

# The Battle of America: Tennis Style at the U.S. Open

sports column

In the past weeks, tennis dominated television. Wrestling, other sporting events, and Craig Kilborn all lost out on their time slots to the U.S. Open. Matches were heated, and most people didn't care who won the third round. However, did any tennis fan ever contemplate the impact of the Americans at the U.S. Open? I am guessing that some American citizens even wanted a foreign player to win the championship.

So, who was the best American at the U.S. Open? Well, this is indeed a complicated subject and one that requires a bit more knowledge than those who picked up their tennis savvy from watching their first two hours of tennis this past weekend as Marat Safin outplayed American Pete Sampras. Should past titles and experience even be considered when asking which American player put in the best performance? Can any players be eliminated from consideration in a field of men's tennis players that are always upset-minded? On any given day, at any given tournament, anyone can beat the top ranked players in the world. So what if you have never heard of someone before! How many Americans knew who Marat Safin was before this past week?

Indeed this is a question that requires some deep thought and there is no one right answer for it. So where do we begin? The number one player in the whole tournament seems like a good starting point. Andre Agassi came into the tennis tournament as the favorite and was

knocked off by Arnaud Clement. Clement went on to win two more matches past Agassi, but unfortunately Agassi did nothing for the morale of American tennis fans. Not too many fans would disagree that Agassi played below his level and does not deserve much more to be said on his performance at the U.S. Open. However, it does need to be said that some so-called fans even stopped watching the tournament after Agassi bowed out.

There are a few other Americans who can just be kicked out of the picture right now. Michael Chang has faded from popularity big time. He was once ranked in the top 10, but now he does not even come into the minds of the tennis fan. Jennifer Capriati has recovered from drug abuse, but her game is still lacking. She started in her early teen years and may have become burnt out. That is why the Capriati Rule is in effect, which limits the number of matches young teenagers can play.

The possible answers to this question come down to Pete Sampras, Todd Martin, Lindsay Davenport, Monica Seles, Venus Williams, and Serena Williams. Obviously there is an argument for each and every player listed above.

Unfortunately, Monica Seles is the first one to be eliminated. Seles has gone through hardships, having been stabbed on the court. Every time she steps on the court could bring back memories of pain and suffering.



American Tennis Player Pete Sampras

FILE PHOTO

Though her back may have recovered, she really has not shown her talent level of the years prior to the stabbing. Seles played Capriati in the quarterfinals, which happened at Wimbledon years back and was

supposed to be the duo of the future. Well, both have faced trouble off the court and have been trying to get back to superstar level.

Next to go is Lindsay Davenport. She has dominated many

tournaments this past year and was in the best shape of her career for the U.S. Open. The Williams sisters seemed to be the only obstacle in her way since Martina Hingis simply glided to the semifinals. American women seem to be at a level above the rest of the world. Davenport has easily stood out this year, despite all the news on the Williams sisters. Davenport beat last year's champion, Serena Williams, in the semifinals in straight sets. It was a wonderfully played match, giving Serena the benefit of the doubt since she was under extreme pressure being the defending champion.

With that said, Serena still had more to do to be considered the best American at the U.S. Open. She is young and has a lot of championships yet to come. She is one of the new generation of women tennis players that can overpower just about anyone on the tour. She is built like a brick wall. For now, Serena can be eliminated from consideration because one-day critics may be calling her one of the best players ever.

Todd Martin became the night owl of the tournament often playing four or five set matches into the wee hours of the evening. He had one of the best comebacks in tennis history at last year's Open and had many memorable moments this year also. Still, the gray hair on his head was a tell tale story of his demise this year. Safin totally destroyed him on the way to the final. Martin

excited the fans for much of the tournament, but his lackluster performance in the semifinals killed his chances of being the best American at the Open.

We are down to Pete Sampras and Venus Williams. Sampras is probably the best American tennis player ever. He has set unbelievable records at Wimbledon and the U.S. Open. His performance at the French Open has been less than desired, but his amazing performances throughout the years cannot be downplayed. However, he falls victim to some of the same criticism of the other candidates for this question. His competition to the final was not all that good. With so many upsets in the earlier rounds, Sampras was the highest ranked player going into the quarterfinals. Also, the champion of the U.S. Open, Safin simply outplayed Sampras in the final.

In this discussion Venus Williams seems to come out on top. She beat the top ranked player, Martina Hingis, followed by the very fit Davenport. Venus seems to be coming into her prime. She is older than her sister is and the talent level appears to be maturing in the right order. It is a shame that the tennis season is coming to a close soon, because fans would probably witness amazing tennis skills from Venus later this year. Opinions differ, but it is hard to disagree with the 2000 U.S. Open womens champion as the best American at the tournament.

