When “consistency” comes to mind, what occurs to me? Do I think of myself doing Zumba seven days a week on my living room floor? Or could it be when I get my office work done every single day? According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, consistency is the quality of staying the same, even at contrasting times. The definition is a smooth fit in the sport of tennis.

In tennis, the Grand Slam tournaments are four important yearly events. They offer ranking points, strength, size of field, and “best of” sets. The women play best of three sets, while the men play best of five. The Australian Open is in mid-January, the French Open in late May into early June, Wimbledon at the end of June into early July, and the US Open from the end of August into early September. The Grand Slams last two weeks and each Grand Slam is on a different surface [Australian and US Opens on hard courts, French Open on clay, and Wimbledon on grass]. Outside of the Grand Slams are the ATP [Association of Tennis Professionals] and WTA [Women's Tennis Association] tours. The ATPis for the men [outside of the four Grand Slams, the men play best of three sets in the other tournaments], while the WTA is for the women. My favorite matches are from the Grand Slams and other tournaments on the ATP and WTA tours. I will analyze and focus on certain matches from specific rounds.

# **2010 WIMBLEDON – WOMEN’S SINGLES**

Serena Williams (USA) is a baseline player. Her game revolves around taking direct control of rallies with her serve, return game, and groundstrokes. Her forehand and double-handed backhand are the most powerful shots in her game. She constantly projects great pace and placement with her serve. Her serve is also lethal because of her ability to constantly place powerful shots with great accuracy. She is a strong volleyer, as she can finish points off at the net. She possesses a powerful overhead and clever touch at the net. This helped her win the title without dropping a set:

1. Michelle Larcher de Brito (PORTUGAL): 6-0 6-4
   1. 15 aces
   2. One double fault
   3. 47 winners
   4. 15 unforced errors
2. Anna Chakvetadze (RUSSIA): 6-0 6-1
   1. 9 aces
   2. Two double faults
   3. 27 winners
   4. 15 unforced errors
3. Dominika Cibulková (SLOVAKIA): 6-0 7-5
   1. 19 aces
   2. Zero double faults
   3. 38 winners
   4. Nine unforced errors
4. Maria Sharapova (RUSSIA): 7-6[11-9] 6-4
   1. 19 aces
   2. Five double faults
   3. 31 winners
   4. 17 unforced errors
5. Na Li (CHINA): 7-5 6-3
   1. 11 aces
   2. One double fault
   3. 21 winners
   4. Six unforced errors
6. Petra Kvitová (CZECH REPUBLIC): 7-6[7-5] 6-2
   1. Seven aces
   2. Three double faults
   3. 19 winners
   4. 14 unforced errors
7. Vera Zvonareva (RUSSIA): 6-3 6-2
   1. Nine aces
   2. Three double faults
   3. 29 winners
   4. 15 unforced errors

Cibulková forms her game with enthusiasm and pace. She can embark on long rallies with her drop shots. Her strength creates quickness to reach and return shots. In the first set, Serena broke in the second, fourth, and sixth games. In the second set, both players traded service holds for the first eleven games. The 12th game was a **MUST-HOLD** game for Cibulková. Cibulková was serving to force a second-set tiebreak **AND** stay in the match. In the 12th game, Cibulková won her first service point before Serena won the next two points. Cibulková won her next two service points to put herself one point away from a second-set tiebreak. But Serena won Cibulková’s last three service points of the match with two return winners and a forehand error from Cibulková.

Sharapova is an aggressive baseline player with power, depth, and angles on her shots. She has good speed around the court with her height. Her strength is her mental toughness and competitive spirit. In the first set, Serena broke in the third game. Then, Sharapova broke in the fourth game. Serena saved four set points and claimed the first-set tiebreak with a minibreak. Then, Serena broke in the fourth game of the second set.

Li is an aggressive baseliner with quick reflexes and athleticism. Her crosscourt forehand is her favorite shot because she can hit it with great accuracy and pace. Her backhand is also steady because she can release it to all areas of the court to dictate play. She has a solid defensive game with footwork, speed, and movement. Serena received serve in this match. In the first set, both players traded service holds for the first ten games. In the 11th game, Li raced out to triple game point. But she let Serena in back to deuce with two forehand errors and a double fault. Serena earned a break point with a second consecutive double fault. Then, the American broke in the 11th game with a forehand volley error from Li. From triple game point in the 11th game, Serena won six straight points to earn the key break and serve for the first set in the 12th game. In the 12th game, Serena missed her first service point. But she smoothly won her last four service points of the set. Things could have tough for Serena if Li effectively held to love in the 11th game. If that were the case, then Serena would need to hold in the 12th game to force a first-set tiebreak. But once Li squandered triple game point, Serena did an excellent job to take advantage of Li’s dip in form. The American crushed 13 winner to only five unforced errors and faced zero break points in the first set. In the second set, Serena broke in the fifth and seventh games. Li broke in the eighth game. But Serena broke again in the ninth game to claim the match.

Kvitová has an offensive game. She also has fast, well-placed serves. The Czech uses her lefty serve to set up her groundstrokes. She also comes to the net to finish points and can hit volleys and overheads comfortably. Her forehand is her dominant wing because she can create tremendous pace and penetration on it. In the first set, Kvitová broke in the fifth game, while Serena broke in the eighth game. Then, Serena claimed the first-set tiebreak with a minibreak. In the second set, Serena broke in the fifth and seventh games.

# **2011 US OPEN – WOMEN’S SINGLES**

Serena’s 2011 season was limited due to her health issues. This caused her ranking to fall out of the top 100. But after she won titles Stanford and Toronto, this resurgence helped her return to the top 32 seeds of the WTA rankings. Her stats in the aces-double faults and winners-unforced ratios helped her reach the final without losing a set. She dropped only 29 games in six matches:

1. Bojana Jovanovski (SERBIA): 6-1 6-1
   1. Four aces
   2. Zero double faults
   3. 22 winners
   4. 10 unforced errors
2. Michaëlla Krajicek (NETHERLANDS): 6-0 6-1
   1. 10 aces
   2. One double fault
   3. 25 winners
   4. 10 unforced errors
3. Victória Azárenka (BELARUS): 6-1 7-6[7-5]
   1. 12 aces
   2. Four double faults
   3. 39 winners
   4. 24 unforced errors
4. Ana Ivanović (SERBIA): 6-3 6-4
   1. Nine aces
   2. One double fault
   3. 16 winners
   4. 14 unforced errors
5. Nastia Pavlyuchenkova (RUSSIA): 7-5 6-1
   1. Six aces
   2. One double fault
   3. 26 winners
   4. 23 unforced errors
6. Caroline Wozniacki (DENMARK): 6-2 6-4
   1. 11 aces
   2. Four double faults
   3. 34 winners
   4. 34 unforced errors

Wozniacki is a defensive baseline player with a counterpunching playing style. Her strengths are movement, speed, court coverage, aggressive footwork, anticipation, balance, and stamina. Her strongest weapon is her two-handed backhand, which she can use to turn defense into offense. Her backhand was hit down-the-line with depth, pace, and perception. Her return game lets her defuse powerful first serves and attack weak second serves to let her dictate play from defense. But her forehand is her weakest shot because it lacks depth, power, and speed. Her second serve is also prone to attack by players, who have aggressive return games. In the first set, Serena broke in the fourth and sixth games. Wozniacki broke in the seventh game. But Serena broke in the eighth game to claim the first set. In the second set, Serena broke in the third game. Wozniacki broke in the ninth game. But Serena broke in the 10th game to claim the match.

# **2012 BANK OF THE WEST CLASSIC – WOMEN’S SINGLES**

The Bank of the West Classic takes place in Stanford, CA. It is the first tournament of the US Open Series. The US Open Series is a series of North American tennis tournaments that lead up to the US Open. In this edition of the tournament, Serena won the title without dropping a set:

1. Nicole Gibbs (USA): 6-2 6-1
2. Chanelle Scheepers (SOUTH AFRICA): 6-4 6-0
3. Sorana Cîrstea (ROMANIA): 6-1 6-2
4. Coco Vandeweghe (USA): 7-5 6-3

Vandeweghe has a strong serve. She plays aggressive with her heavy, powerful groundstrokes. In the first set, Serena broke in the second and fourth games. Then, Vandeweghe broke in the third, fifth, and seventh games. But Serena broke in the 10th and 12th games to claim the first set. Then, Serena broke in the fourth game of the second set.

# **BRISBANE INTERNATIONAL – WOMEN’S SINGLES**

The Australian Open series is a group of tune-up tournaments that lead up to the Australian Open. The Brisbane International is the first tournament in the Australian Open series. It takes place at the Queensland Tennis Center in Brisbane. This tournament heading is a little bit different because I chose to merge the 2013 and 2014 editions together into one heading. Serena first played at this tournament in 2012. She won her opener against Jovanovski before she withdrew from the tournament with a left ankle injury. But in 2013 and 2014, she became the only player to successfully defend her title two years in a row without dropping a set both times:

**2013**

1. Varvara Lepchenko (USA): 6-2 6-1
2. Alizé Cornet (FRANCE): 6-2 6-2
3. Sloane Stephens (USA): 6-4 6-3
4. Pavlyuchenkova: 6-2 6-1

**2014**

1. Andrea Petkovic (GERMANY): 6-4 6-4
2. Cibulková: 6-3 6-3
3. Sharapova: 6-2 7-6(9-7)
4. Azárenka: 6-4 7-5

I chose to write about Serena’s 2014 title win against Azárenka. Azárenka is an aggressive baseline player. She can hit the ball hard and flat. She tends to move her opponents around until she can create the opportunity to hit low-risk winners. She can redirect power crosscourt and down-the-line. Her movement, speed, court coverage, and footwork let her blend offense and defense together. Serena received serve in this match. In the first set, Serena broke in the seventh game. In the second set, Serena broke Azárenka in the first and seventh games, while Azárenka broke in the fourth and sixth games. In the 10th game, Serena was in danger of dropping the second set when she lost her first two service points. But she recovered to win four straight service points. After Serena held in the 10th game, this next 11th game was now a **MUST-HOLD** game for Azárenka. Azárenka was two points away from claiming the second set when she won Serena’s first two service points in the 10th game. But Serena’s strength underlined how she found four big first serves to get out of trouble at this moment. Then, Serena broke in the 11th game to serve for the match in the 12th game. In the 12th game, Serena won her first two service points before Azárenka found a cross-court return winner. Next, Serena won her last two service points of the match. Azárenka’s return game makes her a dangerous player for her opponents. But I was curious to know why her losing record against Serena was lopsided. So, I collected their stats from this match and organized them in a table.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **PLAYER** | Serena | Azárenka |
| **1st SERVE %** | 61% | 72% |
| **ACES** | 11 | 4 |
| **DOUBLE FAULTS** | 0 | 6 |
| **WINNERS** | 30 | 15 |
| **UNFORCED ERRORS** | 30 | 23 |
| **1st SERVE POINTS WON** | 75% [27 of 36] | 64% [35 of 55] |
| **2nd SERVE POINTS WON** | 57% [13 of 23] | 38% [8 of 21] |
| **BREAK POINTS WON** | 50% [4 of 8] | 67% [ 2 of 3] |

Each woman had their strengths and weaknesses in this match. Azárenka maintained a higher first serve percentage and came out on top in break point conversions. Those two components came in the second set, when Azárenka broke Serena in the fourth and sixth games. Even though Serena had a lower first serve percentage and break point conversion rate, her first and second serve points won were solid. The American also kept her aces-double faults and winners-unforced ratios clean. Azárenka’s second serve is vulnerable, because she can commit a high number of double faults when her nerves creep in. Her forehand is also weak since players, who are familiar with her game, can easily target her forehand.

