

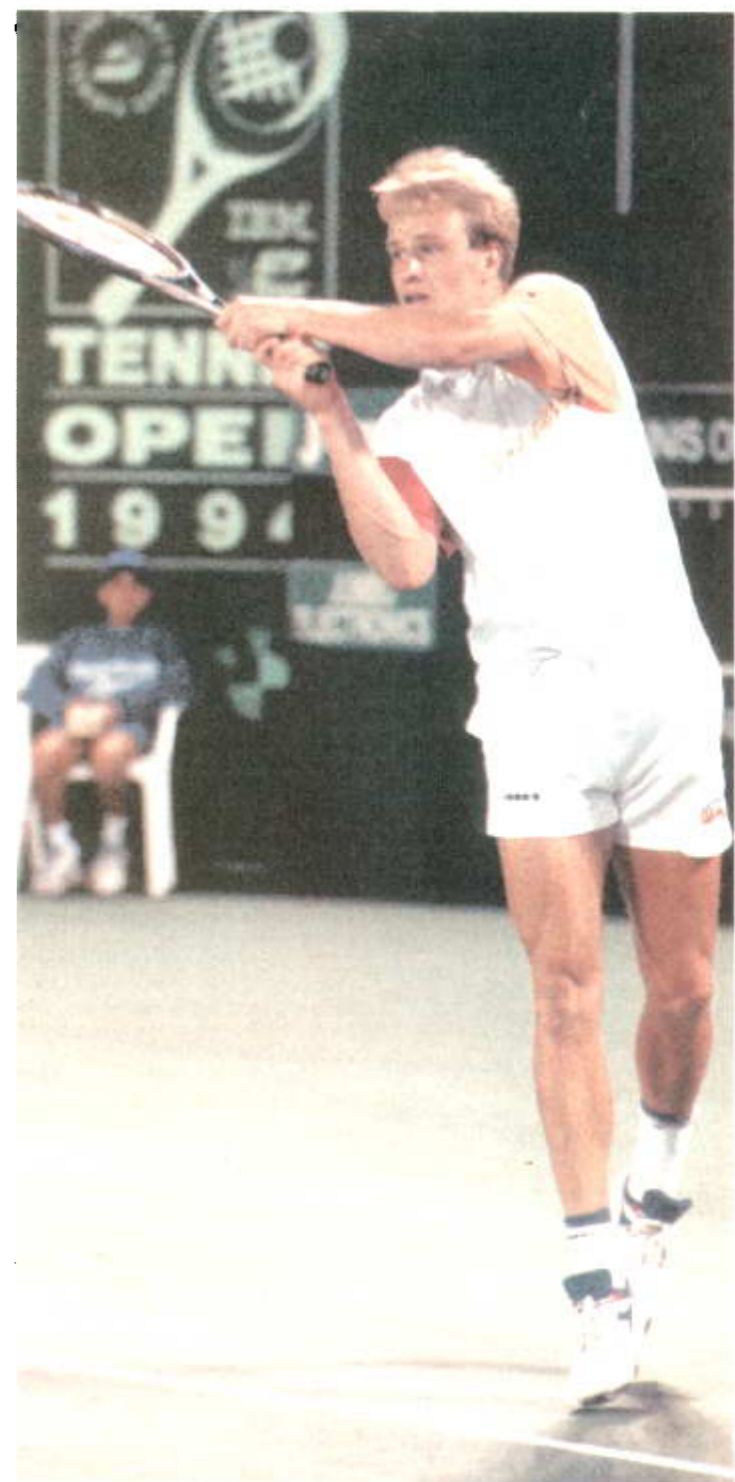


DUBAI TENNIS OPEN 1994



Darren Cahill ... down, just before he was out of the doubles

I just hit the ball and closed my eyes and hoped everything would go in, says new champ



Magnus Gustafsson ... the new champion. Pictures: Anwar Mirza

No stopping Swede Magnus Gustafsson

By Leslie Wilson Jr.

