

Overview - Serbia Open

It's best to give the benefit of the doubt to this tournament given this was its first appearance on the ATP schedule - but a field of just 28 players did give something of a 'novelty' status.

Of course, this number meant that the top four seeds all received byes in R1 but there were still enough matches remaining to produce some good contests. Viktor Troicki (No.5) defeated Sam Querrey in three close sets, Ivan Ljubicic (No.6) also won in the deciding set against Victor Crivoi and Christophe Rochus (No.8), likewise, was pushed all the way by the French player, Nicolas Devilder. Only Arnaud Clement (No.7) won with anything in hand as he downed Santiago Ventura for the loss of just five games. Eye-catching wins came for Flavio Cipolla over Marcos Baghdatis as well as Leonardo Mayer over Wayne Odesnik.

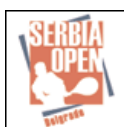
The big guns entered the fray in R2 and all won but Djokovic (No.1) had to dig deep before seeing off his fellow-countryman, Janko Tipsarevic, 6-0 in the third set. Both Karlovic (No.2) and Seppi (No.4) won in straight sets but Igor Andreev (No.3) was forced to retire from his match with Lukasz Kubot because of a rib injury.

Other seeds to fall were Ivan Ljubicic losing to the Brazilian, Marcos Daniel, Arnaud Clement who slumped to a disappointing three set defeat to Cipolla and Kristof Vliegen who beat Christophe Rochus in an all-Belgian battle which also went to a deciding set.

The QF's provided less drama with three of the fancied players - Djokovic, Karlovic and Seppi - all winning in straight sets. Kubot though provided the one shock of the round as the Pole saw off Kristof Vliegen in a close 1'47" match where the underdog took his chances, winning 6 of 9 break points, but Vliegen didn't as he took just 4 of 10 opportunities to break serve.

Novak Djokovic was the first into the final as he defeated Andreas Seppi in the SF's but only after coming back from a set down, finishing strongly in winning the two final sets 6-1 6-2. He would face Kubot in the final as the *lucky loser* in the draw beat the No.2 seed, Ivo Karlovic, convincingly to make his first ever ATP Tour final (and the first by a Polish player since 1983).

Djokovic took the title in routine fashion to move to 13:9 in tour finals. He took the first set easily and although he trailed 0-3 and 2-5 in the second the No.1 seed never looked in any real danger - *'it's not the biggest success I ever had, but it certainly is the most important'* he said later. A big week for the Serb and a great week as well for Kubot in making his first tour final.



Serbia Open

May 03-10, 2009

Outdoor, Clay - ATP Tour Masters 250

R32 Novak Djokovic [1]		R16 Novak Djokovic	6 4 6
R32 Bye		R16 Janko Tipsarevic	2 6 0
R32 Janko Tipsarevic	7 6	R16 Marcel Granollers	3 4
R32 Sergio Roitman	5 2	R16 Viktor Troicki	6 6
R32 wc-Filip Krajinovic	0 6 2	R16 Andreas Seppi	6 6
R32 Marcel Granollers	6 2 6	R16 Leonardo Mayer	4 1
R32 Sam Querrey	6 4 3	R16 Marcos Daniel	6 6
R32 Viktor Troicki [5]	4 6 6	R16 Ivan Ljubicic	4 3
R32 Andreas Seppi [4]		R16 Christophe Rochus	6 4 3
R32 Bye		R16 Kristof Vliegen	3 6 6
R32 Wayne Odesnik	3 2	R16 Lukasz Kubot	3
R32 Leonardo Mayer	6 6	R16 Igor Andreev	ret'd. 2
R32 Marcos Daniel	3 6 6	R16 Arnaud Clement	6 4 2
R32 Guillermo Canas	6 1 4	R16 Flavio Cipolla	1 6 6
R32 q-Victor Crivoi	6 6 4	R16 Brian Dabul	4 6
R32 Ivan Ljubicic [6]	7 3 6	R16 Ivo Karlovic	6 7
R32 Christophe Rochus [8]	6 6 7	QF Novak Djokovic	6 6
R32 Nicolas Devilder	3 7 5	QF Viktor Troicki	3 2
R32 Kristof Vliegen	2 6 6	QF Andreas Seppi	6 7
R32 q-Dominik Hrbaty	6 2 2	QF Marcos Daniel	4 5
R32 LL-Lukasz Kubot	6 7	QF Kristof Vliegen	6 3
R32 Arsenije Zlatanovic	3 5	QF Lukasz Kubot	7 6
R32 Bye		QF Flavio Cipolla	3 3
R32 Igor Andreev [3]		QF Ivo Karlovic	6 6
R32 Arnaud Clement [7]	6 6		
R32 q-Santiago Ventura	1 4	SF Novak Djokovic	4 6 6
R32 q-Flavio Cipolla	1 6 6	SF Andreas Seppi	6 1 2
R32 wc-Marcos Baghdatis	6 3 1	SF Lukasz Kubot	7 6
R32 Brian Dabul	6 6	SF Ivo Karlovic	6 2
R32 Nicolas Massu	2 1		
R32 Bye		RU Lukasz Kubot	3 6
R32 Ivo Karlovic [2]		W Novak Djokovic	6 7

