

NOVAK DJOKOVIC (SRB)

Age 25 (22.05.1987)

Born Belgrade, Serbia

Lives Monte Carlo, Monaco

Height 6'2"

Weight 176lbs

Career-high ranking 1

Career titles 30

Plays Right-handed

Best Wimbledon W 2011



Even the wisest, most senior sages of those who travel the tennis circuit on an annual basis agree: in terms of sheer talent and quality, right now we are privileged to be watching quite probably the richest era the men's game has known. So it is testament to this extrovert but wonderfully gifted and hugely dedicated man that, regardless of other truly great players aiming for the big prizes, he has been so dominant of late in the major events. Retaining the Australian Open, his third, meant Djokovic has won four of the previous five Grand Slam titles and last year's run of 41 straight victories from the start of 2011 until the French Open semi-finals was a simply staggering achievement. Yet according to Serb, the most special day of his life dawned last year on Sunday 3 July when he went on to beat Nadal and win the Wimbledon title. The truth of many victory speeches might benefit from the use of a polygraph, but the depth of sincerity was palpable as Djokovic declared: "This is my favourite tournament, the tournament I always dreamed of winning, the first tournament I ever watched in my life." In the past there was much discussion on his commitment and physical durability; Djokovic actually retired from the Wimbledon semi-final in 2007 because his big toe was hurting. But the physicality of his title wins at the most recent US and Australian Opens, and his run to the French Open final, took the boundaries of human endurance to entirely new levels. ➤

by Barry Flatman
SUNDAY TIMES