

ATP Masters Series Rome - Overview

The tournaments come thick and fast on the European 'clay-court swing' and with this being another Masters Series event all the top names were on show once again this week.

As per usual, with a draw of 56 players, the top eight seeds were given a bye into the second round but there were still enough quality players in R1 to ensure some fascinating encounters.

And we saw a few surprises as well with Paul-Henri Mathieu getting the better of David Ferrer (No.11) and the Romanian, Victor Crivoi, who had come through qualifying, defeating James Blake (No.14) in what turned out to be a pretty comfortable win for the underdog. There was also a setback Jo-Wilfried Tsonga (No.9) as he fell to fellow Frenchman, Richard Gasquet - although, it must be noted, Tsonga is no lover of clay.

The rest of the seeds from No.9 to No.16 made it through into R2 but not without incident. Radek Stepanek (No.16) was pushed all the way in his match with Florent Serra and Tommy Robredo (No.13) had to fight back from 2-6 1-4 down to Marat Safin before eventually winning their 2'12" encounter with something to spare (6-2 in the third) after the Russian capitulated.

Mischa Zverev scored a good win over Tomas Berdych, Ernests Gulbis won against Nicolas Almagro after recovering from losing the first set and then Mardy Fish defeated Igor Andreev in another three-setter.

R2 started with comfortable enough wins for each of Rafael Nadal (No.1), Roger Federer (No.2) and Novak Djokovic (No.3) but there was a surprise loss for Andy Murray (No.4). Given that he was playing Juan Monaco, a multiple tournament winner on clay, this wasn't an incomprehensible defeat but, on recent form, the Scot really should have won the match - all the more so after racing through the first set 6-1.

He was to be joined on the sidelines by another well-fancied player as Nikolay Davydenko (No.7) lost to the Austrian, Jurgen Melzer, in straight sets.

Of the rest Juan Martin Del Potro (No.5) had to battle to see off Viktor Troicki in a match which went to a decider, Fernando Verdaco (No.6) was another who had to go the distance against Mardy Fish and Gilles Simon (No.8) had to come from behind to see off the Italian, Fabio Fognini.

R2 also saw several other notable wins for Stepanek over Lopez, Robredo against Kohlschreiber and Gonzalez in seeing off Janko Tipsarevic.

Overview - ATP Masters Series Rome

Into the last 16 and the three remaining top seeds won their matches for a loss of a mere 8 games between them!

Novak Djokovic dispatched Tommy Robredo in 63 minutes for the loss of two games, Roger Federer took just 66 minutes to defeat Radek Stepanek for the cost of just five and then Rafael Nadal annihilated Robin Soderling, giving up just one game in the process - the only surprise was how the match lasted as long as 84 minutes.

There were also easy, two set wins for Mischa Zverev over Gilles Simon, a good result for the German, plus Juan Monaco, who followed up his Murray win by defeating Marin Cilic and Fernando Verdasco's solid performance in knocking out Richard Gasquet.

The only players made to work for their victories were Fernando Gonzalez and Juan Martin Del Potro who were both pushed to deciding sets before beating Jurgen Melzer and Stanislas Wawrinka respectively.

Each of the QF's went according to the formbook. Nadal was 7:0 against Verdasco and soon enough made it 8:0 with a straightforward win over his fellow countryman. Next up Novak Djokovic got the better of Del Potro and Roger Federer eventually saw off the challenge of Mischa Zverev, after a tight first set the Swiss player proved much too strong for his opponent. Finally, in an all-South American battle, it was the Chilean, Fernando Gonzalez, who completed the SF line-up with a come from behind win over the Argentine, Juan Monaco.

Nadal moved into his fourth Rome final with a 75 minute defeat of Gonzalez, a match where the world No.1 never faced any real threat of defeat. The other match produced a great spectacle as Novak Djokovic came from a set down to oust Roger Federer - the No.2 seed in fact led 3-1 in both the second and third sets before Djokovic twice reeled off five straight games to take them, and the match, 4-6 6-3 6-3.

There was no stopping Nadal landing a record fourth win in Italy. Djokovic pushed the Spaniard in the first set but thereafter the top seed proved unstoppable - *'It is one of the most important titles of my career'*, said Nadal *'to win here in Rome is always unbelievable. It's a very good tournament, and I am very happy for the victory'*. This win took him to 36:9 in finals.

Djokovic dropped to 12:9 but put up a good showing all week and in beating Federer in the SF's showed himself to be Nadal's main rival on clay.



