

AUSTRALIAN OPEN 2012

DJOKOVIC vs. NADAL

THE WARRIOR'S SPIRIT

By Rubén A. Báez¹ | 01.02.2012

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I could start my article this way:

"I remember it was a Sunday January 29, 2012 when I got up at 05:30 am GMT -3 to watch the Australia Open final match between 1 and 2

of the tennis world, Novak Djokovic vs. Rafael Nadal "

Now that is in the past I feel a strange sense of happiness and nostalgia for defeating laziness and getting up at dawn to see one of the most fantastic games recently. For me it was an epic match and I think for many, it was too. This match must be an example to all whom love tennis and, of course, that will be remembered for long time.

In this note, I do not intend to comment technical issues because they abound and have been made by the ton in the media by sports specialists. My point is the *"fighting spirit"* of these two *"Spartan hoplites of tennis."* That's why Novak Djokovic, Rafael Nadal and also in this category I include Roger Federer and David Ferrer, they are true sport warriors who give everything on the court until the end of their forces. It was shown on Sunday January 29 when they played the final match of Australia Open for five hours and 53 minutes and they had no strength in their legs to sustain them self. The tournament staff had to bring two chairs for the two players sit while exposed the usual speeches from sponsors and tour-

nament directors. Djokovic could not stand and Nadal had to sit on the net because his legs were bent.

I am a fairly objective and do not like adjectives or overdo the praise, but I must be realistic, you may agree or not, but for me there are 3 players in the ATP who are gifted and they are 1 or 2 steps above the others with Federer at the top followed by Djokovic and Nadal. Federer is not the same for a while, but it is logically so, although the achievements of recent years have been so impressive that they have their own gravitational force and he is still "there" to continue breaking historical tennis records. Federer is a marvel of extraterrestrial genetic and he has passed the backpack to Djokovic and Nadal, who in due course, going to happen the same thing to him now. But I repeat, these are three players that I have just mentioned, the best of the best of current tennis world and I thank God for being contemporary of them and enjoy their sports achievements. As they say, these wonders are the face of tennis by its regularity, talent, technique and especially for their spirits who command their "minds". Andy Murray is close, but still lacks a bit to be at the height of this gifted trio (We'll see if the input and Ivan Lendl experience this year achieved once and for all inserted at the apex of the wonders that is only for chosen).

Tell me if I'm wrong, since 2004, except the U.S. Open in 2009 that was won by Juan Martin Del Potro, the other Grand Slams is shared between the three super heroes mentioned with preponderance of Federer, ultimately considered to be the best ever player of all time with total justice.

What I try to highlight these lines is precisely that *"fighting spirit"* possessing Djokovic, Nadal, Federer and Ferrer (the latter does not possess the technical level of the other three nor Murray but is 5th in the ATP world ranking and is not by chance. David

¹ Tennis Instructor, Bachelor of Business Administration, Certified Public Accountant, MBA.

Ferrer is also a true Spartan Hoplite and the best of the rest of the players in the world, almost nothing right?).

It is precisely in adversity and demands of a major match in a stadium filled with thousands of fans who roaring like a hurricane when springs the true spirit of the warrior, the champion's blood, the DNA that is different emerges through the pores of the skin and detects the smell of blood of the rival and put into operation a spiritual mechanism which translates into their minds and trained muscles to obtain that extra strength that leads them to triumph and success. When faced two of these characters, everything revolves around them because they have their own gravitational force, they are people of great magnetism and personality, they are the center of attraction because they are different, and they are the best of the world tennis. It is not just physical training, taking vitamins and hitting the ball like an animal, it is a mind trained by a superior spirit, the spirit which seeks not only a bulging bank account because they already achieved, but the spirit which seeks glory and success, which seeks to realize the dreams and devote their efforts to memorialize what they do, in this case, to let engraved on marble their athletic exploits. The match of 5 hours and 53 minutes is one of those memorable games deserve to be remembered in future generations and I hope my little boy tennis player learn something from these guys.

