

Overview - SA Tennis Open

The inaugural main tour event in South Africa sadly wasn't met with the best of turn-outs. In fact, for most it just seemed like a stopping off point coming back from Australia.

This was reflected in the choice of seeds which included several players who frankly didn't deserve such status but, then again, who else did?

Two were despatched in R1 as fellow Spaniards, Marcel Granollers (No.3) and Ivan Navarro (No.5), lost most disappointingly in straight sets. Not a fate which befell the likes of Jo-Wilfried Tsonga (No.1), David Ferrer (No.2) and Marcos Baghdatis (No.8) as the three market leaders all won with something in hand against rather moderate opposition.

R2 saw all the remaining seeds progress to the QF's. Each won in routine fashion with Guillermo Garcia-Lopez (No.4) and Jeremy Chardy (No.6) along with Kristof Vliegen (No.7) keeping up with Tsonga, Ferrer and Baghdatis who once again defeated their opponents with little trouble.

We saw the first really competitive match of the event in the QF's as Ferrer met Baghdatis. The first set was a nip and tuck affair before the Spaniard broke at 6-5 in the first set before easing home with a double break of serve in the second. Jo-Wilfried Tsonga again dropped just five games (for the third match in a row) to beat Vliegen whilst Frederico Gil upset Garcia-Lopez in saving 10 of the 11 break points he faced.

The final player into the SF's was the French player, Jeremy Chardy, who defeated fellow-countryman, Sebastien De Chaunac in straight sets.

For Chardy this was his first SF on the main ATP Tour and it proved one to remember. David Ferrer held match point at 6-1 5-4 and again during the second set tie break. In all, the No.2 seed missed three match points before Chardy took both the second and third set on tie-breaks!

Jo-Wilfried Tsonga then made it an all-French final as he calmly saw off Gil in just 64 minutes.

There was little doubt that Tsonga deserved his 1'48" victory over Chardy as he took his third career title (3:1 overall). He put this win down to good serving - *'It's the best part of my game ... I improved it a lot last year and now I'm really confident on important points.'* - and his growing experience. As for Chardy, he enjoyed his best week to date on tour and despite losing in his first final the young French player created a very favourable impression.



SA Tennis Open

February 2-8, 2009

Outdoor, Hard - ATP Tour World 250

R32	Jo-Wilfried Tsonga [1]	6 6	R16	Jo-Wilfried Tsonga	6 6
R32	Thiago Alves	4 1	R16	Denis Istomin	1 4
R32	Denis Istomin	4 6 7	R16	Ivo Minar	4 1
R32	Santiago Ventura	6 4 6	R16	Kristof Vliegen	6 6
R32	Kevin Anderson	6 4	R16	Guillermo Garcia-Lopez	6 7
R32	Ivo Minar	7 6	R16	Leonardo Mayer	4 5
R32	q-Ross Hutchins	6 4	R16	Frederico Gil	4 7 6
R32	Kristof Vliegen [7]	7 6	R16	Rik De Voest	6 5 4
R32	Guillermo Garcia-Lopez [4]	6 6	R16	Jeremy Chardy	6 6
R32	Bjorn Phau	4 3	R16	Marco Chiudinelli	4 4
R32	Sergio Roitman	2 4	R16	Izak Van der Merwe	7 5 6
R32	Leonardo Mayer	6 6	R16	Sebastien De Chaunac	6 7 7
R32	Frederico Gil	6 6	R16	Marcos Baghdatis	6 7
R32	Daniel Koellerer	4 0	R16	Raven Klaasen	3 5
R32	wc-Rik De Voest	6 6	R16	Simon Greul	3 4
R32	Ivan Navarro [5]	3 4	R16	David Ferrer	6 6
R32	Jeremy Chardy [6]	6 6	QF	Jo-Wilfried Tsonga	6 6
R32	Jiri Vanek	0 4	QF	Kristof Vliegen	4 1
R32	Flavio Cipolla	5 6 4	QF	Guillermo Garcia-Lopez	6 3
R32	q-Marco Chiudinelli	7 1 6	QF	Frederico Gil	7 6
R32	wc-Izak Van Der Merwe	7 7	QF	Jeremy Chardy	7 6
R32	Benjamin Becker	6 6	QF	Sebastien De Chaunac	6 3
R32	Sebastien De Chaunac	7 7	QF	Marcos Baghdatis	5 2
R32	Marcel Granollers [3]	5 6	QF	David Ferrer	7 6
R32	Marcos Baghdatis [8]	6 6			
R32	q-Andrew Anderson	4 2	SF	Jo-Wilfried Tsonga	6 6
R32	Ruben Ramiraz Hidalgo	3 5	SF	Frederico Gil	3 4
R32	wc-Raven Klaasen	6 7	SF	Jeremy Chardy	1 7 7
R32	Simon Greul	6 6	SF	David Ferrer	6 6 6
R32	Victor Crivoi	2 4			
R32	Dudi Sela	2 0	RU	Jeremy Chardy	4 6
R32	David Ferrer [2]	6 6	W	Jo-Wilfried Tsonga	6 7

