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NADAL, FEDERER LAUNCH 2011 ATP WORLD TOUR SEASON IN DOHA

World's greatest players to battle over 63 tournaments in 32 countries

DOHA, QATAR – Rafael Nadal and Roger Federer kicked off the 2011 ATP World Tour season in Doha today by hitting tennis balls on a court laid in the water of Doha Bay. The world's top-ranked players are the top seeds at the Qatar ExxonMobil Open, which begins tomorrow. Other ATP World Tour 250 tournaments in the first week of the season are in Brisbane, Australia, where play is already underway, and in Chennai, India.

“It was a fantastic experience,” said World No. 1 Nadal. “For the past three years we have done a few different things, and this one was a very nice experience. It’s going to be a very exciting season for me, I think. I would love to play against Roger a few more times this year, because when we play each other it’s in the final.”

Federer added, “It was good fun. It was so different. You’re always excited and nervous to see how it will turn out. It is always nice promoting an event and an entire tour with Rafa. I am of course very excited about playing another season on tour. I’m playing some of my best tennis again. I am really enjoying it and have high goals for this year.”

Having shared the year-end World No. 1 and No. 2 South African Airways ATP Ranking spots since 2004, Nadal and Federer will again be the players to beat during the 2011 ATP World Tour season, which comprises 63 tournaments in 32 countries. The season leads to the Barclays ATP World Tour Finals, 20-27 November, to be held at The O2 arena in London for the third consecutive year.

Nadal and Federer have won 21 of the past 23 Grand Slam singles titles and contested a memorable 2010 final at the Barclays ATP World Tour Finals, which Federer won in three sets to claim his fifth year-end crown. Later this month in Melbourne, Nadal will attempt to become the first player since Rod Laver in 1969 to hold all four Grand Slam trophies at the one time, while Federer will look to add to his record haul of 16 major titles. In 2010 Nadal won Roland Garros, Wimbledon and the US Open, where he completed a career Grand Slam, en route to finishing year-end No. 1 for the second time. Federer, whose strong finish to 2010 included a fifth title at the Barclays ATP World Tour Finals, will be the defending champion in Melbourne.

But Nadal and Federer will have plenty of competition throughout the season as World No. 3 Novak Djokovic, World No. 4 Andy Murray and World No. 5 Robin Soderling continue to turn up the heat. And plenty of interest surrounds the return from injury of 2009 US Open champion Juan Martin del Potro, and the performances of stars like Tomas Berdych, David Ferrer, Andy Roddick, Fernando Verdasco, Mikhail Youzhny, Jurgen Melzer, Gael Monfils and Jo-Wilfried Tsonga.



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In doubles, world record holders Bob and Mike Bryan will look to build on their 2010 haul of 11 titles, while intrigue surrounds the reunion in Australia of the Indian Express, Mahesh Bhupathi and Leander Paes, as the duo looks to complete a career Grand Slam at the Australian Open.

Sydney, Australia (starting 9 January) and Auckland, New Zealand (10 January) will be played in the lead-up to the Australian Open (17 January).

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About the ATP World Tour

The ATP is the governing body of the men's professional tennis circuits - the ATP World Tour, the ATP Challenger Tour and the ATP Champions Tour. With 63 tournaments in 32 countries, the ATP World Tour showcases the finest male athletes competing in the world's most exciting venues. From Australia to Europe and the Americas to Asia, the stars of the ATP World Tour battle for prestigious titles and South African Airways 2011 ATP Rankings points at Grand Slams (non ATP events), ATP World Tour Masters 1000, ATP World Tour 500 and ATP World Tour 250 events. At the end of the season only the world's top 8 ranked men's singles players and top 8 doubles teams, based on their performance throughout the year, will qualify to compete for the last title of the season at the Barclays ATP World Tour Finals. Held at The O2 in London, the event will officially crown the 2011 ATP World Tour No.1 in singles and doubles. For more information, please visit ATPWorldTour.com.



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