The example of Rafael Nadal as a player and person is enviable. The man, as a gifted athlete and as a person within the courts a true gentleman, an example unparalleled, unsurpassed, an example to at least try to emulate. No player is how he (Stating that I am not a fan of him). When a game ends Nadal waiting on their side and let the opponent pass in front of him to go to his rest. I have not seen vent his anger by destroying his racket (Although sometimes no shortage of desire, but his mind dominates his mus-

cles), although in the epic match which is why this note, hit it with his fist several times the "strings". I do not think that the new strings (Pro Hurricane Tour) have been at neither fault, nor the 3 grams more that his racket has this year, but was facing another "alien" as he who was willing to die on the court just to get the glory and immortalize in bronze forever in the history of world tennis. It was a match to the limit of physical and mental strength and although Nadal has a mind of iron, but of Djokovic proved to be of steel. Maybe Novak was more "clever" to reserve some strength for the last stage of the match knowing beforehand that it was going to be a long and very tough encounter. Nadal did everything he could, but it is noteworthy that the Djokovic technique is superior to the Nadal, you know as well as I that Nadal has a drive whose follow through is a rolled over his head and that makes him lose strength at impact. With the passage of the sets the technical differences are increasingly expressing either for better or for worse. The Nadal's drive does not hurt Djokovic. Nadal to defeat Djokovic must remove rotation to the ball in exchange for greater speed, something as basic as that, elementary physics. That drive of Nadal favors the rotation of the ball at the expense of output power to Novak does not affect him too much, it does affect Federer especially when he attacks the Federer's backhand to one-handed with high balls far from the ideal point of impact or makes him hit with the drive to the race. But it is no coincidence that their last 7 matches, all final between Nadal and Djokovic, the latter neutralized this driver and his backhand crosscourt and won the final 7 in his pocket, leaving empty-handed to Nadal, uncle Toni and Co. That excessive top spin effect is good for the clay courts but in the hard courts is relative. Imagine for a moment that Nadal would have had a faster drive; perhaps it might be he who would be celebrating now. So it is, the drive is the main weapon along with the service that has a

tennis player and when you are at the limit any "weirdness" in the technique is magnified because the margins of error are very narrowed. But, despite everything, Nadal could have stayed calmed with the glory of victory because, to be fair, they were 5-5 in the fifth set where the slightest slip or error tip the balance one way or the other. Rafael Nadal with a "small" change in the technique of his drive, I sincerely believe that he is able to stop an unstoppable Djokovic. In other words, Nadal's game would be more aggressive. I think his team should be evaluated at this time because if he keeps swinging the racket over his head he can win from Federer down, but he cannot beat "Nole".

Beyond that Novak Djokovic has won the title, Rafael Nadal should remain calm because he and Djokovic are the best players on the planet and gave all, do not save anything, there was no speculation and probed they are the tennis couple more fantastic today. They are two examples to be followed by the younger generation of players and by their own professional colleagues, especially about Rafael Nadal's sports ethics that continues to be truly admirable.

Roger Federer is another great example, but I have not mentioned him much in this note because it's the time of Djokovic and Nadal. Federer had his moment of supreme glory. Today, the rivalry moment is Djokovic-Nadal and Andy Murray is, for a while, trying to sneak between them but still lacks the "plus" spiritual that have the other three and it not get into a sports store or with a powerful sponsor. I think Murray, if he put in his head that he can, he will accomplish and achieve is to reach that "regularity" in the results, but nobody will give him anything, he has to earn it, indeed, he has to find a way to acquire these "super mental powers" that have the other three. The other one that will surely make noise this year is the Argentine Juan Martin Del Potro who is quietly claiming the 5th. place in the

ranking that shows with total justice David Ferrer. Del Potro is one of the privileged to become one of the great titans of today's tennis, but he still has the roof of the "Fantastic Four" (Novak, Rafael, Roger and Andy). Hopefully Delpo (as they say) year-end is in the Top 5 to add more spice to the fight for the glory of world tennis, a sport truly fantastic.

The analysis in this article would be complete if we added the performance statistics of the players, but that work is beyond the scope of this paper and will be pending for more on an objective analysis of the performance of the Top 10 of world tennis.