With her 2013 and 2014 titles, Serena maintained her perfect streak of sixteen sets won and zero sets lost. Even though she chose not to participate at this tournament anymore after her 2014 win, her success was so rare she left large shoes to fill. Since the 2014 edition, there are only three other women, who managed to successfully reach the final without dropping a set – Sharapova [2015 champion], Azárenka [2016 champion], and 2019 runner-up Lesia Tsurenko (UKRAINE). I will explain about Tsurenko’s run in a later heading.

# **2015 FRENCH OPEN – WOMEN’S SINGLES + WOMEN’S DOUBLES**

Lucie Šafářová (CZECH REPUBLIC) plays left-handed with a two-handed backhand. She possesses a high topspin forehand. Her timing off the ground lets her project groundstrokes with power, and she is quick to spot opportunities to take the initiative. She has a dangerous return that can hit clean winners. This helped her reach her first Grand Slam final without dropping a set:

1. Pavlyuchenkova: 7-6[8-6] 7-6[11-9]
2. Kurumi Nara (JAPAN): 6-2 6-0
3. Lisicki: 6-3 7-6[7-2]
4. Sharapova: 7-6[7-3] 6-4
5. Garbiñe Muguruza: 7-6[7-3] 6-3
6. Ivanović: 7-5 7-5

Ivanović is an offensive baseline player with an aggressive playing style. Her movement and net play make her a fast player. In this match, Šafářová received serve. In the first set, Ivanović got off to a strong start with a break in the second game. But Šafářová broke in the ninth and 11th games. In the second set, Šafářová broke in the third game. Ivanović broke in the 10th game. But Šafářová broke again in the 11th game.

Casey Dellacqua (AUSTRALIA) and Slava Shvedova (KAZAKHSTAN) formed a unique partnership with their playing styles. Dellacqua has spin on her shots with a strong lefty forehand. Meanwhile, Shvedova has efficient groundstrokes and proficiency at the net. This helped them reach their first Grand Slam final without dropping a set:

1. Chan Chin-Wei (CHINESE TAIPEI)/Lauren Davis (USA): 6-1 6-2
2. Cornet/Madga Linette (POLAND): 6-2 6-1
3. Caroline Garcia (FRANCE)/Katarina Srebotnik (SLOVENIA): 6-1 6-1
4. Krajicek/Barbora Strýcová (CZECH REPUBLIC): 6-3 7-5
5. Katya Makarova (RUSSIA)/Elena Vesnina (RUSSIA): 6-3 6-2

Makarova is an all-court player, who uses power and angles to set up her shots. She can attack the return by hitting deep with her backhand. Meanwhile, Vesnina has an all-court game, but focuses on having an offensive baseline game. Her game is based on getting control in the rallies by using her groundstrokes to move her opponents around the court to find an opening. She can use her backhand to find angles on the court and dominate the rally. She also frequently uses drop shots, volleys, and angles to win points. Her movement and footwork around the court is solid, and she can accelerate around the court horizontally. The Russians were the heavy favorites to win this match. But experience helped Dellacqua and Shvedova to win this match in straight sets. Shvedova won two Grand Slam titles with Vania King (USA) in 2010 at Wimbledon and the US Open. When Shvedova and King won Wimbledon, they faced Vesnina and Zvonareva. Taking that final into account, I believe that Shvedova knew what to expect from Vesnina. Dellacqua and Shvedova broke in the eighth game of the first set. This was followed by two more breaks in the second set.

# **2015 WIMBLEDON – WOMEN’S DOUBLES**

Martina Hingis (SWITZERLAND) and Sania Mirza (INDIA) formed a unique partnership with their playing styles. Hingis is an all-court player with superior movement, anticipation, and court coverage. Meanwhile, Mirza is an offensive player. She can set up attacks with her groundstrokes. This helped the Swiss-Miss Indian duo reach their first Grand Slam final without dropping a set:

1. Zarina Diyas (KAZAKHSTAN)/Zheng Saisai (CHINA): 6-2 6-2
2. Francesca Schiavone (ITALY)/Date-Krumm (JAPAN): 6-0 6-1
3. Anabel Medina Garrigues (SPAIN)/Arantxa Parra Santonja (SPAIN): 6-4 6-3
4. Dellacqua/Shvedova: 7-5 6-3
5. Raquel Kops-Jones (USA)/Abigail Spears (USA): 6-1 6-2

Hingis and Mirza faced Makarova and Vesnina in the championship match. In the first set, Makarova and Vesnina broke Hingis and Mirza in the first and 11th games, while Hingis and Mirza broke in the second game. In the final set, Makarova and Vesnina broke in the third game. The Russians were two games away from victory in the seventh game of the final set. But Hingis and Mirza held in the eighth and 10th games. Then, they broke in the ninth and 11th games and successfully served out the match in the 12th game.

# **2015 US OPEN – MEN’S SINGLES**

Federer is an all-court, all-around player with speed and fluidity. His movement and footwork help him run around shots. He has immense variety with his forehand, because he can hit it with both topspin and pace. This helped him reach the final without dropping a set:

1. Leonardo Mayer (ARGENTINA): 6-1 6-2 6-2
   1. 12 aces
   2. Five double faults
   3. 29 winners
   4. 13 unforced errors
2. Steve Darcis (BELGIUM): 6-1 6-2 6-1
   1. 11 aces
   2. One double fault
   3. 46 winners
   4. 25 unforced errors
3. Philipp Kohlschreiber: 6-3 6-4 6-4
   1. Five aces
   2. Four double faults
   3. 27 winners
   4. 26 unforced errors
4. John Isner (USA): 7-6[7-0] 7-6[8-6] 7-5
   1. 15 aces
   2. One double fault
   3. 55 winners
   4. 16 unforced errors
5. Richard Gasquet (FRANCE): 6-3 6-3 6-1
   1. 16 aces
   2. Two double faults
   3. 50 winners
   4. 21 unforced errors
6. Stan Wawrinka (SWITZERLAND): 6-4 6-3 6-1
   1. 10 aces
   2. Two double faults
   3. 29 winners
   4. 17 unforced errors

I chose to write about the championship match between Federer and Novak Djokovic (SERBIA). Djokovic is an aggressive baseline player. His best shot is his backhand down the line because it has pace and precision. He has quickness, court coverage and mobility, which let him hit winners from shaky positions. In the first set, Djokovic broke in the third and seventh games, while Federer broke in the fourth game. In the second set, Federer broke in the 12th game. Just like the first set, the third set started off in the same fashion. Then, Djokovic broke in the ninth game. In the fourth set, Djokovic broke Federer in the first and seventh games. Then, Federer broke in the ninth game.

# **2015 WTA FINALS – WOMEN’S DOUBLES**

The WTA Finals is the year-end championships for the women. To qualify for the WTA Finals, players compete in WTA tournaments and the four Grand Slams. Based on their results, they earn points on their ranking on the Race to the WTA Finals. The top eight singles players and doubles teams qualify for the event. The players participate in a round-robin format in two groups. The winners and runners-ups of each group advance to the semifinals. Hingis and Mirza went undefeated for the rest of the season. They secured the top spot at the WTA Finals when they won the US Open, Guangzhou, Wuhan, and Beijing. At the WTA Finals, they won all their matches in straight sets to claim the biggest title of their careers:

**ROUND-ROBIN**

1. Kops-Jones/Spears: 6-4 6-2
2. Hlaváčková/Lucie Hradecká (CZECH REPUBLIC): 6-3 6-4
3. Tímea Babos (HUNGARY)/Kristina Mladenovic (FRANCE): 6-4 7-5

**SEMIFINALS**

Angel Chan (CHINESE TAIPEI)/Latisha Chan (CHINESE TAIPEI): 6-4 6-2

**FINAL**

Garbiñe Muguruza (SPAIN)/Carla Suárez Navarro (SPAIN): 6-0 6-3

Babos has an aggressive playing style with slices and drop-shots. Meanwhile, Mladenovic has an all-court playing style, using variety along at the baseline to win points. Her forehand is her strongest wing, and she can hit this shot both flat, and with topspin. She can also hit her backhand as a slice more frequently to change the pace of the rally. She uses her volleys, along with her backhand slice and drop shots, to create variety in her game. Her height and footwork help her develop movement. In this match, Hingis and Mirza received serve. In the first set, Hingis and Mirza broke in the ninth game. Then, the Swiss-Miss Indian duo broke in the 11th game of the second set.

# **2016 AUSTRALIAN OPEN – WOMEN’S SINGLES**

Serena won the Australian Open in 2003, 2005, 2007, 2009, 2010, and 2015. But one year later, she dropped only twenty-six games in six matches. She accumulated forty-six aces, ten double faults, 164 winners, and ninety-eight unforced errors:

1. Camila Giorgi (ITALY): 6-4 7-5
   1. Nines aces
   2. Two double faults
2. Hsieh: 6-1 6-2
   1. Seven aces
   2. Three double faults
3. Daria Kasatkina (RUSSIA): 6-1 6-1
   1. Six aces
   2. Zero double faults
4. Margarita Gasparyan (RUSSIA): 6-2 6-1
   1. Three aces
   2. One double fault
5. Sharapova: 6-4 6-1
   1. Twelve aces
   2. Three double faults
6. Aga Radwańska: 6-0 6-4
   1. Eight aces
   2. One double fault

Giorgi is a baseline player with an aggressive playing style and powerful groundstrokes. She can create angles with both her forehand and backhand to amaze her opponents and hit winners with ease. She can regularly hit deep returns and take the ball early, which lets her hit return winners. In this match, Serena received serve. In the first set, Serena broke in the third game and fifth games, while Giorgi broke in the sixth game. In the second set, Serena broke in the 11th game.

Aga Radwańska is a tactically delicate tennis player. She can pull off challenging shots with smoothness. Her game is based on mobility and anticipation. She can redirect the ball by using her backhand on defense. Her primary weapons are slices and lobs. She can hit her groundstrokes at a variety of angles. In this match, Serena received serve. In the first set, Serena broke Aga Radwańska in the first, third and fifth games. In the second set, Serena broke in the third game. Aga Radwańska broke in the sixth game. But Serena broke again in the ninth game.

# **2016 INDIAN WELLS MASTERS – WOMEN’S SINGLES**

The Indian Wells Masters take place at the Indian Wells Tennis Garden in Indian Wells, CA. The singles main draws have 96 players in a 128-player grid. The top 32 seeded players get a free pass from the first round into the second round. Serena reached the final without dropping a set:

1. Laura Siegemund (GERMANY): 6-2 6-1
2. Yulia Putintseva (KAZAKHSTAN): 7-6[7-2] 6-0
3. Kateryna Bondarenko (UKRAINE): 6-2 6-2
4. Simona Halep (ROMANIA): 6-4 6-3
5. Aga Radwańska: 6-4 7-6[7-1]

Aga Radwańska pushed Serena to the limit in the semifinals. In the first set, the Pole broke in the first game. But Serena broke in the eighth and 10th games to claim the first set. In the second set, the American broke in the second game. Aga Radwańska broke in the fifth and 11th games to serve for the second set in the 12th game. But Serena won seven straight points in the tiebreaker.