Rome Masters

April 27-03, 2009

Outdoor, Clay - ATP Tour Masters 1000

R64 Rafael Nadal [1]		R64 Juan Martin Del Potro [5]	
R64 Bye		R64 Bye	
R64 Andreas Seppi	3 6 6	R64 Victor Hanescu	3 3
R64 Sam Querrey	6 4 3	R64 Viktor Troicki	6 6
R64 Robin Soderling	6 6	R64 q-Daniel Gimeno-Traver	5 4
R64 Marcel Granollers	3 0	R64 q-Mikhail Youzhny	7 6
R64 q-Victor Crivoi	7 6	R64 Igor Kunitsyn	3 4
R64 James Blake [14]	5 3	R64 Stanislas Wawrinka [10]	6 6
R64 Jo-Wilfried Tsonga [9]	6 4	R64 Tommy Robredo [13]	2 7 6
R64 Richard Gasquet	7 6	R64 Marat Safin	6 6 2
R64 Nicolas Almagro	6 6 2	R64 Philipp Kohlschreiber	4 6 6
R64 Ernests Gulbis	3 7 6	R64 Simone Bolelli	6 1 0
R64 Mardy Fish	6 4 7	R64 wc-Potito Starace	6 4
R64 Igor Andrejev	3 6 6	R64 Albert Montanes	7 6
R64 Bye		R64 Bye	
R64 Fernando Verdasco [6]		R64 Novak Djokovic [3]	
R64 Andy Murray [4]		R64 Gilles Simon [8]	
R64 Bye		R64 Bye	
R64 Nicolas Kiefer	2 3	R64 wc-Fabio Fognini	6 6 7
R64 Juan Monaco	6 6	R64 wc-Filippo Volandri	7 1 6
R64 Juan Ignacio Chela	1 2	R64 q-Mischa Zverev	4 6 7
R64 Christophe Rochus	6 6	R64 Tomas Berdych	6 2 5
R64 wc-Flavio Cipolla	2 2	R64 Paul-Henri Mathieu	6 2 6
R64 Marin Cilic [15]	6 6	R64 David Ferrer [11]	3 6 2
R64 Fernando Gonzalez [12]	6 6	R64 Radek Stepanek [16]	7 4 7
R64 Jeremy Chardy	4 1	R64 Florent Serra	6 6 5
R64 Janko Tipsarevic	6 6	R64 q-Thomaz Bellucci	4 2
R64 Jose Acasuso	3 4	R64 Feliciano Lopez	6 6
R64 Julien Benneteau	6 2 3	R64 q-Jan Hernych	6 4 2
R64 Jurgen Melzer	3 6 6	R64 Ivo Karlovic	4 6 6
R64 Bue		R64 Bye	
R64 Nikolay Davydenko [7]		R64 Roger Federer [2]	

	No. Matches	2 sets-3 sets	Ave. Sets/Match	Ave. Games/Match
R64	24 matches	13-11	2.45	23.41
R32	16 matches	8-8	2.50	23.68
R16	8 matches	6-2	2.25	20.37

Rome Masters

April 27-03, 2009

Outdoor, Clay - ATP Tour Masters 1000



R32	Rafael Nadal	66	R16	Rafael Nadal	66
R32	Andreas Seppi	23	R16	Robin Soderling	10
R32	Robin Soderling	666	R16	Richard Gasquet	54
R32	Victor Crivoi	171	R16	Fernando Verdasco	76
R32	Richard Gasquet	616	R16	Juan Monaco	66
R32	Ernesto Gulbis	264	R16	Marin Cilic	44
R32	Mardy Fish	473	R16	Fernando Gonzalez	367
R32	Fernando Verdasco	656	R16	Jurgen Melzer	635
R32	Andy Murray	635	R16	Juan Martin Del Potro	666
R32	Juan Monaco	167	R16	Stanislas Wawrinka	273
R32	Christophe Rochus	072	R16	Tommy Robredo	11
R32	Marin Cilic	656	R16	Novak Djokovic	66
R32	Fernando Gonzalez	66	R16	Gilles Simon	41
R32	Janko Tipsarevic	44	R16	Mischa Zverev	66
R32	Jurgen Melzer	77	R16	Radek Stepanek	41
R32	Nikolay Davydenko	56	R16	Roger Federer	66
R32	Juan Martin Del Potro	616	QF	Rafael Nadal	66
R32	Viktor Troicki	363	QF	Fernando Verdasco	33
R32	Mikhail Youzhny	36	QF	Juan Monaco	634
R32	Stanislas Wawrinka	67	QF	Fernando Gonzalez	266
R32	Tommy Robredo	67	QF	Juan Martin Del Potro	34
R32	Philipp Kohlschreiber	26	QF	Novak Djokovic	66
R32	Albert Montanes	60	QF	Mischa Zverev	62
R32	Novak Djokovic	76	QF	Roger Federer	76
R32	Gilles Simon	666			
R32	Fabio Fognini	723	SF	Rafael Nadal	66
R32	Mischa Zverev	376	SF	Fernando Gonzalez	33
R32	Paul-Henri Mathieu	660	SF	Novak Djokovic	466
R32	Radek Stepanek	66	SF	Roger Federer	633
R32	Feliciano Lopez	21			
R32	Ivo Karlovic	44	RU	Novak Djokovic	62
R32	Roger Federer	66	W	Rafael Nadal	76

