



Federer Versus Ljubicic for Third Final in 2005 at Dubai

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World No. 1 Roger Federer won two matches Saturday, including a rout of former No. 1 Andre Agassi, to advance to the final at the ATP stop in Dubai.

Due to rain on Friday the Swiss was forced to play his quarterfinal and semifinal on Saturday, defeating No. 7 seed Mikhail Youzhny 6-3, 7-5, then rolling over Agassi 6-3, 6-1.

It was the sixth consecutive win for Federer over Agassi.

"I have shown I can raise my game when it is important," Federer said. "I didn't expect anything like this because the way I was playing. I was really struggling with my rhythm and I thought it would be really hard against Agassi. But I pulled off a magnificent match."

Agassi said there was little he could do to turn the tide against the Swiss steamroller.

"He was just too good in the second set," said Agassi, who defeated Russian Nikolay Davydenko Saturday morning before meeting Federer in the afternoon. "I could have made a few less errors. But it was much more him out there tonight."

Federer spent a good deal of the match in The Zone, at one point running back for a ball and hitting a lob winner that left the Swiss shaking his head in wonder.

"That was unbelievable," Federer said. "It was one of the best shots in my life. You try to scramble everything back if possible, but I thought it was lost and just tried to get the right angle on the ball, and it finished for a winner. I don't know what happened. I've got to see a replay. I stretched to the limit and lucked to the limit. I know I'm very good at maybe bringing back some impossible balls."

Agassi dropped his final service game at love, finishing with an anti-climactic double fault.

"I've seen him play that way before. I'm not surprised," Agassi said. "He picked up his level, and he was just too good in the second set. To lose my serve a second time in the second set, it was an incredible game that he played."

In the final Federer will face Croat No. 8 seed Ivan Ljubicic in their third final of the year after wins for the Swiss at Doha and Rotterdam.

"Hopefully, I will have a few spectators on my side tomorrow," Ljubicic said after defeating No. 5 seed Tommy Robredo 6-4, 6-3 in his semifinal.

Ljubicic takes an 0-3 record in finals into the Dubai championship, while Federer has won an Open Era-record 15 straight finals.

Federer leads Ljubicic 5-3 in their career meetings.

The doubles final will be unseeded Czechs Martin Damm/Radek Stepanek (d. (3) Bhupathi/Woodbridge in the semis, coming from a set down) versus (4) Jonas Bjorkman/Fabrice "The Original Magician" Santoro (d. Berdych/Kiefer in two tiebreaks).

The Czechs are shooting for their second title of the year, and the Swedish/French combo for their first.

