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FRIDAY PREVIEW – FIVE FRENCHMEN HIGHLIGHT QUARTER-FINAL LINE-UP

- The Open Sud de France quarter-finals on Friday feature five of the top eight Frenchmen in the Emirates ATP Rankings. Two Frenchmen are guaranteed in Saturday's semi-finals. This is the second straight year five Frenchmen are in the quarter-finals here.

- Leading off the order of play is a first-time unseeded meeting between **Jan Hajek** of the Czech Republic and 32-year-old Frenchman **Michael Llodra**, who is the oldest player remaining. Hajek is making his tournament debut this week and he's in his first ATP World Tour quarter-final since last July when he reached the semi-finals in Bastad (l. to Almagro). Llodra upset No. 2 seed and No. 9-ranked Janko Tipsarevic in the second round on Thursday to improve his career tournament record to 10-9. His last three Top 10 wins have come on French soil ('12 Marseille, d. No. 9 Tipsarevic; '12 Paris-indoor, d. No. 8 del Potro). His best tournament result is a runner-up in 2009 in Lyon (l. to Ljubicic).

- In the next match, **Jarkko Nieminen** of Finland and **Sergiy Stakhovsky** of Ukraine meet for the third time in a main draw (tied 1-1). Nieminen also won in a Challenger and ATP World Tour qualifying event, all on clay. This will be their first meeting on hard courts. Nieminen, who is one of two left-handers remaining (Llodra), won the last encounter in the second round of ATP Masters 1000 Rome in May 2011. This is Nieminen's third quarter-final in Montpellier (2010, '12-13) and he owns a 6-2 career tournament record. Stakhovsky is playing here for the first time and the Ukrainian is trying to reach his first ATP World Tour semi-final since August 2010 when he won the title in New Haven (d. Istomin).

- In the third match on, No. 8 seed **Benoit Paire** looks for his second win against countryman No. 4 seed **Gilles Simon**. In their previous meeting in the first round of Rotterdam two years ago, Paire won in three sets. The 23-year-old Paire is looking to reach his second ATP World Tour semi-final of the season. He opened the year with a semi-final showing in Chennai (d. No. 15-ranked Cilic, l. to Bautista-Agut). Simon is 12-6 lifetime at this tournament and he is trying to reach his fourth semi-final (2008-09, last year). The 28-year-old Frenchman opened the season with a quarter-final in Brisbane (l. to Baghdatis) and followed with a fourth round at the Australian Open (l. to No. 3 Murray).

- In the evening session, No. 3 seed **Richard Gasquet** takes a 2-0 record against countryman No. 6 seed/wild card **Julien Benneteau**. Gasquet won both previous meetings in straight sets in Sydney in 2007 and '10. Gasquet is off to a career-best 11-1 start, opening the season with his eighth career ATP World Tour title in Doha (d. Davydenko). He won the title in Lyon in 2006 (d. Gicquel) and was a quarter-finalist last year. Benneteau was runner-up in 2008 (l. to Soderling) and a quarter-finalist in 2007 and '09. He's trying to breakthrough and earn his first career ATP World Tour title (0-7 in finals). Benneteau has a 13-8 career tournament record.

- **FRENCH RANKINGS** -- There are 10 Frenchmen in the Top 100 Emirates ATP Rankings and five (in bold) among the top eight are in the quarter-finals on Friday :
  8) Jo-Wilfried Tsonga
  10) Richard Gasquet
  14) Gilles Simon
  26) Jeremy Chardy
  38) Julien Benneteau
  43) Benoit Paire
  54) Paul-Henri Mathieu
  62) Michael Llodra

Friday Quarter-finals FedEx ATP Head 2 Heads – In Order of Play

Court Central

Jan Hajek (CZE) vs Michael Llodra (FRA) First Meeting

Hajek FastFacts:
2013 Highlights:
YTD W-L: 2-2
YTD Titles: 0/Career Titles: 0
Date of Birth: August 7, 1983
Emirates ATP Ranking: 97

- **Hajek**, 29, made his tournament debut on Tuesday, defeating top Israeli Dudi Sela 26 75 61, and he followed with a 60 4-2 victory over No. 7 seed Viktor Troicki, who retired due to a right hamstring injury
- The Czech Republic native is 2-2 on the season, opening with a 1R loss in Chennai (l. to Devvarman) and at the Australian Open (l. to Raonic in four sets)
- Appearing in his first ATP World Tour semi-final since last July in Bastad (l. to No. 10 Almagro)
- Last year finished just outside Top 100 (at No. 105) and compiled a 4-7 record. Also 29-14 in Challengers and winner at Marburg (d. Haider-Maurer)