# **2016 MIAMI OPEN – WOMEN’S SINGLES**

The Miami Open takes place after Indian Wells. Indian Wells and Miami are the only two tournaments, where matches take place beyond eight days. Azárenka won this title without dropping a set:

1. Monica Puig (PUERTO RICO): 6-2 6-4
2. Linette: 6-3 6-0
3. Muguruza: 7-6[8-6] 7-6[7-4]
4. Jo Konta (GREAT BRITAIN): 6-2 6-4
5. Angelique Kerber (GERMANY): 6-2 7-5
6. Svetlana Kuznetsova (RUSSIA): 6-3 6-2

Muguruza has an aggressive, all-court game. Her powerful groundstrokes and serve sets up points. But her playing style causes her to lose to lower-ranked players. Azárenka broke in the third game of the first set and the second game of the second set. Muguruza broke in the fourth game of the second set and the ninth game of the second set but fell to the Belarussian in two tiebreakers.

# **2016 ITALIAN OPEN – WOMEN’S SINGLES**

The Italian Open is a tune-up tournament for the French Open. Serena 13 of Serena’s 73 WTA titles came on clay. She won three French Open titles in 2002, 2013, and 2015. The American also reigned in Rome in 2002, 2013, and 2014. In this edition, she won the title without dropping a set:

1. Anna-Lena Friedsam (GERMANY): 6-4 6-3
   1. Seven aces
   2. Two double faults
2. Christina McHale (USA): 7-6[9-7] 6-1
   1. Seven aces
   2. Three double faults
3. Kuznetsova: 6-2 6-0
   1. Five aces
   2. Three double faults
4. Irina-Camelia Begu (ROMANIA): 6-4 6-1
   1. Four aces
   2. Two double faults
5. Madison Keys (USA): 7-6[7-5] 6-3
   1. Four aces
   2. Two double faults

McHale is an aggressive baseline player. She has powerful groundstrokes and incredible speed. McHale broke in the fifth game of the first set. But Serena broke in the 10th game. McHale saved two set points in the 11th game and earned a set point of her own in the first-set tiebreak. But Serena rallied to snag the first set on her third chance. Then, Serena broke in the third, fifth, and seventh games of the second set.

Keys is an aggressive baseline player. She uses her height to develop her style, based on hitting big serves and powerful groundstrokes. She relies on her power to hit winners to end points. She can also use her serve to dominate her service games. In the first set, Keys broke Serena to love in the first game. But Serena broke in the sixth game. The first three points in the tiebreak went against serve, then Serena was the first to win a point with a first serve. Keys won the best point of the set with a stunning forehand down the line winner to get back in the tiebreak. But Serena won the next two points to capture the first set. In the second set, Serena broke in the first and third games. Keys broke in the fourth game, only to get broken in the seventh game. Serena was broken in the eighth game, but she broke Keys in the ninth game to claim the title.

# **2016 WIMBLEDON – WOMEN’S SINGLES**

Kerber was born right-handed but plays left-handed. She is a defensive baseline player. Her counterpunching style lets her hit low-risk winners with ease. She has exceptional speed, agility, athleticism, and footwork. Her powerful groundstrokes let her hit winners from defensive positions. Her forehand is her strongest weapon, because she can hit with power, disguise, speed, and angles. She can also redirect this shot down-the-line. This helped her breeze through to her first Wimbledon final without dropping a set:

1. Laura Robson (GREAT BRITAIN): 6-2 6-2
2. Lepchenko: 6-1 6-4
3. Carina Witthöft (GERMANY): 7-6[13-11] 6-1
4. Misaki Doi (JAPAN): 6-3 6-1
5. Halep: 7-5 7-6[7-2]
6. Venus Williams (USA): 6-4 6-4

I chose to write about the Wimbledon final between Serena and Kerber. Serena and Kerber first faced each other in the 2016 Australian Open final. At that time, Serena won under 50% of points at the net and sprayed 46 unforced errors across three sets. But despite the loss, Serena made a significant turnaround and successfully avenged her loss to Kerber in the Wimbledon final. With her Wimbledon victory, the American secured her seventh Wimbledon title and became a 22-time Grand Slam champion alongside Steffi Graf (GERMANY). “I thought I learned a valuable lesson, which I thought I learned at 18, when I tied Chrissie Evert (USA) and Martina Navratilova (USA). But now I learned I cannot think about that. I have to do the best that I can and enjoy the moment.” Patrick Mouratoglou (FRANCE), Serena’s coach, said, that Kerber is tough to play because she reads the game well and has a convenient answer to the problem. But she is predictable. Even though Kerber won all twelve sets she played in six matches, she doesn’t have a big serve to get out of trouble like Serena does. To understand this better, I collected Kerber’s match stats from her last three matches. That way, I could compare her level between each match.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **PLAYER** | Halep | Kerber |
| **1st SERVE %** | 69% | 71% |
| **ACES** | 1 | 2 |
| **DOUBLE FAULTS** | 3 | 1 |
| **WINNERS** | 18 | 23 |
| **UNFORCED ERRORS** | 21 | 21 |
| **1st SERVE POINTS WON** | 50% | 57% |
| **2nd SERVE POINTS WON** | 36% | 42% |
| **BREAK POINTS WON** | 75% [6 of 8] | 64% [7 of 11] |

Halep is an aggressive baseline player. She can hit winners both cross-court and down-the-line. She uses her speed and anticipation to set up her shots. But her serve does not come down from a great height and she cannot create the power required to end points quickly. In the first set, Kerber broke in the second, fourth, sixth, eighth, and 12th games, while Halep broke in the third, fifth, seventh, and ninth games. In the second set, Kerber broke in the sixth and eighth games. Then, Halep broke in the seventh and ninth games. Halep earned an immediate minibreak in the second-set tiebreak. But Kerber won five of the last seven points of the match. Halep came out on top only in one area with a higher rate of break point conversion.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **PLAYER** | Kerber | Venus |
| **1st SERVE %** | 71% | 64% |
| **ACES** | 2 | 3 |
| **DOUBLE FAULTS** | 4 | 2 |
| **WINNERS** | 17 | 24 |
| **UNFORCED ERRORS** | 11 | 21 |
| **1st SERVE POINTS WON** | 73% | 57% |
| **2nd SERVE POINTS WON** | 36% | 52% |
| **BREAK POINTS WON** | 45% [5 of 11] | 60% [3 of 5] |

Venus has an all-court game. She possesses powerful groundstrokes and can hit them flat or with topspin. She can also hit her backhand as a slice, to slow down rallies and break up the pace in rallies. She can approach the net and finish points quickly. Her height gives her a long arm span and lets her reach any ball while she is at the net. She has a complete range of shots to perform at the net, which let her hit clever volleys with ease. But footwork and defense are weaknesses in her game. In this semifinal match, neither player was at their best or worst. Kerber had a higher first serve percentage and first serve points won. But Venus won more second serve points and came out on top in break point conversions. Both women also kept their winners-unforced errors ratios in the positive category. In the first set, Kerber broke in the first, third, and fifth games. Venus returned the favor with breaks of in the second, fourth, and eighth games. Then, Kerber broke in the first game of the second set.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **PLAYER** | Serena | Kerber |
| **1st SERVE %** | 65% | 67% |
| **ACES** | 13 | 0 |
| **DOUBLE FAULTS** | 9 | 1 |
| **WINNERS** | 39 | 12 |
| **UNFORCED ERRORS** | 21 | 9 |
| **1st SERVE POINTS WON** | 88% | 59% |
| **2nd SERVE POINTS WON** | 45% | 71% |
| **BREAK POINTS WON** | 33% [2 of 6] | 0% [0 of 1] |

The championship match between Serena and Kerber was remarkable. There was only one break of serve in each set. Kerber conceded only one double fault in the entire match, which came in the second game of the first set. She also kept her unforced error count in the single digits. Even though Kerber’s first serve percentage and second serve points won were higher than Serena’s, she fell apart on first serve points won and break points won. Kerber’s serve is her biggest weakness, because her opponents can often step into the court to return it. She also struggles to end points, even if she is in a wining position. This means that she will get herself engaged in lengthy rallies. She also can’t win more than 50% of her second serve points. In the first set, both players traded service holds for the first eleven games. The 12th game was a **MUST-HOLD** game for Kerber, because she was serving to force a first-set tiebreak **AND** stay in the set. Kerber dropped serve in the 12th game. In the second set, both players traded service holds for the first seven games. In the seventh game, Serena won her first service point before Kerber won the next two points. Serena found a big first serve before a loose backhand error gave Kerber her lone break point of the match. But Serena scorched down two straight aces and forced a backhand return error from Kerber to edge through a crucial hold. This was the one and only break point Serena faced in the match. Just like the 12th game of the first set, the nerves crept in for the German in the eighth game of the second set. As a result, Serena broke in the eighth game and successfully served out the match to love in the ninth game.

# **2016 NATIONAL BANK OPEN – MEN’S SINGLES**

The National Bank Open takes place in Canada. The event used to take place during separate weeks in the July and August for the men and women. But now, the two competitions take place during the same week in August. The events alternate between Montreal and Toronto. In the 2016 edition of this tournament, Djokovic won the title without dropping a set:

1. Gilles Müller (LUXEMBOURG): 7-5 7-6[7-3]
2. Radek Štěpánek (CZECH REPUBLIC): 6-2 6-4
3. Tomáš Berdych (CZECH REPUBLIC): 7-6[8-6] 6-4
4. Gaël Monfils (FRANCE): 6-3 6-2
5. Kei Nishikori (JAPAN): 6-3 7-5

Nishikori is a primary baseline player. He uses his groundstrokes to push his opponents around. He can create pace on his backhand. He also plays defensively to wear out his opponents. The Serbian broke in the sixth game of the first set. Djokovic broke in the third game of the second set. Nishikori broke in the sixth game. But Djokovic broke again in the 11th game.

# **2016 US OPEN – WOMEN’S SINGLES**

Kerber exhibited stamina and freedom. Her speed and sense of anticipation were top notch. She ran down the biggest shots with deadly passes. She hit her forehand crosscourt, down-the-line, and inside-out. These parts of her game helped her to reach the final without dropping a set:

1. Polona Hercog (SLOVENIA): 6-0 2-0 RETIRED
2. Mirjana Lučić-Baroni (CROATIA): 6-2 7-6[9-7]
3. Cici Bellis (USA): 6-1 6-1
4. Kvitová: 6-3 7-5
5. Roberta Vinci (ITALY): 7-5 6-0
6. Wozniacki: 6-4 6-3

Vinci has proficiency at the net and brutal use of her backhand slice. She has excellent anticipation with her powerful forehand. In the first set, Vinci broke in the first, fifth, and ninth games. But Kerber broke in the second, sixth, 10th and 12th games to claim the first set. In the second set, Kerber broke in the second, fourth, and sixth games to seal the match. Vinci sliced every ball hit to her backhand, while Kerber relied on her serve and groundstrokes to outhit Vinci. Kerber dictated most of the points by playing closer to the baseline and creating sharp angles with her backhand.