	No. Matches	2 sets-3 sets	Ave. Sets/Match	Ave. Games/Match
R32	16 matches	14-2	2.12	20.81
R16	8 matches	6-2	2.25	23.25
QF	4 matches	4-0	2.00	20.25
SF	2 matches	1-1	2.50	26.00
F	1 match	1-0	2.00	23.00

SA Tennis Open - Facts & Figures

Market Leaders	Odds
Jo-Wilfried Tsonga [1]	5/4
Marcos Baghdatis [8]	5/1
David Ferrer [2]	6/1
Marcel Granollers [3]	16/1
Jeremy Chardy [6]	18/1
Dudi Sela	25/1
Guillermo Garcia-Lopez [4]	33/1
Benjamin Becker	33/1
Kristof Vliegen [7]	40/1
Ivan Navarro [5]	66/1
Denis Istomin	66/1
Flavio Cipolla	66/1
Bjorn Phau	80/1
Leonardo Mayer	80/1
Ruben Ramirez-Hidalgo	100/1

Performance Of The Seeded Players

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
2009	W	SF	R1	QF	R1	RU	QF	QF
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	Jo-Wilfried Tsonga (5/4)	Jeremy Chardy (18/1)	Gil-Ferrer
2008	No event held		
2007	No event held		
2006	No event held		
2005	No event held		
2004	No event held		

Betting - SA Tennis Open

Pre-Tournament Briefing :-

Due to the very poor standard of the field, analysis of this tournament ended up as a decision between two possibilities.

The first was whether Tsonga (5/4) would justify favouritism and a short price. He was the best player in the field in terms of rankings, form and winning potential - however, he did pull out of Sydney with a back injury the week prior to the Australian Open. Was he 100% fit?

The alternative was a straight choice in the bottom section between a player coming back to form (Baghdatis) and one struggling for form (Ferrer). They both seemed destined to meet in the QF's with the winner seemingly a good thing for the final. Picking either the Cypriot (5/1) or the Spaniard (6/1), it was a tough choice.

There simply seemed little else on offer. Granollers (16/1) looked a much better player on slow surfaces as did Chardy (18/1) - based on what little form he had. Neither were huge prices either given this crucial fact.

The only other player to even feature on the radar would be Benjamin Becker (33/1) - he had just won a Challenger Tour event in his native Germany.

Post-Tournament Review :-

Tsonga won as he really should have done. No fuss, no great alarm, no sets dropped. In truth, he could barely have had five lesser opponents but you can only beat what's in front of you.

Of the rest, Baghdatis just came up short against Ferrer who, himself, looked in great nick before blowing it spectacularly against Chardy. Simply put, he should have won.

Brownie points for Chardy in gutsing that one out but time will tell if his career develops on faster surfaces or his apparent preferred conditions, clay.

Pointers for 2010 :-

An event with no pedigree which makes forecasting rather difficult. The rule of thumb after a Grand Slam is to go for a fresh, seeded, relatively in-form player who didn't go past R4 in Melbourne (e.g. Tsonga). This event may get stronger in time so it's hard to say whether outsiders have a real chance but in this location, this early in the year, surprises could well occur. The hunch would be to look for a European, top 30 player, who is a previous tour winner.