

The Telegraph

Dubai Open 2011: Novak Djokovic inflicts more misery on Roger Federer

Novak Djokovic, who took away Roger Federer's Australian Open title last month, beat him in straight sets again to prevent the former world No 1 from regaining the Dubai Open title in Dubai.



Yes: Novak Djokovic's star continues to rise as Roger Federer's fades Photo: REUTERS

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The second-seeded Serbian won with something to spare by 6-3, 6-3, out playing the top-seeded Swiss maestro in the first set and recovering from 1-3 down in the second as Federer had constant problems with his timing and rhythm off the ground.

It gained Djokovic his third successive title at the \$1,600,000 event, and suggested that he has every chance of leapfrogging Federer next month into the world No 2 ranking.

"I played really well here," said Djokovic. "It's a great challenge playing Roger Federer and I had to be at the top of my game if I was going to win."

Federer had described Djokovic as "a huge obstacle" before the final, and so it proved. Djokovic had his tactics well worked out - directing a higher proportion of his attacks to the backhand, and mixing athletic containment with fiercely angled counter-attacks which threatened to spread Federer.

It was hard to believe that Djokovic had described his performance against Tomas Berdych the previous day as a "catastrophe".

He started with a far better rhythm, even though the conditions were very different - much cooler and slower - than during his last two matches in the afternoon sun.

Federer, by contrast, struck his first forehand into the net and it proved a signal. He remained prone to odd mistimings and ended the match with 20 unforced errors on the forehand drive which has sometimes been described as the best shot of its kind there has been.