Dubai If anything was needed to emphasize the power in modern sport it had to have been yesterday's final of the 1994 Dubai Tennis Open, where Sweden's Magnus Gustafsson turned on a desert storm to win the \$1 million ATP event from Spain's Sergi Bruguera.

Though the mercury dipped to a discouraging 12 degrees centigrade the scorching tennis the two finalists produced served as a bonfire for a near full house at the Aviation club.

The scoreline accredited Gustafsson with having won 6-4, 6-2 but if it were a boxing contest, which at times it looked like, the judges would have scored it perhaps 120-119 in favour of the Swede.

True, Gustafsson claimed victory in straight sets, but the top seed Bruguera was far from disgraced. He displayed equal qualities of stamina and determination, to share in some of the fiercest rallies the sport has seen in a long time.

Bruguera's post match comments perhaps summed it up best. "I have worked hard to play better and better and then I meet somebody who plays even better than that," said the Spaniard.

"He played a marvellous match, it was the best I have ever seen him play," he added.

And as if as a rejoined Gustafsson said that the way he played yesterday, even he was surprised.

"I'll never forget those first four games of the first set for the rest of my life," Gustafsson said shaking his head as if in disbelief. "I won because I played well, and not because he played bad," he added.

They certainly did. Armed with a forehand befitting a heavyweight pugilist, Gustafsson ripped apart Bruguera's baseline game, with 165 kmph passes that routinely whizzed past his outstretched racquet.

Gustafsson, who practices transcendental meditation daily, gained the psychological advantage when broke Bruguera to love in the third game. More importantly his powerful forehand completely overwhelmed the spariard and forced him on to the ropes.

So furious was the pace of this slugfest that Gustafsson went 3-1 ahead even before the crowds returned to their seats following the short break. It was a firecracker of a start that was to be the pattern of the entire match.

Bruguera seemed to have got his foot in the door when breaking Gustafsson, for the first and only time of the match, aided by two double faults. But Gustafsson, striking the ball with demonic power, just as quickly slammed it

shut hitting his forehand deep and covering the net diligently. He took the set at 6-4.

Gustafsson continued to dictate the pater of play forcing Bruguera, winner of the French Open, to play top quality tennis.

Bruguera responded like a true sportsman. But in attempting to carry the fight to the Swede clouded his gameplan, which should have been to slow down the rallies and go to the net more often.

Gustafsson virtually sealed the match in his favour in the fifth game when he broke Bruguera in what was by far the most captivating one of the match.

Bruguera trailed love-30 after Gustafsson hit two unbelievable down the line winners, but digging deep into his resolve he countered with his whipped forehand topspins to level at 30-all. But the effort was taking its toll on the Spaniard who surrendered the next point following a sapping rally.

Bruguera gave it all he had and saved three match points before buckling in to Gustafsson.

The top seed had one more chance to come back when he held two break points in the next game. But Gustafsson displayed exemplary determination and finesse at the net to ward off the challenge and after holding for 4-2 went one better breaking a distraught

Bruguera in the seventh.

Gustafsson allowed Bruguera one last fling when he dropped a point at 40-15 but took the title off the next as Bruguera netted his return.

The evening began in sterling fashion with Todd Woodbridge and Mark Woodforde winning the all-Australian doubles final from Darren Cahill and John Fitzgerald

6-7 6-4 6-2.

Gustafsson picked up the winners cheque of \$ 144,000 and 220 ranking points, together with an elegant silver dhow trophy, from Sheikh Hasher Al Maktoum, President of the UAE Tennis Federation and Director of Information, government of Dubai.

Bruguera received \$ 85,130 and 160 points for his effort.

Earlier Mohidin Binhindi, Director Dubai Duty Free thanked everybody who had joined hands to make the second Dubai Tennis Open a smashing success. He also lauded General Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Minister of Defence, UAE, for his continued support.



Doubles winners Mark Woodforde and Todd Woodbridge

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