

Vancouver Open Titleholders trip over Desert Opponents

by Rick Angus
Indian Wells, CA

On an outside court, unnoticed by many Pacific Life fans, 2006 Odlum Brown Champion Rik De Voest, a very frequent visitor to Vancouver, was dispatched in straight sets 6/3, 7/6(2) by the lanky Croatian #20 seed Ivo Karlovic. No relation to Boris Karloff, but every bit as scary to meet in a tiebreaker.

De Voest fought competitively throughout this second round encounter, right up until his eventual demise. The victory was secured by Ivo relying once more on his time tested pattern over the years. Hold serve, break serve occasionally, or simply hang around until the deciding tie-breaks.

Karlovic now moves on to meet in the round of 32 the hot hand of Andy Murray of Scotland, already a two time Tour winner this year. Andy is another graduate of the Vancouver Open having played in the 2005 event. Surprisingly, Murray lost in the quarterfinals to the eventual finalist that year.

Rik's advance to this meeting was by virtue of a first round win over little known German Michael Berrer in another tight battle 7/6(4), 7/5.

Today's match was the second meeting lifetime between De Voest and Karlovic, both contested on hard courts and ending in effectively identical scores. In the first go round six years earlier, De Voest won two more points while losing the second set tiebreaker.

PacLife #7 seed and Vancouver Open 2004 titleholder, Nicole Vaidisova of the Czech Republic, was eliminated in her first match this week in a surprising desert upset by the previously unheralded Australian Casey Dellacqua, 6/1, 3/6, 6/4.

The twenty three year old Dellacqua seemed to possess a new found confidence which was no doubt instilled in her psyche by her much publicized run down under to the fourth round at the 2008 Australian Open.

Normally, following the scalping of a top seeded player, the draw would logically open up for the Aussie hopeful. Dellacqua, who is relatively mature, by definition, for women's tennis faces in her next opponent, the mirror opposite.

With a similarity in the spelling of their country of origin, that is where the resemblance ends. The 17 year old #32 seed Tamira Paszek of Austria is an up and comer of high merit.