty average field.

Alternatives came in the form of Querrey (13/2) - but just two points bigger in the betting the American didn't look great value - and the more speculative options like Fish (14/1) Chardy (20/1) and Robredo (33/1) none of whom had been in tremendous recent form.

David Ferrer (13/2) looked a good call over the erratic Andreev (28/1) but injury forced out the Spaniard. Verdasco (13/2) was the pick of the bottom quarter but the problem here was that a mere two career wins hardly pegged the No.2 seed as prolific.

It is also worth bearing in mind that the week before a Slam the form can often prove unreliable - not all players are looking for the same thing out of the week's play and strange results have been known to happen.

Post-Tournament Review :-

Verdasco, by his own admission, had the benefit of winning three crucial tie-breaks in the SF and final - but someone had to win them and he did.

In truth, Andreev and Querrey weren't the toughest opponents late on in an event but Verdasco played as well as anybody this week. Querrey too showed his talents, especially in the US, but his record in finals is a worry.

Andreev, Acasuso, Melzer and Mayer all caught the eye - but as the youngest more emphasis should probably go on the last named player. Davydenko did little wrong but guys like Robredo, Fish and Chardy were disappointing.

Pointers for 2010 :-

The roll of honour is not too bad for an event which falls just before the US Open. Top seeds tend to do well here, Americans are high on the list (as you'd expect on home soil) and the prices of the finalists aren't as varied as some other events. It might be better to look at players who have few miles on the clock after the previous two weeks - Verdasco hadn't made either QF and lost in R1 the week before - and need a good run prior to hitting New York. That apart, solid American players appear to be Sam Querrey and James Blake, maybe John Isner, whilst a couple of others to consider would have to be the regular visitor, Davydenko, and David Ferrer.