



RAFAEL NADAL (ESP)

**Age** 26 (03.06.1986)  
**Born** Manacor, Spain  
**Lives** Manacor, Spain  
**Height** 6'1"  
**Weight** 188lbs  
**Career-high ranking** 1  
**Career titles** 50  
**Plays** Left-handed  
**Best Wimbledon** W 2008, 10

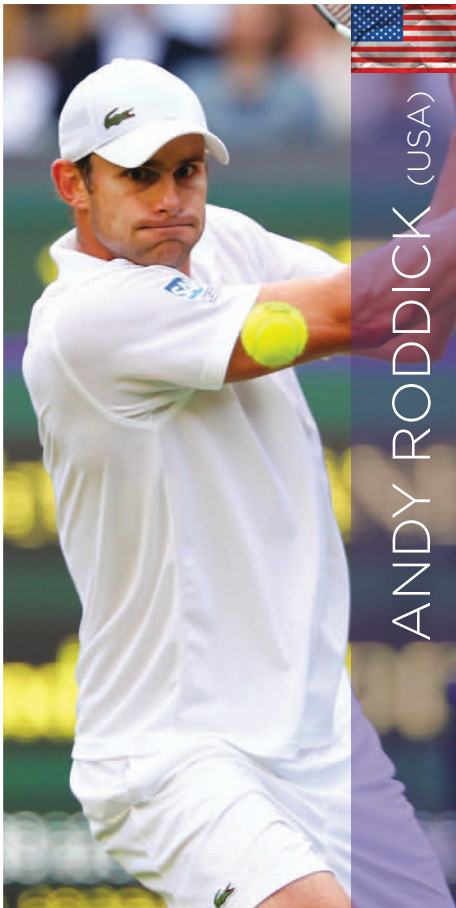
Not too many years have elapsed since the time most Spanish players annually regarded the last week of June and the first of July as a time for rest and recuperation but one man effectively changed all that. The icon universally known simply as Rafa is of course no run-of-the-mill competitor. The unquestioned King of Clay, fresh from a record seventh Roland Garros title, is now almost equally as regal on grass to the extent that he has contested the Wimbledon final in five of the past six years and the one blank came when injury prevented him from defending the title. After losing last year's final in four sets to Djokovic, he waged two of the most physical battles ever seen on a tennis court against the Serb and ended up having to accept the runner's-up prize at both the US and Australian Opens. An English lawn is far more conducive to a pair of problematic knees than an expanse of hard court in either Melbourne or New York and it is a fact that Nadal finds it much easier to relax here at Wimbledon, staying just a short and gentle stroll away from the courts. Once again the rented Nadal headquarters will become a bastion of support for the Spanish football team. Two years ago there was a Wimbledon title and a World Cup to celebrate and similar elation is more than conceivable.



MILOS RAONIC (CAN)

**Age** 21 (27.12.1990)  
**Born** Podgorica, Montenegro  
**Lives** Monte Carlo, Monaco  
**Height** 6'5"  
**Weight** 195lbs  
**Career-high ranking** 21  
**Career titles** 3  
**Plays** Right-handed  
**Best Wimbledon** 2R 2011

The esteemed American trio of Pete Sampras, John McEnroe and Andy Roddick know a thing or two about winning and believe this big-serving Canadian leviathan is set to become the sport's next superstar. According to bio-mechanic studies commissioned by Britain's Lawn Tennis Association, the perfect build for an emergent male tennis champion in the next 10 years is tall, relatively muscular, but with a strong degree of mobility so Raonic perfectly fits the bill. Sampras observed: "It takes time to be a champion but with Milos all the tools are there. His serve is bigger than big." McEnroe referred to the youngster as simply 'The Real Deal' and Roddick concurred saying: "He is as exciting of a talent as we've seen in a while." Earlier this year, en route to retaining the San Jose title, Raonic struck a serve timed at 155mph and it shouldn't come as a surprise that after the first four months of this year, he led the ATP World Tour charts for first serve points won and break points saved, chasing John Isner for top spot in the ace charts. Of course it's imperative to steer clear of injury and Raonic's Wimbledon debut last year ended in disaster; playing Luxembourg's Gilles Muller, he slipped after winning the first three games and injured a hip, necessitating the need to be rushed back to Vail, Colorado for immediate surgery.



ANDY RODDICK (USA)

**Age** 29 (30.08.1982)  
**Born** Omaha, USA  
**Lives** Austin, Texas, USA  
**Height** 6'2"  
**Weight** 190lbs  
**Career-high ranking** 1  
**Career titles** 30  
**Plays** Right-handed  
**Best Wimbledon** RU 2004, 05, 09

Cast the mind back to this big-serving American's third disappointment in the Wimbledon final three years ago and remember his heartfelt words when interviewed by Sue Barker. Roddick had played perhaps the greatest match of his life, but after winning 37 straight service games until, at 14-15 in the fifth set's 95th minute, with the shadows creeping in, he could hold no more. However the quality of his demeanor in defeat was equal to the performance on court and with legends like Laver, Sampras, Borg and Santana looking on he declared: "It was a pleasure playing out there in front of such great champions." This is Roddick's 12th consecutive Wimbledon and while he has won the title across the Thames at Queen's Club four times, the big prize has avoided him. Since last year's event he has struggled with an abdominal injury and was forced to withdraw from January's Australian Open because of a pulled hamstring. But anyone ready to write him off as a spent force would have had to eat their words after he ended a long losing streak against Federer. There's no question Roddick is one of the most popular players never to have won this title and after that 2009 final John McEnroe told him he had won over more fans in defeat than the three-times champion ever did in victory. McEnroe was spot on with his assessment.