Llodra FastFacts:
2013 Highlights:
YTD W-L: 2-1
YTD Titles: 0
Career Titles: 5
Date of Birth: May 18, 1980
Emirates ATP Ranking: 62

- **Llodra**, 32, comes into his first quarter-final of the season after posting a 63 63 win over countryman Kenny De Schepper and No. 2 seed/No. 9 ranked Janko Tipsarevic 63 76(4). Also remaining in the doubles semi-finals (w/Gicquel), only player left in both draws
- Has a 10-9 career tournament record and his best result was a runner-up in 2009 in Lyon (l. to Ljubicic). That was the only previous time he won back-to-back matches
- The left-hander is playing in his second tournament of the season and lost in the 1R at the Australian Open (l. to countryman Tsonga). His last quarter-final or better came at ATP Masters 1000 Paris where he reached the semi-finals (d. No. 11 Isner, No. 8 del Potro, l. to Ferrer)
- Has an 11-38 career record vs. Top 10 opponents (2-8 last year) and his last three wins have come on French soil ('12 Marseille, d. No. 9 Tipsarevic; '12 Paris-indoor, d. No. 8 del Potro and here Thursday)
- Last weekend played on Davis Cup squad vs. Israel and won doubles match (w/Benneteau) and dead rubber in singles (vs. Okun)

Jarkko Nieminen (FIN) vs Sergiy Stakhovsky (UKR) — Tied 1-1

10 Nice (France)	Clay	R32	Sergiy Stakhovsky	2-6 6-3 6-4
11 ATP World Tour Masters 1000 Rome	Clay	R32	Jarkko Nieminen	6-7(3) 6-3 6-4
Other meeting:				
05 Prostejov CH (Czech Republic)	Clay	R32	Jarkko Nieminen	7-5 1-6 6-2
09 ATP Masters 1000 Monte Carlo-Qual.	Clay	R1	Jarkko Nieminen	6-4 6-3

Nieminen FastFacts:
2013 Highlights:
QF: Sydney (l Tomic)
YTD W-L: 6-3
YTD Titles: 0/Career Titles: 2
Date of Birth: July 23, 1981
Emirates ATP Ranking: 67

- **Nieminen**, 31, opened with a 63 62 win over French qualifier Florent Serra and followed with a 63 76(8) victory over No. 5 seed Nikolay Davydenko. He has a 6-2 career record here and appearing in the quarter-finals for the third time (2010, l. to Ljubicic; last year l. to Monfils)
- The left-hander comes in with a 6-3 match record on the season, reaching the 2R in Brisbane (d. Benneteau, ret. vs. Dolgopolov), quarter-finals in Sydney (l. to eventual champ Tomic in three sets) and the 2R at the Australian Open (d. No. 21 Haas 8-6 in fifth set, l. to Dodig in five sets)
- Last season the Finnish native won his second career ATP World Tour title in Sydney (d. Benneteau) and he also reached the semi-finals in Bangkok (l. to Gasquet)

Stakhovsky FastFacts:
2013 Highlights:
YTD W-L: 3-2
YTD Titles: 0
Career Titles: 4
Date of Birth: January 6, 1986
Emirates ATP Ranking: 105

- **Stakhovsky**, 27, is making his tournament debut this week and he opened with a 64 64 victory over No. 9 seed Paul-Henri Mathieu and followed with a 67(4) 64 76(3) win over Japan's No. 3 Tatsuma Ito
- The Ukrainian comes into his first quarter-final of the season with a 3-2 match record. He opened the first month with a 2R in Chennai (d. Bemelmans, l. to No. 15 Cilic) and 1R at the Australian Open (l. to qualifier Berankis)
- At No. 105, he is the lowest-ranked player remaining in the draw. This is his first ATP World Tour quarter-final since last October in Stockholm. He is trying to reach his first semi-final since August 2010 in New Haven where he won the title (d. Istomin)
- Has never lost in an ATP World Tour final (4-0), winning his last title in New Haven in 2010

(8) Benoit Paire (FRA) vs (4) Gilles Simon (FRA) — Paire Leads 1-0

11 Rotterdam (The Netherlands)	Hard	R32	Benoit Paire	6-2 2-6 6-3

Paire FastFacts:
2013 Highlights:
SF: Chennai (l Bautista Agut)
YTD W-L: 5-3
YTD Titles: 0/Career Titles: 0
Date of Birth: May 8, 1989
Emirates ATP Ranking: 43

