

Roland Garros: A Parisian love affair

A city of passion, elegance and flair, Paris is the destination for the French Open at Roland Garros. First staged in 1891 as the *Championnat de France*, the two-week showpiece, played on iconic red clay, enthralled crowds with breathtaking rallies and feats of physical endurance

KING OF CLAY: Rafael Nadal (below) is dominant at Roland Garros, winning 13 out of 17 singles titles since his tournament debut in 2005

Wins at Roland Garros (Open Era, men):

Rafael Nadal	ESP	Matches W/L: 105/3
Novak Djokovic	SRB	81/15
Roger Federer	SUI	73/17
Guillermo Vilas	ARG	57/17
Ivan Lendl	CZE	53/12

Nadal holds record for most singles titles at individual Grand Slam – surpassing tally of Margaret Court who won 11 Australian Open titles

Titles at single Grand Slam (Open Era, men):

Australian Open	Djokovic	9
Roland Garros	Nadal	13
Wimbledon	Federer	8
U.S. Open		5

Jimmy Connors, Pete Sampras, Federer

Surface

Clay court concept originated in 1880 when powdered terracotta was used in Cannes to cover grass courts wilting in heat

ROLAND GARROS COMPOSITION

Playing surface: Red brick dust Improves ball visibility – slippery top layer allows players to slide into shots

Linking layer Crushed white limestone

Cushion Clinker (coal residue)

Loose aggregation At least 30cm of crushed gravel for stability

Foundation Larger stones for drainage

Comparison of surface impacts:

	Ball speed	Consistency	Height of bounce
Clay	●●●●●	●●●●●	●●●●●●●
Hardcourt	○○○○○○○	○○○○○○○○○	○○○○○○○
Grass	○○○○○○○○○	○○○○	○○○○○

Slower ball speed encourages tactical rallies – topspin, slice, and drop shots all used to develop advantage

1891: Inaugural French Clay-Court Championships, reserved exclusively for members of French tennis clubs. Tournament alternates between three venues in early years



1925: French Open born when tournament opens to international competition. French stars, including six-time champion Suzanne Lenglen (left), still dominate

1928 Court complex opens in Paris. Name honours Roland Garros, pioneer aviator killed in World War I

2021 winner
Novak Djokovic
Serbian returns to Grand Slam action after visa row prevented him competing at Australian Open in January. Third Roland Garros title would equal 21 majors won by Nadal



Timeline

1932: Famous four “Mousquetaires” – René Lacoste, Jean Borotra, Henri Cochet and Jacques Brugnon (below) – bow out after sharing 10 titles over decade of dominance



1968: Hosts first Grand Slam of Open Era
1973: Margaret Court wins record 13th Paris title, totalling five singles and eight doubles

1974-86: Tennis legends Björn Borg and Chris Evert establish new era of clay court superiority
1979: Five new courts bring total to 10 – further expansions follow in 1986 and 1994

2000 Mary Pierce (right) is most recent French singles champion

2018-20: Major expansion includes complete demolition and rebuild of 90-year-old Court Philippe Chatrier to accommodate retractable roof



Roll call of champions

MOST CHAMPIONSHIPS (OPEN ERA)

2005-08, 2010-14, 2017-20	Rafael Nadal ESP	13 7	Chris Evert USA	1974, 75, 79, 80, 83, 85, 86
1974, 75, 78, 79, 80, 81	Bjorn Borg SWE	6 6	Steffi Graf GER	1987, 88, 93, 95, 96, 99
1982, 85, 88	Mats Wilander SWE	3 4	Justine Henin BEL	2003, 05, 06, 07
1984, 86, 87	Ivan Lendl CZE	3 3	Four players: Margaret Court*, Arantxa Sanchez, Monica Seles, Serena Williams	
1997, 2000, 01	Gustavo Kuerten BRA	3		

◀ Coupe des Mousquetaires

Coupe ▶ Suzanne Lenglen

Court Philippe Chatrier
Capacity: 15,000
Retractable roof completed in 2020. Closes in 15 minutes, allowing all-weather play and night sessions

Roland Garros Village
Administration, reception areas and panoramic terraces

Court Suzanne Lenglen
Capacity: 10,000

Fonds des Princes
Sunken 2,200-seater court

CLAY COURT QUEENS
All-time win ratio (%)

▼ 50.0	
Chris Evert	94.0
Steffi Graf	90.1
Justine Henin	85.5
Monica Seles	85.0
Martina Navratilova	81.4
Martina Hingis	81.3

Evert on clay:
312 Matches won
20 Lost

Chris Evert
Seven-time champion at Roland Garros. First two trophies won during 125-match winning streak on clay (1973-79) – Open Era record on single surface for any player, male or female

Steffi Graf (inset) tops winners' table in Paris

Wins at Roland Garros (Open Era, women):

Steffi Graf	GER	Matches W/L: 84/10
Chris Evert	USA	72/6
Arantxa Sanchez	ESP	72/13
Serena Williams	USA	69/14
Conchita Martinez	ESP	62/18

Evert has best career win ratio on clay of any player (94%) – Nadal is on 91.2%