# **2017 AUSTRALIAN OPEN – WOMEN’S SINGLES**

Serena’s 2016 season initially got off to a shaky start. But she got herself back on track with her 2016 Wimbledon win. She came into the 2017 Australian Open with more confidence [she tiedGraf’s record with her 22nd Grand Slam title under her belt] and less pressure [she was the number two seed and defending only finalist points]. This helped her win the title without dropping a set:

1. Belinda Bencic (SWITZERLAND): 6-4 6-3
2. Lucie Šafářová (CZECH REPUBLIC): 6-3 6-4
3. Gibbs: 6-1 6-3
4. Strýcová: 7-5 6-4
5. Jo Konta (GREAT BRITAIN): 6-2 6-3
6. Lučić-Baroni: 6-2 6-1
7. Venus: 6-4 6-4

Strýcová has a crafty game with elegant footwork and well-disguised drop shots. In the first set, Strýcová broke in the first, third, and seventh games. Serena returned the favor with breaks in the second, fourth, eighth, and 12th games. In the second set, Serena broke in the fourth game. Strýcová broke in the ninth game when Serena served for the match. But Serena broke again in the 10th game for the win.

Konta has an offensive baseline playing style. She can create sharp angles on her groundstrokes. In the first set, Serena broke in the fourth and eighth games. In the second set, Konta broke in the third game. But Serena broke in the sixth and eighth games. Then, the American effectively served out the match to love in the ninth game.

# **2017 DUBAI TENNIS CHAMPIONSHIPS – WOMEN’S DOUBLES**

The Dubai Tennis Championships take place on outdoor hardcourts. It is held at the end of February on outdoor hardcourts. The courts have a medium-fast speed. Hlaváčková started a creative partnership with Shuai Peng (CHINA). Hlaváčková’s game highlights her attacking returns. Meanwhile, Peng plays two-handed on her groundstrokes. This helped them reach multiple finals without losing a set:

**2014 CHINA OPEN [CHAMPIONS]**

1. Medina Garrigues/Shvedova: 7-5 6-2
2. Chuang Chia-Jung (CHINESE TAIPEI)/Olga Govortsova (BELARUS): 6-3 6-2
3. Jarmila Gajdošová (AUSTRALIA)/Ajla Tomljanović (AUSTRALIA): 6-4 7-5
4. Alla Kudryavtseva (RUSSIA)/Anastasia Rodionova (AUSTRALIA): 6-1 6-4
5. Cara Black (ZIMBABWE)/Mirza: 6-4 6-4

**2016 AEGEON OPEN [CHAMPIONS]**

1. Nicole Melichar (USA)/Alicja Rosolska (POLAND): 6-2 6-4
2. Angel Chan/Latisha Chan: 6-2 7-6[7-3]

**2017 SHENZHEN OPEN [CHAMPIONS]**

1. Nina Stojanović (SERBIA)/Zhu Lin (CHINA): 6-4 7-5
2. Jelena Janković (SERBIA)/Kateřina Siniaková (CZECH REPUBLIC): 6-3 6-3
3. Natela Dzalamidze (RUSSIA)/Veronika Kudermetova (RUSSIA): 6-4 6-2
4. Raluca Olaru (ROMANIA)/Olga Savchuk (UKRAINE) 6-1 7-5

**2017 AUSTRALIAN OPEN [RUNNERS-UP]**

1. Misaki Doi (JAPAN)/Nara: 6-1 7-6[7-1]
2. Karin Knapp (ITALY)/Mandy Minella (LUXEMBOURG) 6-3 6-2
3. Andreja Klepač (SLOVENIA)/María José Martínez Sánchez (SPAIN): 6-2 6-0
4. Makarova/Vesnina: 7-5 7-6[7-5]
5. Garcia/Mladenovic: 7-6[7-4] 6-2

After Hlaváčková and Peng won the 2017 Shenzhen Open, they won ten more straight sets when they reached their first Grand Slam final without dropping a set at the 2017 Australian Open. This put their winning streak at 18 sets won and zero sets lost. Even though they came up short in the finals with a three-set loss, they maintained their blistering form in their next tournament. They efficiently navigated their way through a delicate draw in Dubai and breezed through to another final without dropping a set:

1. Liang Chen (CHINA/Yang Zhaoxuan (CHINA): 7-5 6-2
2. Minella/Anastasija Sevastova (LATVIA): 7-5 6-2
3. Latisha Chan/Hingis: 6-4 6-2
4. Angel Chan/Shvedova: 6-1 6-3

Hlaváčková and Peng faced Makarova and Vesnina in the championship match. In the first set, Makarova and Vesnina broke in the second game. Hlaváčková and Peng broke in the fifth game. But the Russians broke in the sixth and eighth games to claim the first set. Hlaváčková and Peng recovered to take the second set. Then, the Russians edged the Czech Chinese duo in a match tiebreak to claim the title.

# **2017 FRENCH OPEN – MIXED DOUBLES**

Gaby Dabrowski (CANADA) started a productive partnership with Rohan Bopanna (INDIA). Dabrowski is an all-court player, who uses touch shots when she plays at the net. Meanwhile, Bopanna has a serve-oriented game, where he uses his big first serve to set up points. He is proficient at the net and can use his sharp reflexes to deal with passing shots. Neither of these players won a Grand Slam title in their careers. But their playing styles helped them reach their first Grand Slam final without dropping a set:

1. Jessica Moore (AUSTRALIA)/Matt Reid (AUSTRALIA): 6-0 6-1
   1. Five aces
   2. One double fault
2. Chloé Paquet (FRANCE)/Benoît Paire (FRANCE): 6-3 6-2
   1. Two aces
   2. Zero double faults
3. Mirza/Ivan Dodig (CROATIA): 6-3 6-4
   1. Six aces
   2. Two double faults
4. Hlaváčková/Édouard Roger-Vasselin (FRANCE): 7-5 6-3
   1. Five aces
   2. One double fault

Dabrowski and Bopanna faced Anna-Lena Grönefeld (GERMANY) and Robert Farah (COLOMBIA) in the final. In the first set, Grönefeld and Farah broke in the third and seventh games. Grönefeld and Farah broke in the third game of the second set. But Dabrowski and Bopanna broke in the fourth, sixth, and eighth games to claim the second set. Then, the Canadian Indian duo saved two championship points in the match tiebreak to claim the title. “We didn’t start off great today, but we kept pushing and working hard together, and we finally got through. At that point in time, we didn’t think that it’s match point. We just played aggressive.”

# **2017 WIMBLEDON – MEN’S SINGLES**

Federer’s form on grass is impeccable. The surface helps him with his athleticism, all-court knowledge, and variety. The surface lets him play quick so that his opponents do not have time to react. This helped him reach multiple Wimbledon finals without losing a set:

**2006 [CHAMPION]**

1. Richard Gasquet (FRANCE): 6-3 6-2 6-2
   1. Five aces
   2. One double fault
   3. 35 winners
   4. 13 unforced errors
2. Tim Henman (GREAT BRITAIN): 6-4 6-0 6-2
   1. Six aces
   2. Zero double faults
   3. 23 winners
   4. Eight unforced errors
3. Nicolas Mahut (FRANCE): 6-3 7-6[7-2] 6-4
   1. Seven aces
   2. One double fault
   3. 50 winners
   4. 13 unforced errors
4. Tomáš Berdych (CZECH REPUBLIC): 6-3 6-3 6-4
   1. 21 aces
   2. One double fault
   3. 47 winners
   4. 15 unforced errors
5. Mario Ančić (CROATIA): 6-4 6-4 6-4
   1. Seven aces
   2. One double fault
   3. 35 winners
   4. 17 unforced errors
6. Jonas Björkman (SWEDEN): 6-2 6-0 6-2
   1. Nine aces
   2. Zero double faults
   3. 30 winners
   4. 13 unforced errors

**2008 [RUNNER-UP]**

1. Dominik Hrbatý (SLOVAKIA): 6-3 6-2 6-2
2. Robin Söderling (SWEDEN): 6-3 6-4 7-6[7-3]
3. Marc Gicquel (FRANCE): 6-3 6-3 6-1
4. Lleyton Hewitt (AUSTRALIA): 7-6[9-7] 6-2 6-4
5. Ančić: 6-1 7-5 6-4
6. Marat Safin (RUSSIA): 6-3 7-6[7-3] 6-4

In 2017, Federer secured an eighth crown at the All-England Club. He was the second player to reign at Wimbledon without dropping a set in the Open Era since Björn Borg (SWEDEN) accomplished this feat in 1976. Like his 2006 win, he accumulated positive ratios in the aces-double faults and winners-unforced errors categories:

1. Alexandr Dolgopolov (UKRAINE): 6-3 3-0 RETIRED
   1. 10 aces
   2. One double fault
   3. 18 winners
   4. 17 unforced errors
2. Dušan Lajović (SERBIA): 7-6[7-0] 6-3 6-2
   1. Nine aces
   2. Two double faults
   3. 31 winners
   4. 15 unforced errors
3. Mischa Zverev (GERMANY): 7-6[7-3] 6-4 6-4
   1. 13 aces
   2. One double fault
   3. 61 winners
   4. Seven unforced errors
4. Grigor Dimitrov (BULGARIA): 6-4 6-2 6-4
   1. Eight aces
   2. Zero double faults
   3. 24 winners
   4. 11 unforced errors
5. Milos Raonic (CANADA): 6-4 6-2 7-6[7-4]
   1. 11 aces
   2. Two double faults
   3. 46 winners
   4. Nine unforced errors
6. Berdych: 7-6[7-4] 7-6[7-4] 6-4
   1. 13 aces
   2. Four double faults
   3. 53 winners
   4. 20 unforced errors
7. Marin Čilić (CROATIA): 6-3 6-1 6-4
   1. Eight aces
   2. Two double faults
   3. 23 winners
   4. Eight unforced errors

Čilić is an aggressive baseline player. He can use his height to hit big off both wings and change direction. He can use his serve to win free points and set up groundstroke winners. He can hit his forehand with topspin, which lets him control most rallies. His footwork helps him reach balls that others cannot. In the first set, Federer broke in the fifth and ninth games. The Swiss grabbed two more breaks in the second and sixth games in the second set. Then, Federer broke again in the seventh game of the third set.

# **2018 AUSTRALIAN OPEN – MEN’S SINGLES + MIXED DOUBLES**

Federer is a great attacking player. He averages 90% of service games in his career, because he can produce big serves in tight games. Federer is confident in his game and always found a way to play his best at the moments in matches when it counted most. This helped the Swiss player win the 2007 Australian Open title without dropping a set:

1. Björn Phau (GERMANY): 7-5 6-0 6-4
   1. Seven aces
   2. One double fault
   3. 29 winners
   4. 29 unforced errors
2. Björkman: 6-2 6-3 6-2
   1. Seven aces
   2. One double fault
   3. 38 winners
   4. 19 unforced errors
3. Mikhail Youzhny (RUSSIA): 6-3 6-3 7-6[7-5]
   1. Seven aces
   2. One double fault
   3. 40 winners
   4. 33 unforced errors
4. Djokovic: 6-2 7-5 6-3
   1. 12 aces
   2. One double fault
   3. 51 winners
   4. 26 unforced errors
5. Tommy Robredo (SPAIN): 6-3 7-6[7-2] 7-5
   1. Five aces
   2. One double fault
   3. 42 winners
   4. 31 unforced errors
6. Andy Roddick (USA): 6-4 6-0 6-2
   1. 10 aces
   2. Two double faults
   3. 45 winners
   4. 12 unforced errors
7. Fernando González (CHILE): 7-6[7-2] 6-4 6-4
   1. Five aces
   2. One double fault
   3. 45 winners
   4. 19 unforced errors

Eleven years later, Federer’s form was still scintillating. The Swiss won all 18 sets he played in six matches. While he could not blow his opponents out, he also did not give them any hope either. His opponents pushed him to tiebreakers. But no opponent could grab a set from him. He was able to count on his all-court game and superior skill to pull him through tough positions. He also spent fewer hours on court. This helped him accumulate positive ratios in the aces-double faults and winners-unforced errors categories:

1. Aljaž Bedene (SLOVENIA): 6-3 6-4 6-3
   1. 11 aces
   2. Three double faults
   3. 41 winners
   4. 32 unforced errors
2. Jan-Lennard Struff (GERMANY): 6-4 6-4 7-6[7-4]
   1. 15 aces
   2. One double fault
   3. 36 winners
   4. 22 unforced errors
3. Gasquet: 6-2 7-5 6-4
   1. 10 aces
   2. One double fault
   3. 42 winners
   4. 30 unforced errors
4. Márton Fucsovics (HUNGARY): 6-4 7-6[7-3] 6-2
   1. Six aces
   2. Two double faults
   3. 34 winners
   4. 28 unforced errors
5. Berdych: 7-6[7-1] 6-3 6-4
   1. 13 aces
   2. Five double faults
   3. 61 winners
   4. 30 unforced errors
6. Hyeon Chung (SOUTH KOREA): 6-1 5-2 RETIRED
   1. Nine aces
   2. One double fault
   3. 24 winners
   4. 15 unforced errors

I chose to write about the championship match between Federer and Čilić. Both men treated Rod Laver Arena to a five-setter thriller. In the first set, Federer broke in the first and third games. Then, Čilić won the second-set tiebreak. In the third set, Federer broke in the sixth game. In the fourth set, Federer broke in the first game. But Čilić broke in the sixth and eighth games. In the fifth set, Federer broke Čilić in the second and sixth games.