- **Paire**, 23, is the youngest player remaining and he's appearing in his first quarter-final in Montpellier. He cruised in his first round win over Spanish qualifier Adrian Menendez-Maceiras 60 62, hitting nine aces and winning 28 of 35 service points.Then saved a match point in his 46 76(11) 64 second round win over Belgian Steve Darcis. In his previous showing here in 2010, lost in the 1R
- The Frenchman has a 5-3 match record on the season and opened the season with a semi-final showing in Chennai (d. No. 15-ranked Cilic, l. to Bautista-Agut). Then followed with 1R in Auckland (l. to Lu) and Australian Open (l. to Federer)
- One of three players left (Benneteau, Hajek) who has never won an ATP World Tour title in his career

Simon FastFacts:
2013 Highlights:
QF: Brisbane (l Baghdatis)
YTD W-L: 6-2
YTD Titles: 0
Career Titles: 10
Date of Birth: December 27, 1984
Emirates ATP Ranking: 14

- **Simon**, 28, comes in with an 11-6 career record and his best result was the semi-finals in 2008-09 and last year (l. to Monfils). Also a quarter-finalist in 2010
- He opened this year with a quarter-final in Brisbane (l. to Baghdatis) and followed with fourth round at Australian Open (d. Monfils 8-6 in fifth set, l. to No. 3 Murray)
- Last season finished as the No. 3 Frenchman (behind No. 8 Tsonga, No. 10 Gasquet) in the Top 20 at No. 16, highlighted by his 10th career ATP World Tour title in Bucharest (d. Fognini)

(3) Richard Gasquet (FRA) vs (6-WC) Julien Benneteau (FRA) — Gasquet Leads 2-0

07 Sydney (Australia)	Hard	R32	Richard Gasquet	6-1 6-4
10 Sydney (Australia)	Hard	SF	Richard Gasquet	6-4 7-5
Other meetings:				
01 France F18 (Nevers)	Hard	R32	Julien Benneteau	6-2 6-4
01 France F21 (La Roche Sur Yon)	Hard	R16	Julien Benneteau	6-2 7-5

Gasquet FastFacts:
2013 Highlights:
W: Doha (d Davydenko)
YTD W-L: 11-1
YTD Titles: 1
Career Titles: 8
Date of Birth: June 18, 1986
Emirates ATP Ranking: 10

- **Gasquet**, 26, opened on Thursday with a 63 26 63 win over countryman Gael Monfils. Has an 8-5 career tournament record and won the title in 2006 in Lyon (d. Gicquel) and last year was a quarter-finalist (l. to Kohlschreiber)
- The No. 2 Frenchman (behind No. 8 Tsonga) is off to a career-best 11-1 start. Last year didn't win his 11th match until the third week of March in Miami (his 12th win came in May in Estoril)
- In Doha in opening week of season, became the eighth Frenchman in the Open Era to win at least 300 matches on the ATP World Tour, joining Yannick Noah (476), Fabrice Santoro (470), Cedric Pioline (389), Guy Forget (378), Henri Leconte (377), Sebastien Grosjean (341) and Arnaud Clement (316)
- Went on to clinch his eighth ATP World Tour title in Doha (d. Davydenko) and reached 4R at Australian Open for the fourth time (also 2007-08, 2012), losing to compatriot Tsonga in four sets
- Last weekend represented France in 5-0 victory over Israel in Davis Cup World Group 1R, beating Sela and Weintraub (dead rubber) in straight sets

Benneteau FastFacts:
2013 Highlights:
SF: Sydney (l Anderson)
YTD W-L: 6-3
YTD Titles: 0
Career Titles: 0
Date of Birth: December 20, 1981
Emirates ATP Ranking: 38

- **Benneteau**, 31, is playing in Montpellier for the first time and on Wednesday opened with a 63 4-2 ret. win over Romanian Adrian Ungur and followed with a 64 64 victory over Victor Hanescu. Has a 13-8 tournament record with his best result a runner-up in Lyon in 2008 (l. to Soderling). Also a quarter-finalist in 2007 and '09
- Has a 6-3 record on the season and his best result is the semi-finals in Sydney last month (l. to Anderson). Followed with 3R at the Australian Open (l. to Tipsarevic in five sets)
- Has played in 206 career tour level tournaments without a title and is 0-7 in finals