	No. Matches	2 sets-3 sets	Ave. Sets/Match	Ave. Games/Match
QF	4 matches	3-1	2.25	21.25
SF	2 matches	1-1	2.50	23.00
F	1 match	1-0	2.00	21.00

ATP Masters Series Rome - Facts & Figures

Market Leaders	Odds
Rafael Nadal [1]	2/5
Novak Djokovic [3]	8/1
Roger Federer [2]	10/1
Andy Murray [4]	14/1
Nikolay Davydenko [7]	40/1
Juan Martin Del Potro [5]	40/1
David Ferrer [7]	50/1
Fernando Verdasco [6]	50/1
Fernando Gonzalez [8]	50/1
Gilles Simon [8]	66/1
Stanislas Wawrinka	80/1
Nicolas Almagro	125/1
Tommy Robredo	150/1
Radek Stepanek	150/1
Tomas Berdych	150/1

Performance Of The Seeded Players

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
2009	W	SF	RU	R2	QF	QF	R2	R3
2008	QF	R2	W	R3	R2	SF	R2	QF
2007	R3	W	R3	SF	QF	RU	QF	R2
2006	RU	W	R1	SF	QF	R3	R1	R1
2005	R3	R2	R3	R3	W	SF	R1	R1
2004	R2	R1	R1	R3	RU	W	R2	QF

Recent Winners/Leading Performers

	Winner	Runner-Up	Losing SF's
2009	Rafael Nadal (2/5)	Novak Djokovic (8/1)	Gonzalez-Federer
2008	Novak Djokovic (9/1)	Stanislas Wawrinka (150/1)	Stepanek-Roddick
2007	Rafael Nadal (8/15)	Fernando Gonzalez (100/1)	Davydenko-Volandri
2006	Rafael Nadal (8/11)	Roger Federer (5/2)	Monfils-Nalbandian
2005	Rafael Nadal (5/4)	Guillermo Coria (16/1)	Ferrer-Agassi
2004	Carlos Moya (28/1)	David Nalbandian (50/1)	Zabaleta-Costa

Betting - ATP Masters Series Rome

Pre-Tournament Briefing :-

Rafael Nadal (2/5) entered this event having won in both Monte Carlo and Barcelona the previous two weeks, each time with something in hand. As such, he was a very warm favourite - and rightly so.

What's more, the Spaniard had won here in three of the last four years and he had a pretty good draw this time around. His nearest challenger in his own quarter was Fernando Verdasco (50/1), who he led 7:0 on past meetings, and even a possible SF against one of Andy Murray (14/1), Nikolay Davydenko (40/1) or Fernando Gonzalez (50/1), given that this was clay, wasn't deemed much of a threat to the world No.1's chances.

The best option looked an each-way bet in the bottom section and with Federer (10/1) not firing on all cylinders - his 2009 was still very patchy - the obvious choice was Novak Djokovic (8/1). The Serb made more appeal, especially after his Monte Carlo exploits, than Juan Martin Del Potro (40/1), David Ferrer (50/1) or last year's RU, Stanislas Wawrinka (80/1).

Post-Tournament Review :-

A victory for the formbook as the market leader defeated the second favourite in the final. Nadal didn't drop a set all week and looked even more impressive than in Barcelona the week before. Djokovic played well too.

Roger Federer ran a solid race before finding Djokovic too strong in the SF's and even Andy Murray's demise, given his lack of top-level experience on clay, was understandable.

Fernando Gonzalez played well to reach the SF's and guys like Del Potro and Verdasco played up to form (good but not good enough) with only a couple really letting themselves down. Murray lost to a decent clay-courtier in Monaco but should really have won that match, Daydenko, still feeling his way back to form after injury, went out tamely to Melzer and the likes of James Blake and Jo-Wilfried Tsonga once again showed their 'feet of clay'.

Pointers for 2010 :-

Nadal clearly targets this event. With four wins in five years he has to be considered, more so if he's played well in the previous weeks. But Rafa aside, you're looking for a well-seeded, European with a clay-court pedigree. That would have to direct attention to Novak Djokovic, possibly Andy Murray (if he's won on clay by then) or for a very rare South American win, a first since Gustavo Kuerten 1999, take a look at Juan Martin Del Potro.