In the mixed doubles portion of the tournament, Dabrowski started a partnership with Mate Pavić (CROATIA). Pavić has quick reflexes with a lefty serve. This helped them reach their first Grand Slam final without dropping a set or losing serve:

1. Lizette Cabrera (AUSTRALIA)/Alex Bolt (AUSTRALIA): 6-3 7-5
   1. Seven aces
   2. Two double faults
2. Demi Schuurs (NETHERLANDS)/Jean-Julien Rojer (NETHERLANDS): 6-1 6-3
   1. Six aces
   2. Two double faults
3. Johanna Larsson (SWEDEN)/Matwé Middelkoop (NETHERLANDS): 6-3 7-6[7-0]
   1. Three aces
   2. One double fault
4. Makarova/Bruno Soares (BRAZIL): 6-1 6-4
   1. Three aces
   2. Zero double faults

Dabrowski and Pavić faced Babos and Bopanna in the championship match. In the first set, Babos and Bopanna broke in the fourth and eighth games. In the second set, Dabrowski and Pavić broke in the seventh game. Then, Pavić and Dabrowski claimed the title in a match tiebreak.

# **2019 BRISBANE INTERNATIONAL – WOMEN’S SINGLES**

2019 was the final year that the Brisbane International was part of the ATP and WTA tours. Tsurenko’s playing style labels her as a counterpuncher. Her backhand gives her power to dominate the court. This enabled her to reach the final without dropping a set:

1. Mihaela Buzărnescu (ROMANIA): 6-0 6-2
   1. Two aces
   2. Two double faults
2. Kimberly Birrell (AUSTRALIA): 6-4 6-3
   1. Five aces
   2. Three double faults
3. Anett Kontaveit (ESTONIA): 7-5 6-3
   1. Two aces
   2. One double fault
4. Naomi Osaka (JAPAN): 6-2 6-4
   1. Six aces
   2. Two double faults

Osaka is an aggressive baseline player. She has raw power on her forehand and serve. She uses her serve to take advantage of points and her forehand controls the rallies. She also uses her forehand as an offensive weapon to control the rallies by hitting it deep and heavy. Her backhand is a set up shot for her forehand and she uses it as an attacking tool. But Tsurenko cut Osaka’s effective playing style down in this semifinal match. Tsurenko broke in the first and seventh games of the first set. Then, the Ukrainian broke in the first game of the second set.

Tsurenko set up a clash against Karolína Plíšková (CZECH REPUBLIC) in the championship match. Even though Tsurenko lost the final in three sets after suffering a left ankle injury, she played a cleaner match. Plíšková has an aggressive playing style. Her groundstrokes let her hit winners from any position on court. But her weaknesses are movement and footwork. Her movement lets her opponents hit low-risk winners because she cannot reach winning shots quickly. She also struggles against players who move her around the baseline. Tsurenko had only one ace each in the first and third sets. But in the first and third sets, the Ukrainian had no double faults at all. The second set saw Tsurenko hit four aces to two double faults. On the other side, Plíšková had only a single ace to five double faults. Even though Plíšková won more first serve points, Tsurenko had the cleaner aces-double faults ratio. The Ukranian also had a higher first serve percentage, second serve points, and break point conversions.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **PLAYER** | Plíšková | Tsurenko |
| **ACES** | 1 | 6 |
| **DOUBLE FAULTS** | 5 | 2 |
| **1st SERVE %** | 67% | 70% |
| **1st SERVE POINTS WON** | 68% | 58% |
| **2nd SERVE POINTS WON** | 50% | 54% |
| **BREAK POINTS WON** | 60% [6 out of 10] | 67% [4 out of 6] |

# **2019 AUSTRALIAN OPEN – WOMEN’S SINGLES + MEN’S SINGLES**

During the off-season in 2016 going into the 2017 season, Kvitová suffered injuries to her dominant left hand during a home invasion. The doctors said she may never be able to play tennis again. But she overcame the obstacles to return to the sport and reached her first Australian Open final without dropping a set:

1. Magdaléna Rybáriková (SLOVAKIA): 6-3 6-2
2. Begu: 6-1 6-3
3. Bencic: 6-1 6-4
4. Amanda Anisimova (USA): 6-2 6-1
5. Ashleigh Barty (AUSTRALIA): 6-1 6-4
6. Danielle Collins (USA): 7-6[7-2] 6-0

Collins has an aggressive playing style that is daring and fierce. She has a powerful serve and strong groundstrokes. Her strengths are her kick serve, inside-out forehand, and her backhand down the line. She can also hit winners from any position on court. In this semifinal match, Collins broke in the fifth game. But Kvitová broke in the sixth game. After Kvitová won the first set tiebreak with a double minibreak, she broke in the first, third, and fifth games of the second set.

Rafael Nadal (SPAIN) is born right-handed but plays left-handed. He plays an aggressive, baseline game with his topspin groundstrokes, speedy footwork, and persistent court coverage. This makes him an aggressive counterpuncher. He can hit well on the run and construct winning plays from wary positions. This helped him reach the final without dropping a set:

1. James Duckworth (AUSTRALIA): 6-4 6-3 7-5
2. Matthew Ebden (AUSTRALIA): 6-3 6-2 6-2
3. Alex De Minaur (AUSTRALIA): 6-1 6-2 6-4
4. Berdych: 6-0 6-1 7-6[7-4]
5. Frances Tiafoe (USA): 6-3 6-4 6-2
6. Stefanos Tsitsipas (GREECE): 6-2 6-4 6-0

Tsitsipas is an aggressive baseline, all-court player. He can hit his forehand and one-handed backhand with topspin. But his backhand is weak because he tends to overhit and make unforced errors while trying to hit winners. Tsitsipas routed Federer in a fourth-round four-setter and saved all 12 break points that he faced. But in this semifinal match, Nadal broke in the third and seventh games of the first set. Then, the Spaniard broke ninth game of the second set. This was followed by breaks in the first, third, and fifth games of the third set. Before Tsitispas lost to Nadal, the Greek was predicted to push the Spaniard to five sets. But several people pointed out that Tsitsipas’s game matches up better with Federer’s than Nadal’s. I was intrigued to know how Tsitsipas’s level fluctuated. So, I collected and organized his stats in two separate tables.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **PLAYER** | Tsitsipas | Federer |
| **1st SERVE %** | 60% [112 of 188] | 67% [105 of 156] |
| **ACES** | 20 | 12 |
| **DOUBLE FAULTS** | 1 | 0 |
| **WINNERS** | 62 | 61 |
| **UNFORCED ERRORS** | 36 | 55 |
| **1st SERVE POINTS WON** | 78% [87 of 112] | 79% [83 of 105] |
| **2nd SERVE POINTS WON** | 64% [49 of 76] | 61% [31 of 51] |
| **BREAK POINTS WON** | 33% [1 of 3] | 0% [0 of 12] |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **PLAYER** | Tsitsipas | Nadal |
| **1st SERVE %** | 69% [45 of 65] | 66% [40 of 61] |
| **ACES** | 5 | 5 |
| **DOUBLE FAULTS** | 2 | 0 |
| **WINNERS** | 17 | 30 |
| **UNFORCED ERRORS** | 22 | 14 |
| **1st SERVE POINTS WON** | 64% [29 of 45] | 85% [34 of 40] |
| **2nd SERVE POINTS WON** | 30% [6 of 20] | 71% [15 of 21] |
| **BREAK POINTS WON** | 0% [0 of 1] | 55% [ 6 of 11] |

When Tsitsipas faced Federer in the fourth round, it was a battle between two players with all-court playing styles and one-handed backhands. The number of winners, first serve percentages, first serve points won, and second serve points won were close in proximity. But when Tsitsipas lost to Nadal, the Greek’s first and second serve points won took a plunge. Nadal made clean, heavy cuts at the ball to control Tsitsipas’ sparkling talent. The Spaniard was on offense from the first game and pushed the Greek on almost each of his service games. Tsitsipas was a strong server in this tournament, but he dropped serve six times across all three sets.

# **2019 MIAMI OPEN – MEN’S SINGLES**

Isner can use his groundstrokes to finish points quickly. His serve is powerful and stable because he delivers huge serves when it matters most. This helped him reach multiple finals without losing a set:

**2011 NEWPORT HALL OF FAME OPEN [CHAMPION]**

1. Karol Beck (SLOVAKIA): 6-3 6-2
2. Arnaud Clément (FRANCE): 7-6[8-6] 6-4
3. Alex Bogomolov Jr. (USA): 7-6[7-5] 6-4
4. Kamke: 7-5 7-6[7-4]
5. Rochus: 6-3 7-6[8-6]

**2017 HALL OF FAME OPEN [CHAMPION]**

1. Sam Groth (AUSTRALIA): 6-2 6-4
2. Dennis Novikov (USA): 6-4 6-4
3. Bjorn Frantangelo (USA): 6-2 6-4

**2017 BB&T ATLANTA OPEN [CHAMPION]**

1. Vasek Pospisil (CANADA): 6-3 6-4
2. Lukáš Lacko (SLOVAKIA): 7-5 6-4
3. Müller: 6-4 6-2
4. Ryan Harrison (USA): 7-6[8-6] 7-6[9-7]

Isner’s form in Miami was flawless. He won all ten sets he played in five matches and dropped serve only three times throughout his run in the tournament:

1. Lorenzo Sonego (ITALY): 7-6[7-2] 7-6[9-7]
   1. 20 aces
   2. Three double faults
2. Albert Ramos-Viñolas (SPAIN): 7-5 7-6[8-6]
   1. 16 aces
   2. Two double faults
3. Kyle Edmund (GREAT BRITAIN): 7-6[7-5] 7-6[7-3]
   1. 18 aces
   2. One double fault
4. Bautista Agut: 7-6[7-1] 7-6[7-5]
   1. 25 aces
   2. One double fault
5. Félix Auger-Aliassime (CANADA): 7-6[7-3] 7-6[7-4]
   1. 21 aces
   2. Two double faults

Auger-Aliassime is an all-court player with a strong forehand. In the first set, Auger-Aliassime broke in the seventh game. But Isner broke in the 10th game. In the second set, Auger-Aliassime broke in the sixth game. But Isner broke in the ninth game and defeated Auger-Aliassime in two tiebreakers.

