

# Venus defends Dubai crown to move up all-time titles ladder

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GFP/Getty Images

A delighted Venus Williams, right, shakes hands with her defeated final opponent Victoria Azarenka.

## STORY HIGHLIGHTS

- Venus Williams claims 42nd title of her career, defending Dubai Tennis Championship crown
- American third seed defeats Victoria Azarenka of Belarus 6-3 7-5 in final
- Victory lifted Williams into 11th place on the all-time list above Justine Henin
- Maria Sharapova claims her first title of 2010, beating Sophia Arvidsson in Memphis final

**(CNN)** -- Venus Williams claimed the 42nd title of her glittering career as she successfully defended her Dubai Tennis Championship crown on Saturday.

The American defeated fourth seed Victoria Azarenka of Belarus 6-3 7-5 in the final, having also won their only previous encounter at the 2008 Beijing Olympics.

The victory lifted Williams into 11th place on the all-time list, moving her one title ahead of the recently returned Justine Henin to make her the most successful player currently active on the WTA Tour.

The former world No. 1, seeded third in the absence of her top-ranked younger sister Serena and No. 2 Dinara Safina, won the opening set in controversial circumstances with the only break after using the Hawkeye system to challenge a line call on Azarenka's second serve at 3-2.

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--Venus Williams



The 29-year-old Williams romped to a 2-0 lead in the second set, but Australian Open quarterfinalist Azarenka leveled at 3-3 and games went with serve until 5-5.

Williams broke then with a forehand passing shot, highlighting the extra power she said had given her an edge.

"Obviously, my serve is a big advantage for me," she told the tournament's official Web site. "I think I get a lot of balls back. I think off the ground she's very strong and consistent, but I think I'm probably a little stronger than her, so that helps me to control the point.

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"I think she does everything well, but there's a few things, obviously the strength that helps me."

The 20-year-old Azarenka has now lost five of her eight WTA Tour finals.

"It's not about power. It's more about precision that she was making it on the lines close to the lines," Azarenka said. "Venus came off with some big shots, and, you know, I think overall the game was really good.

"Very high quality of tennis from both of us. Just, you know, a little bit of bad luck on a few balls. But I'm proud of what I did today."

Meanwhile, top seed Maria Sharapova claimed her 21st career title and her first of this year after thrashing Sophia Arvidsson 6-2 6-1 in the final of the Cellular South Cup in Memphis on Saturday.

The Russian made short work of the 102-ranked Swede, who reached the final after coming through qualifying rounds but won the tournament four years ago.

The 22-year-old Sharapova won her fifth consecutive match in straight sets, claiming her first title since triumphing in Tokyo in October last year as she continues her rehabilitation from long-term shoulder problems.