	No. Matches	2 sets-3 sets	Ave. Sets/Match	Ave. Games/Match
R32	12 matches	7-5	2.41	23.33
R16	8 matches	5-3	2.37	20.00
QF	4 matches	4-0	2.00	19.75
SF	2 matches	1-1	2.50	23.00
F	1 match	1-0	2.00	22.00

Serbia Open - Facts & Figures

Market Leaders	Odds
Novak Djokovic [1]	8/15
Igor Andreev [3]	11/2
Ivo Karlovic [2]	12/1
Marcos Baghdatis	18/1
Ivan Ljubicic [6]	20/1
Andreas Seppi [4]	25/1
Janko Tipsarevic	33/1
Viktor Troicki [5]	40/1
Christophe Rochus [8]	40/1
Sam Querrey	40/1
Marcel Granollers	50/1
Guillermo Canas	50/1
Arnaud Clement [7]	66/1
Kristof Vliegen	66/1
Nicolas Massu	66/1

Performance Of The Seeded Players

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
2009	W	SF	R2	SF	QF	R2	R2	R2
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	Novak Djokovic (8/15)	Lukasz Kubot (500/1)	Seppi-Karlovic
2008	No event held		
2007	No event held		
2006	No event held		
2005	No event held		
2004	No event held		

Betting - Serbia Open

Pre-Tournament Briefing :-

Djokovic (8/15) was the obvious starting point. The Serb had the best current form, all-round tennis ability and winning record. Added to this he was a hometown player who desperately wanted to win this inaugural event.

But his price was mighty slim and draw of Tipsarevic-Troicki-Ljubovic-Karlovic wasn't exactly a formality. So whilst you could say he was the most likely winner of the week, arguing that Djokovic was also the best value was slightly harder to prove (after all, only Tipsarevic of the above players hadn't beaten the No.1 seed before).

Each-way betting was the best way to proceed. Igor Andreev (11/2) so often flattered to deceive that it was hard to back him, even with a R1 bye, at what was quite a short price. Ivo Karlovic (12/1) looked a better bet, the Croat had also won on clay before and his draw looked reasonable.

Those two aside, options in the bottom half seemed limited as most players lacked either general ability on a clay court or specific winning ability, whatever the surface!

Post-Tournament Review :-

Djokovic didn't give favorite backers the easiest of times. His win didn't come without something of a struggle as both Tipsarevic and Seppi tested him. Class told in the end though and maybe, giving him the benefit of the doubt, it was hard for Djokovic to focus on this rather weak event.

Ivo Karlovic and Andreas Seppi both played creditably in making the SF's and whilst Karlovic should have beaten Kubot it was possibly one of those weeks when it wasn't meant to be - the Pole had a dream run to the final.

Several players however did show signs of a possible terminal decline as Canas, Massu and Hrbaty, all once good players, fell tamely in R1.

Pointers for 2010 :-

Hard to draw many too conclusions from just one tournament but given the location we should continue to see a good turn out from Serbian, Croatian and other European players. The feeling is that the likes of Djokovic may not return in 2010 leaving the way open for a lesser player, even a tour maiden, to come through what will probably be a moderate field. A few options would be Andreas Seppi, Viktor Troicki and Ivo Minar but until the event beds itself in it's hard to gauge the type of player who will regularly come here and play.