# **2019 MADRID OPEN – WOMEN’S SINGLES**

The Madrid Open takes place in early May. It is a tune-up tournament for the French Open. Kiki Bertens (NETHERLANDS) is a baseline player. She can hit her forehand with heavy topspin. Her movement, fitness, footwork, and court coverage make her an expert counterpuncher. This helped her become the first woman to win the title without dropping a set:

1. Siniaková: 6-3 6-2
2. Jeļena Ostapenko (LATVIA): 6-4 6-3
3. Sevastova: 6-1 6-2
4. Kvitová: 6-2 6-3
5. Stephens: 6-2 7-5
6. Halep 6-4 6-4

Stephens is an all-court player. She favors her forehand to run around her backhand. She relies on her athleticism to defend against her opponent’s shots. She excels at turning defense into offense. Bertens received serve in this match. In the first set, Bertens broke in the first and fifth games. In the second set, Stephens broke in the sixth game. But Bertens broke in the seventh game. In the 10th game, Bertens was down triple set point on her serve. But she edged through a key hold. Then, she broke in the 11th game and efficiently served out the match in the 12th game.

Bertens set up a final against Halep. The Romanian won four sets without losing a game and dropped only one set against Bencic in a second-set tiebreak in the semifinals. Bertens told reporters that she struggled to recover after her quarterfinal win against Kvitová. But the good news for her is that she had an earlier finish in her semifinal win against Stephens. This earlier finish gave her extra time to squeeze in more rest and recovery. In the first set, Halep broke in the fourth and sixth games. But Bertens broke in the fifth, seventh, and ninth games. In the second set, Bertens broke in the first and fifth games. Halep broke once in the third game. Ultimately, Bertens claimed the biggest title of her career and dropped only thirty-five games in six matches.

# **2019 FRENCH OPEN – WOMEN’S SINGLES**

Markéta Vondroušová (CZECH REPUBLIC) has a crafty playing style with a variety of shots. Her game has lengthy rallies with her lefty topspin forehand. Her signature shot is her drop shot. This helped her reach her first Grand Slam final without dropping a set:

1. Wang Yafan (CHINA): 6-4 6-3
2. Anastasia Potapova (RUSSIA): 6-4 6-0
3. Suárez Navarro: 6-4 6-4
4. Sevastova: 6-2 6-0
5. Petra Martić (CROATIA): 7-6[7-1] 7-5
6. Konta: 7-5 7-6[7-2]

Martić has an aggressive all-court game with variety. Her power lets her hit her groundstrokes both flat and with topspin. She can also hit her backhand with slice and feature the drop shot effectively. She can constantly disturb baseline rallies by creating opportunities to hit winners or forcing her opponents to commit errors. She can extend rallies, as a counterpuncher, to take unforced errors out of aggressive player and possess a complete defensive game. In the first set, Vondroušová broke in the fifth game. Martić broke in the sixth and eighth games. But Vondroušová broke in the ninth game. In the second set, Vondroušová broke in the second, sixth, and 11th games.

Vondroušová scored a breathtaking recovery in her semifinal win against Konta. In the first set, Konta broke in the first and fifth games. But Vondroušová broke in the fourth, 10th and 12th games. In the second set, Konta broke in the third game. But Vondroušová broke in the 10th game. Then, the Czech closed out the match with a double minibreak in the second-set tiebreak.

# **2019 WIMBLEDON – WOMEN’S DOUBLES**

Strýcová formed a unique partnership with Hsieh. Hsieh has a unique, eccentric playing style with her two-handed groundstrokes. She incorporates drop shots, lobs, volleys, and sharply angled groundstrokes. This helped them win their first Grand Slam title without losing a set:

1. Mona Barthel (GERMANY)/Xenia Knoll (SWITZERLAND): 6-2 6-1
2. Ekaterina Alexandrova (RUSSIA)/Viktorija Golubic (SWITZERLAND): 6-2 6-2
3. Begu/Monica Niculescu (ROMANIA): 6-3 6-4
4. Aryna Sabalenka (BELARUS)/Elise Mertens (BELGIUM): 6-4 6-2
5. Babos/Mladenovic: 7-6[7-5] 6-4
6. Dabrowski/Yifan Xu (CHINA): 6-2 6-4

The Taiwanese Czech duo flattened Babos and Mladenovic in their semifinal match. The first set went on serve for all twelve games. Hsieh and Strýcová won the first set tiebreak with a minibreak. Then, the Taiwanese Czech duo broke in the first game of the second set.

# **2019 SHANGHAI MASTERS – MEN’S SINGLES**

Daniil Medvedev (RUSSIA) is a baseline player. He possesses superior movement and quickness. His game is focused on lengthy baseline rallies owing to his long, flat groundstrokes. His best shot from the baseline is his backhand, which he hits with depth, pace, and precision, and he can redirect this shot down the line. His strong return game let him adopt a deep return position to hit full-swing groundstrokes. This helped him reach multiple finals without dropping a set:

**2018 WINSTON-SALEM OPEN [CHAMPION]**

1. Bašić: 6-4 6-4
2. De Minaur: 6-3 6-3
3. Guido Andreozzi (ARGENTINA): 7-5 6-1
4. Harrison: 7-6[7-4] 6-4
5. Steve Johnson (USA): 6-4 6-4

**2019 WASHINGTON OPEN [RUNNER-UP]**

1. Bjorn Fratangelo (USA): 6-3 6-4
2. Tiafoe: 6-2 7-5
3. Čilić: 6-4 7-6[9-7]
4. Peter Gojowczyk (GERMANY): 6-2 6-2

The Washington Open is held at Rock Creek Tennis Stadium in Washington DC. It is a tune-up tournament for the US Open. I chose to write about the final between Medvedev and Nick Kyrgios (AUSTRALIA). Kyrgios has an aggressive playing style. He can use his serve to set up his topspin forehand. He also has a superb slice and well-disguised drop shot. Even though Kyrgios defeated Medvedev in straight sets, the score was closer than it looked. The match went the into two tiebreakers with zero break points between both players.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **PLAYER** | Kyrgios | Medvedev |
| **1st SERVE %** | 80% | 74% |
| **ACES** | 18 | 10 |
| **DOUBLE FAULTS** | 0 | 2 |
| **WINNERS** | 32 | 29 |
| **UNFORCED ERRORS** | 19 | 14 |
| **1st SERVE POINTS WON** | 81% | 88% |
| **2nd SERVE POINTS WON** | 63% | 67% |
| **BREAK POINTS WON** | 0% [0 of 0] | 0% [0 of 0] |

With his run in Washington, Medvedev broke into the top ten. In his 2019 summer North American hard-court campaign, the Russian reached a second final in Montreal without losing a set:

1. Kyle Edmund (GREAT BRITAIN): 6-3 6-0
2. Cristian Garín (CHILE): 6-3 6-3
3. Dominic Thiem (AUSTRIA): 6-3 6-1
4. Karen Khachanov (RUSSIA): 6-1 7-6[8-6]

Khachanov is a baseline player. He hits his forehand with spin to move his opponents around. But his weaknesses are lack of variety and defense at the baseline. In the first set, Khachanov double faulted away two breaks in the first set. Medvedev broke in the third and ninth games of the second set. But Khachanov returned the favor in the fourth and 10th games. Despite letting his advantage slip, Medvedev held his nerve in the second-set tiebreak to triumph in straight sets.

The St. Petersburg Open takes place on indoor hard courts at the Petersburg Sports and Concert Complex in St. Petersburg, Russia. It takes place in late September, after the US Open. Medvedev became the youngest player to win the title on home soil without losing a set:

1. Donskoy: 7-5 6-3
2. Andrey Rublev (RUSSIA): 6-4 7-5
3. Egor Gerasimov (BELARUS): 7-5 7-5
4. Borna Ćorić (CROATIA): 6-3 6-1

The Shanghai Masters takes place on outdoor hard courts in early October. It takes place at the Qizhong Forest Sports City Arena in the Minhang District of Shanghai. Medvedev’s form soared when he won the without losing a set:

1. Cameron Norrie (GREAT BRITAIN): 6-3 6-1
2. Vasek Pospisil (CANADA): 7-6[7-4] 7-5
3. Fabio Fognini (ITALY): 6-3 7-6[7-4]
4. Tsitsipas: 7-6[7-5] 7-5
5. Sascha Zverev (GERMANY): 6-4 6-1

I chose to write about the semifinal match between Medvedev and Tsitsipas. All 12 games of the first set went on serve. Both players traded holds for the first ten points of the tiebreak. Then, Medvedev won the first-set tiebreak with a minibreak. Medvedev broke in the third game of the second set. Tsitsipas broke to love in the 10th game. But Medvedev quickly put the disappointment behind him and broke Tsitsipas with a forehand return winner in the 11th game.

# **2019 ROLEX PARIS MASTERS – MEN’S SINGLES**

The Paris Masters takes place in Paris on indoor hard courts at the AccorHotels Arena in Bercy. The event is the final tournament on tour before the year-ending ATP Finals. The ATP Finals is the year-ending championships for the men’s tennis players and takes place annually each November. The ATP Finals feature the top eight singles players and doubles teams on the ATP Rankings. In this edition, Djokovic won the title without dropping a set:

1. Corentin Moutet (FRANCE): 7-6[7-2] 6-4
2. Edmund: 7-6[9-7] 6-1
3. Tsitsipas: 6-1 6-2
4. Grigor Dimitrov (BULGARIA): 7-6[7-5] 6-4
5. Shapovalov: 6-3 6-4

Dimitrov has an all-round playing style. He has flexibility, athleticism, and fluidity. He is comfortable playing in all areas of the court with his groundstrokes. But his one-handed backhand and mental game are his two biggest weaknesses, because he frequently makes the wrong decisions or loses concentration on the big points. In the first set, Djokovic claimed the first-set tiebreak with a minibreak. In the second set, the Serbian in the fifth game.

# **2020 ADELAIDE INTERNATIONAL – WOMEN’S SINGLES**

Dayana Yastremska (UKRAINE) has a unique playing style. Her groundstrokes can create speed and sharp angles. She can also apply a slice to her backhand to break up the pace of rallies. This helped her reach multiple finals without dropping a set:

**2018 HONG KONG TENNIS OPEN [CHAMPION]**

1. Fanny Stollár (HUNGARY): 6-4 6-4
2. Saisai: 6-3 6-3
3. Kristína Kučová: 7-6[8-6] 6-2
4. Shuai Zhang (CHINA): 7-5 6-4
5. Wang Qiang (CHINA): 6-2 6-1

**2019 THAILAND OPEN [CHAMPION]**

1. Arantxa Rus (NETHERLANDS): 6-0 6-3
2. Peng: 6-1 6-4
3. Muguruza: 7-6[7-5] 6-1
4. Linette: 6-4 6-3

**2019 INTERNATIONAUX DE STRASBOURG [CHAMPION]**

1. Pauline Parmentier (FRANCE): 6-2 6-4
2. Sam Stosur (AUSTRALIA): 6-0 6-2
3. Fiona Ferro (FRANCE): 6-1 6-3
4. Sabalenka: 6-4 6-4

The Adelaide International takes place in Adelaide, South Australia, at the Memorial Drive Tennis Centre. It is a tune-tup tournament for the Australian Open. Yastremska cruised through to the biggest final of her career without dropping a set:

1. Babos: 7-5 6-3
2. Kerber 6-3 2-0 RETIRED
3. Donna Vekić (CROATIA): 6-4 6-3
4. Sabalenka: 6-4 7-6[7-4]

Sabalenka has an all-out attack playing style. She can take cuts on her groundstrokes to hit them flat and deep. She also uses her serve to set up her groundstrokes. But her height and volleys restrict her mobility on court. Yastremska broke in the fifth game of the first set. Then, the Ukrainian broke in the first game of the second set. While Sabalenka broke in the sixth game, the Belarusian’s 14 winners outnumbered 24 unforced errors could not force a third set.

