

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

World No.1
Carlos Alcaraz

Rising star of men's tennis battling expectant comparisons with Spanish compatriot Rafael Nadal

KING OF CLAY: Rafael Nadal (below) is dominant at Roland Garros, winning 14 out of 18 singles titles since his tournament debut in 2005

Wins at Roland Garros (Open Era, men):

Rafael Nadal	ESP	Matches W/L: 112/3
Novak Djokovic	SRB	85/16
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	10
Roland Garros	Nadal	14
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

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



Timeline

Roll call of champions

MOST CHAMPIONSHIPS (OPEN ERA)			
2005-08, 2010-14, 2017-20, 2022	Rafael Nadal ESP	14 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

Venue

Court Simonne Mathieu
5,000-seater sunken arena

Roland Garros Village
Administration, reception areas and panoramic terraces

Serres d'Auteuil

Avenue Gordon Bennett

Orangery
Public services and gourmet restaurant

Place des Mousquetaires

Court Suzanne Lenglen
Capacity: 10,000

Fonds des Princes
Sunken 2,200-seater court

CLAY COURT QUEENS
All-time win ratio (%)

Evert	94.0
Graf	90.1
Henin	85.5
Seles	85.0
Navratilova	81.4
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

