

# UAE TENNIS

## Federer wins Dubai Open

Roger Federer won his fourth Dubai tennis title, thanks to an awesome second set display which blew away Russian fighter Mikhail Youzhny.



Image Credit: Gulf News Archive

Roger Federer won his fourth Dubai title in five years.

Dubai: Roger Federer won his fourth Dubai tennis title, thanks to an awesome second set display which blew away Russian fighter Mikhail Youzhny.

He defeated unseeded Youzhny 6-4 6-3, marking his 41st consecutive victory stretching back to the beginning of the US Open in August.

Youzhny, who upset defending champion Rafael Nadal in the quarter-finals, was seeking his second title in two weeks after winning in Rotterdam.

Usually the overwhelming crowd favourite, Federer must have been surprised to have been confronted by a vociferous and boisterous Russian fan club – and it was a fan club which grew as the game progressed.

The charismatic Russian, who has been in a rich vein of form this year, came out of the blocks like an Olympic sprinter, attacking Federer from the off.

His chipping and charging tactics seemed to catch the world number one cold, and Youzhny must have been surprised at the ease with which he broke Federer in the first game.

But Federer, hit straight back in Youzhny's next service game, helped in no small part by a double fault on break point which handed Federer the break back without even having to work for it.

With the scores level again, the Russian contingent decided their man needed more vocal encouragement, with chants of 'Micha, Micha' ringing around the stadium in between every single point.

However, Federer moved into another gear and broke Youzhny again, helped again by a double fault which handed Federer two break points.

If the crowd thought it would be routine Roger, game over, they were wrong.

The Russian showed his fighting spirit, with a fiery performance breaking back – thanks in part to a rare bit of hesitancy from the Swiss maestro as he dealt with a high, hopeful lob.

His fists were pumping like the pistons from a steam train at this point, but calm as ever, Federer held his own serve and then broke again to take the first set 6-4.

The second set saw Federer playing tennis which was not just good, not just great, but from another planet.

Raking searching backhands, balls down the line and consistent power hitting saw the Fed Express race into a 3-0 lead.

It was all credit to Youzhny that Federer didn't run away with the game at that point, as he hung in, fighting every step of the way.

He saved break points on his next two serves – including one epic 10 minute game with the scores at 5-2 to Federer where the Russian came back from 0-40 down before saving two more championship points.

But again, despite energy, the talking to the crowd and the emotional chanting from Youzhny, Federer did what he does best, serving out to 15 to take the crown yet again.

Federer said, "I had a bit of a rough start here, and struggled in the early rounds. And Mikhail made a good start and I had to react."

He added, "But I am full of confidence and am on a great run. I did react and then my game came together nicely."