# **2020 MEXICAN OPEN – WOMEN’S SINGLES**

Leylah Fernandez (CANADA) is born right-handed but plays left-handed. She is a baseline player. She can accompany her forehand passes with her backhand. She can switch from offense to defense but prefers to play offense. This helped her reach two junior Grand Slam finals without losing a set:

**2019 AUSTRALIAN OPEN [RUNNER-UP]**

1. Kylie Collins (USA): 6-3 6-2
2. Moyuka Uchijima (JAPAN): 6-4 7-6[7-5]
3. Lisa Pigato (ITALY): 6-3 7-5
4. Manon Léonard (FRANCE): 6-3 6-1
5. Anastasia Tikhonova (RUSSIA): 6-1 6-3

**2019 FRENCH OPEN [CHAMPION]**

1. Mariia Tkacheva (RUSSIA): 7-5 6-3
2. Marta Custic (SPAIN): 6-0 6-3
3. Park So-Hyun (SOUTH KOREA): 6-2 6-0
4. Elsa Jacquemot (FRANCE): 6-0 6-0
5. María Camila Osorio Serrano (COLOMBIA): 6-2 6-4
6. Emma Navarro (USA): 6-3 6-2

The Mexican Open takes place in late February at the Fairmont Acapulco Princess in Acapulco, Mexico. This tournament was a breakthrough for Fernandez. The Canadian came through the qualifying and main draws with six straight-set wins to book her place in her first WTA final:

**QUALIFYING**

1. Cabrera: 6-3 6-1
2. Lepchenko: 6-3 6-3

**MAIN DRAW**

1. Stojanović: 6-4 6-1
2. Nao Hibino (JAPAN): 6-3 6-0
3. Potapova: 6-3 7-5
4. Renata Zarazúa (MEXICO): 6-3 6-3

Heather Watson (GREAT BRITAIN) has a unique playing style with movement, footwork, and timing. She has variety with her backhand slice and volleys. In the first set, Watson broke in the first and third games. But Fernandez broke in the eighth game. In the second set, Watson broke in the first game. But Fernandez broke in the fourth game and saved four match points in the second-set tiebreak. In the third set, Watson broke in the second and sixth games.

# **2020 FRENCH OPEN – MEN’S SINGLES**

Nadal’s game on clay revolves around his groundstrokes, footwork, and movement. He is famous for his killer topspin, lefty-forehand and net game. The surface takes pace off the ball, so his shots cause his opponents to retreat to the baseline and return to defense. His patience, speed, and stamina helped him reach multiple French Open finals without dropping a set:

**2007 [CHAMPION]**

1. Juan Martín Del Potro (ARGENTINA): 7-5 6-3 6-2
2. Flavio Cipolla (ITALY): 6-2 6-1 6-4
3. Albert Montañés (SPAIN): 6-1 6-3 6-2
4. Hewitt: 6-3 6-1 7-6[7-5]
5. Carlos Moyá (SPAIN): 6-4 6-3 6-0
6. Djokovic: 7-5 6-4 6-2

**2008 [CHAMPION]**

1. Thomaz Bellucci (BRAZIL): 7-5 6-3 6-1
2. Nicolas Devilder (FRANCE): 6-4 6-0 6-1
3. Jarkko Nieminen (FINLAND): 6-1 6-3 6-1
4. Verdasco: 6-1 6-0 6-2
5. Almagro: 6-1 6-1 6-1
6. Djokovic: 6-4 6-2 7-6[7-3]
7. Federer: 6-1 6-3 6-0

**2010 [CHAMPION]**

1. Gianni Mina (FRANCE): 6-2 6-2 6-2
2. Horacio Zeballos (ARGENTINA): 6-2 6-2 6-3
3. Hewitt: 6-3 6-4 6-3
4. Bellucci: 6-2 7-5 6-4
5. Almagro: 7-6[7-2] 7-6[7-3] 6-4
6. Melzer: 6-2 6-3 7-6[8-6]
7. Robin Söderling (SWEDEN): 6-4 6-2 6-4

**2017 [CHAMPION]**

1. Paire: 6-1 6-4 6-1
2. Robin Haase (NETHERLANDS): 6-1 6-4 6-3
3. Nikoloz Basilashvili (GEORGIA): 6-0 6-1 6-0
4. Bautista Agut: 6-1 6-2 6-2
5. Pablo Carreño Busta (SPAIN): 6-2 2-0 RETIRED
6. Dominic Thiem (AUSTRIA): 6-3 6-4 6-0
7. Wawrinka: 6-2 6-3 6-1

After the 2020 Mexican Open, the COVID-19 pandemic hit on March 11th, 2020. Nobody knew if tennis would return. But, when the 2020 French Open took place in late September, fans came back. Court Philippe-Chatrier had a retractable roof as well. Nadal found his best level and won the title without dropping a set:

1. Egor Gerasimov (BELARUS): 6-4 6-4 6-2
2. Mackie McDonald (USA): 6-1 6-0 6-3
3. Stefano Travaglia (ITALY): 6-1 6-4 6-0
4. Sebastian Korda (USA): 6-1 6-1 6-2
5. Jannik Sinner (ITALY): 7-6[7-4] 6-4 6-1
6. Diego Schwartzman (ARGENTINA): 6-3 6-3 7-6[7-0]
7. Djokovic: 6-0 6-2 7-5

Sinner’s playing style displays his all-court movement. He can hit his backhand with topspin. In the first set, Sinner broke in the 11th game. But Nadal broke in the 12th game. In the second set, Sinner broke in the fourth game. But Nadal broke in the fifth and ninth games. Then, Nadal broke in the first, third, and seventh games of the third set to seal the match.

Schwartzman is a baseline player. He can hit his groundstrokes with depth and pace. His speed lets him retrieve drop shots and hit passing shots with ease. His defense is his strength, because he can hit winners from suspicious positions far out of the court. In the first set, Nadal broke in the second and fourth games, while Schwartzman broke in the third game. In the second set, Nadal broke in the third and ninth games. In the third set, Nadal broke in the fourth and sixth games, while Schwartzman broke in the fifth and seventh games. Then, Nadal cruised through the third-set tiebreak and defeated Schwartzman in straight sets.

With his win against Schwartzman, Nadal set up a clash with Djokovic in the championship match. In this final, Nadal broke in the first, third, and fifth games to whitewash Djokovic in the first set. Then, the Spaniard broke in the third and fifth games of the second set. In the third set, Nadal broke in the fifth and 11th games, while Djokovic broke in the sixth game.

# **2021 MUTUA MADRID OPEN**

Sacsha Zverev is a baseline player. He can hit his backhand either crosscourt or down the line with tremendous disguise. He can also create glittering defense with his sense of court awareness and anticipation. This helped him reach multiple finals without losing a set:

**2016 ST. PETERSBURG OPEN [CHAMPION]**

1. Khachanov: 7-6[7-3] 6-4
2. Medvedev: 6-3 7-5
3. Youzhny: 6-2 6-2
4. Berdych: 6-4 6-4

**2018 MUTUA MADRID OPEN [CHAMPION]**

1. Donskoy: 6-2 7-5
2. Mayer: 6-4 6-2
3. Isner: 6-4 7-5
4. Shapovalov: 6-4 6-1
5. Thiem: 6-4 6-4

**2019 MEXICAN OPEN [RUNNER-UP]**

1. Alexei Popyrin (AUSTRALIA): 6-3 6-3
2. David Ferrer (SPAIN): 7-6[7-0] 6-1
3. De Minaur: 6-4 6-4
4. Norrie: 7-6[7-0] 6-3

**2021 MEXICAN OPEN [CHAMPION]**

1. Carlos Alcaraz (SPAIN): 6-3 6-1
2. Laslo Đere (SERBIA): 6-4 6-3
3. Dominik Koepfer (GERMANY): 6-4 7-6[7-5]
4. Tsitsipas: 6-4 7-6[7-3]

**2021 MUTUA MADRID OPEN [CHAMPION]**

1. Nishikori: 6-3 6-2
2. Dan Evans (GREAT BRITAIN): 6-3 7-6[7-3]
3. Nadal: 6-4 6-4
4. Thiem: 6-3 6-4

I chose to write about Sacsha Zverev’s semifinal win against Thiem. Thiem is a baseline player. His groundstrokes are solid with a heavy forehand and harsh one-handed backhand. But his backhand can be vulnerable because it produces untimely errors. Sacsha Zverev broke in the third, fifth, and ninth games, while Thiem broke in the sixth game. Then, the German broke in the 10th game.

# **2021 QUEEN’S CLUB CHAMPIONSHIPS**

Matteo Berrettini (ITALY) is an all-court player with a strong serve and forehand. His forehand has speed, spin, and depth. His backhand slice also lets him set up his forehand. This helped him reach multiple finals without dropping a set:

**2018 SWISS OPEN GSTAAD**

1. Radu Albot (MOLDOVA): 6-4 6-2
2. Rublev: 6-3 6-3
3. Feliciano López (SPAIN): 6-4 6-3
4. Jürgen Zopp (ESTONIA): 6-4 7-6[8-6]
5. Bautista Agut: 7-6[11-9] 6-4

**2019 STUTTGART OPEN**

1. Kyrgios: 6-3 6-4
2. Khachanov: 6-4 6-2
3. Denis Kudla (USA): 6-3 6-3
4. Auger-Aliassime: 6-4 7-6[13-11]

The Queen’s Club Championships takes place at the Queen’s Club in West Kensington in London. The event is the oldest tennis tournament in the world and is a tune-up tournament for Wimbledon. At this event, Berrettini successfully reached his first grass court final without dropping a set:

1. Stefano Travaglia: 7-6[7-5] 7-6[7-4]
2. Andy Murray (GREAT BRITAIN): 6-3 6-3
3. Evans: 7-6[7-5] 6-3
4. De Minaur: 6-4 6-4

Norrie’s playing style dubs him as a counterpuncher. His forehand has heavy topspin. He is strong in his ability to deactivate pace and spin with his movement and speed. When Berrettini and Norrie faced off in the championship match, it was a high-quality display from both men. In the first set, Berrettini broke in the fifth game. All twelve games of the second set went on serve and Norrie won the second-set tiebreak with a minibreak. Then, Berrettini broke in the eighth game of the third set.

# **2021 CINCINNATI MASTERS**

Barty has an all-court playing style. She can hit her forehand deep crosscourt and flat down the line. She can also use her backhand as a slice. She can hit short slices to draw her opponents to the net or sharp angles to pull them off court. Her composure on court is incredible, because whether she wins or loses, she always calmly stays in in the present moment. She is also a well-rounded athlete, who knows how to balance her tennis schedule with her personal life and stay 100% healthy. Since 2019, she is the current number one player in the world. Her 2019 season saw her win the Miami Open, French Open, Birmingham Classic, and WTA Finals. She kicked off her 2020 season with a title on home soil at the Adelaide International. Then, she took the rest of the year off due to traveling concerns once the COVID-19 pandemic hit. But she came back with a bang in her 2021 season. She won her second title on home soil at the Yarra Valley Classic. This was followed by titles in Miami, Stuttgart, Wimbledon, and Cincinnati. The Cincinnati Masters is the oldest tennis tournament in the US. It has been played in its original city since 1899. It is a tune-up tournament for the US Open Series. In the 2021 edition, Barty won the title without dropping a set:

1. Watson: 6-4 7-6[7-3]
2. Azárenka: 6-0 6-2
3. Barbora Krejčíková (CZECH REPUBLIC): 6-2 6-4
4. Kerber: 6-2 7-5
5. Jil Teichmann (SWITZERLAND): 6-3 6-1

Barty was in blistering form against Kerber in the semifinals. In the first set, Barty broke in the sixth and eighth games. In the second set, Barty broke in the second game. But Kerber broke in the third and fifth games. Despite this hiccup, Barty showed no signs of panic or frustration. The Australian broke in the sixth and 12th games to seal the match. “I didn’t feel like I did a lot wrong. Angie came up with some good stuff and tough points. I knew that Angie was lifting, and I needed to go with her. I had to accept if I was going to miss, I was going to miss in the right way.”

After Barty effectively reached the final without dropping a set, I was already eager to start writing about her run in this tournament. But I had to be patient and wait for the second semifinal match between Plíšková and Teichmann to be completed. Plíšková reached the semifinals without dropping a set, while Teichmann upset Osaka in a three-setter in the Round of 16. The oddsmakers favored Plíšková to defeat Teichmann in straight sets. But Teichmann broke in the fifth and seventh games and effectively served out the first set in the eighth game. After I saw that Plíšková dropped the first set, I knew that it was starting to get easier for me to write about Barty. I still wasn’t 100% quite dialed in just yet. But, knowing that I could dedicate my focus to Barty only, it helped me feel more at ease in my comfort zone. In the second set, Teichmann broke in the seventh game, Plíšková broke in the eighth game, then Teichman broke again in the ninth game and successfully served out the match in the 10th game. After this second semifinal match was completed, I knew that I was now going to be able to successfully write about my first women’s singles match of 2021.

Now that Barty was going to face Teichmann in the final, one question lingered in my mind. If Plíšková did beat Teichmann in a three-set semifinal, could the Czech push the Australian to three sets in the final and upset the world number one? When I compared the weaknesses between Barty and Plíšková, there was a discrepancy. Barty’s lone weakness is getting hit off court by her opponents. But Plíšková’s weaknesses are movement and defense. Then, I also realized that the fatigue factor played a key role. After a player wins a match in three sets, I always question how much energy they have left in their tank. This was something I saw in two previous tournaments when Serena secured the 2017 Australian Open and Bertens claimed the 2019 Mutua Madrid Open. But I saw the fatigue factor from a slightly different angle in Cincinnati. Whether this semifinal match between Plíšková and Teichmann went three sets, it didn’t matter to me. Regardless of the result, I knew that Barty was going to come out on top as the winner, because she spent less time on court. After Teichmann defeated Plíšková in straight sets, I knew that this result would be a straight set win for Barty. Barty and Teichmann never faced each other before. But Barty knew what to expect. “I don’t know Jil a lot. But I have seen bits and pieces. I know she’s got the ability to move and run and defend. She’s got a great slice backhand, and she’s got variety off her lefty forehand. She can flatten it out if she wants to or she can flip it up and change the tempo of the match.” In the first set, Barty broke in the eighth game. This was followed by breaks in the first, third, and fifth games of the second set. Teichmann broke in sixth game. But Barty broke in the seventh game to claim the title. “I wanted to be aggressive, get up after my serve, and be assertive on my serve. In my return games, I was able to build pressure and wear down my opponents. It’s been a fun and exciting week for us to come away with the title.”

# **2021 US OPEN**

When the pandemic hit, the 2020 US Open was held behind closed doors without spectators. But one year later, the fans were allowed to return to the tournament. Emma Raducanu (GREAT BRITAIN) is a baseline player with an aggressive playing style. Her playing style is focused on offense and helps her redirect power down the line. She can hit her groundstrokes flat and hard, with persistent depth and power. Her top groundstroke is her two-handed backhand and her signature shot is her backhand down-the-line. She can hit her backhand as a slice to break up the pace of the rallies and unsettle her opponent’s rhythm. With her return game, she can keep her opponents deep in court by taking the ball early and hitting hard down the line. She can also attack short second serves with her return winners. Her movement, court coverage, footwork, speed, and anticipation let her rally and defend effectively against her opponents. She can blend point construction with flexibility, which makes it difficult for opponents to read her game. She also possesses an effective drop shot. This helped her become the first qualifier to win the title without losing a set:

**QUALIFYING**

1. Bibiane Schoofs (NETHERLANDS): 6-1 6-2
2. Mariam Bolkvadze (GEORGIA): 6-3 7-5
3. Mayar Sherif (EGYPT): 6-1 6-4

**MAIN DRAW**

1. Stefanie Vögele (SWITZERLAND): 6-2 6-3
2. Zhang: 6-2 6-4
3. Sara Sorribes Tormo (SPAIN): 6-0 6-1
4. Shelby Rogers (USA): 6-2 6-1
5. Bencic: 6-3 6-4
6. Maria Sakkari (GREECE): 6-1 6-4
7. Fernandez: 6-4 6-3

The 2021 US Open women’s final is one I will remember forever. After Fernandez stunned Sabalenka in the semifinals, Raducanu pulled off a similar upset against Sakkari. As a result, Raducanu and Fernandez set up the first unseeded all-teenage women’s singles US Open final! It didn’t matter to me who was the champion or runner-up. These two ladies displayed incredible composure and breathtaking, unique playing styles.

# **2022 AUSTRALIAN OPEN – WOMEN’S SINGLES**

I chose to write about the 2022 Australian Open in a different way. Barty was under a tremendous amount of pressure. Her world number one ranking was in contention with two other women and she had a tough draw. She was slated to face Osaka in the fourth round, Sakkari in the quarterfinals, Krejčíková in the semifinals, and either Muguruza, Sabalenka, or Kontaveit in the final. But after Muguruza and Kontaveit both lost in the second round, things took a turn. Osaka went out in the third round, Sabalenka and Sakkari both bowed out in the fourth round, then Krejčíková crashed out in the quarterfinals. Based on what happened here, it was clear to me that history was about to repeat itself. When Serena won the 2014 US Open without dropping a set, she also dealt with the same exact scenario, but with different opponents. At that time, Serena had Ivanović and Stosur in her section of the draw. But once Ivanović and Stosur fell in the second round, the strings of upsets continued. As a result, Serena took full advantage of a depleted, decimated, draw, and secured her 18th Grand Slam title. Almost eight years later, the same thing happened to Barty and she secured her first Australian Open on home soil without the loss of a set:

1. Tsurenko: 6-0 6-1
   1. Five aces
   2. Zero double faults
2. Lucia Bronzetti (ITALY): 6-1 6-1
   1. Eight aces
   2. Two double faults
3. Giorgi: 6-2 6-3
   1. Four aces
   2. Two double faults
4. Anisimova: 6-4 6-3
   1. Seven aces
   2. Three double faults
5. Jessica Pegula (USA): 6-2 6-0
   1. Six aces
   2. Two double faults
6. Keys: 6-1 6-3
   1. Five aces
   2. Zero double faults
7. Collins: 6-3 7-6[7-2]
   1. 10 aces
   2. Three double faults

With her home Grand Slam crown, Barty joined Serena, Federer, Nadal, and Djokovic as the fourth active player to claim Grand Slams on all three surfaces. She also became the first Australian woman in 44 years to lift the Daphne Akhurst Memorial Cup since Chris O’Neil (AUSTRALIA) in 1978. Her capabilities with her delicacy and touch make her the most complete player in the game. Her dominant serve, strange variety, and remarkable composure helped her reach new heights in the game. Many fans worldwide said that she set a high standard, because she’s a consistent world number one player, like Serena. I can see why the fans that feel way, because these two ladies are very similar! Both women tend to take lengthy breaks to keep their bodies healthy and avoid serious risks of injuries. Even though Serena has chosen to slowly wind down on the number of tournaments she played as she’s gotten older, she still currently reigns at the top of the leaderboard in terms of the YTD [year-to-date] winning percentile range. Regardless of what health issues she has suffered, ever since she made her debut on the WTA tour back in 1997, the American has maintained a high level of stability. Fast-forwarding to the present, Barty has started to follow Serena’s footsteps in the same manner. As the reigning number one player in the world since June 2019, the Australian cut the losses down into the single digits and her YTD winning percentile range has slowly risen. Excluding Serena, what I’ve seen with the current women’s singles Grand Slam champions [Kerber, Ostapenko, Muguruza, Halep, Osaka, Bianca Andreescu (CANADA), Sonya Kenin (USA), Iga Świątek (POLAND), and Raducanu] is a huge amount of confidence and very little ability. But Barty is the complete opposite. She often refers to “we” or “our”, instead of “I” or “my” to make sure that her team is included. She also emphasizes the importance of always trying to learn and get better. “Serena created a legacy in this sport. But I’m not worthy of being mentioned with her, because I’m still learning. I’m just trying to learn on the fly, week in, week out with the people that are around me. Each time I step out onto the court, I just want to grow. I just want to be a little bit better. Whether it’s my forehand, serve, backhand slice, one shot that I try, tactically something I do, I just want that to be a little bit better than the last time I tried it. Continually trying to grow has held us in good place the last few years. That product is because of the people that are around me. The team that I started my career with essentially hasn’t changed. That’s what excites me the most. All the time in between the memories and the experiences and the opportunities that we’ve had have been second to none. It’s been incredible. There was a massive emphasis on this January. We made the decision as a team in September last year that we wanted to stop, take a breath, and really prepare ourselves for the best possible January. We made a massive focus to keep this tournament really light, to keep this experience of playing at the Australian Open, playing at our home Grand Slam as something that is really fun.” What I love about Barty is that she’s always focused on the present moment and never looks too far ahead. No matter what the situation is on court, she always displays incredible calmness and composure. As a well-rounded athlete, I feel like she is a gift to the millions of us tennis fans worldwide, who watch this sport every single year!

# **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

I hope my readers enjoyed reading about consistency in tennis. My family and friends gave me excellent feedback to help me turn my love for the sport into an ongoing, long-term project! I could not have done it without them! Stay tuned for updates! In the meanwhile, though, feel free to watch these match highlights! With some of these YouTube links, I surprisingly didn’t write about some of these matches at all! But some of them were worth checking out!

**ASB CLASSIC**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IHt_chpRX3A>

# **ADELAIDE INTERNATIONAL**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AXVwLHu3M4g>

# **AUSTRALIAN OPEN**

1. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2gcMN5BHvHk>
2. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5ox8uWPCn0I>
3. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xqYKxmGc1Ys>

**INTERNATIONAUX DE STRASBOURG**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XcSkh2a5HmE>

# **BIRMINGHAM CLASSIC**

1. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W0rcWhB14Us>
2. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5WEKF9O6GW4>

**WIMBLEDON**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y4n3JhIrJrQ>

# **US OPEN**

1. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W7fCn_Y4yEk>
2. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=634UMLDrVzc>
3. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xtNxwb056-8
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