## The Scoreboard

### Behrend Scores

#### Women's Soccer

Sept. 6 Vs. Wooster W 2-0  
Sept. 9 at Ohio Northern L 2-1  
Sept. 10 at Heidelberg L 2-1 (ZOT)

#### Men's Soccer

Sept. 7 at Fredonia L 3-1

#### Volleyball

Sept. 6 at Brockport L 2-3  
Sept. 8-9 Allegheny Tournament L 0-3 Vs. Mt. Union, Muskingum, and Westminster L 1-3 Vs. Heidelberg  
Sept. 12 Vs. Fredonia L 2-3

#### Cross Country

Sept. 9 at California (PA)  
Men finished 8th  
Women finished 9th

#### Women's Tennis

Sept. 9 at Allegheny Tournament W 4-2 Vs. Carnegie Mellon  
L 6-0 Vs. Allegheny  
W 5-1 Vs. Fredonia  
Sept. 10 at Alfred W 9-0

### AMCC STANDINGS

(Standings as of September 11, 2000)

#### WOMEN'S SOCCER

School	Conference record	Overall
Lake Erie	1-0	1-3
Pitt-Greensburg	0-1	0-2
Penn State Behrend	0-0	3-2
La Roche	0-0	2-1
Frostburg	0-0	1-2
Pitt-Bradford	0-0	0-1

#### MEN'S SOCCER

School	Conference record	Overall
Pitt-Greensburg	1-0	1-2-1
Lake Erie	0-1	0-3
Penn State Behrend	0-0	2-1
Pitt-Bradford	0-0	1-1
Frostburg	0-0	0-3
La Roche	0-0	0-4

#### WOMEN'S TENNIS

School	Overall Record
Penn State Behrend	3-1
Penn State Altoona	1-0
Pitt-Bradford	0-0
Frostburg	0-0
La Roche	0-0
Pitt-Greensburg	0-2

Conference play in the Allegheny Mountain Collegiate Conference began this week for the women's tennis team. The first conference match was against Lake Erie, who returns to Behrend for a match Sunday.

#### WOMEN'S VOLLEYBALL

School	Overall Record
Penn State Altoona	3-3
Pitt-Bradford	3-3
Penn State Behrend	3-6
Frostburg	2-1
Pitt-Greensburg	0-2
La Roche	0-5

The next game is against Buffalo State, and the women's volleyball team will kick off conference play on September 21 in a trip to Lake Erie.

### Major League

#### Baseball

(As of 9/13)

#### American League East

Team	W	L	GB
New York	83	59	-
Boston	75	67	8
Toronto	75	69	9
Baltimore	65	79	19
Tampa Bay	61	83	23.5

#### American League Central

Team	W	L	GB
Chicago	86	57	-
Cleveland	76	64	8.5
Detroit	70	73	16
Kansas City	68	76	18.5
Minnesota	62	81	24

#### American League West

Team	W	L	GB
Seattle	78	66	-
Oakland	76	66	1
Anaheim	72	72	6
Texas	65	79	13

#### American League Wild Card

Team	W	L	GB
Cleveland	76	64	-
Oakland	76	66	1
Boston	75	67	2
Toronto	75	69	3

#### National League East

Team	W	L	GB
Atlanta	84	60	-
New York	82	62	2
Florida	69	74	14.5
Montreal	61	82	22.5
Philadelphia	59	85	25

#### National League Central

Team	W	L	GB
St. Louis	83	61	-
Cincinnati	74	71	9.5
Houston	63	81	20
Milwaukee	63	81	20
Pittsburgh	61	82	21.5
Chicago	60	84	23

#### National League West

Team	W	L	GB
San Francisco	85	58	-
Arizona	76	66	8.5
Los Angeles	75	69	10.5
Colorado	73	70	12
San Diego	71	74	15

#### National League Wild Card

Team	W	L	GB
New York	82	62	-
Arizona	76	66	4.5

#### League Leaders

(as of 9/11)

#### American League--Batting

Player	Batting Average
Garcia parra, BOS	.362
Delgado, TOR	.357
Erstad, ANA	.356
M. Ramirez., CLE	.345
Segui, TEX-CLE	.338

#### Home Runs

Player	Home Runs
Thomas, CHI	42
Glaus, ANA	41
Delgado, TOR	39
Batista, TOR	38
Justice, CLE-NY	37

#### American League--Pitching

Player	Victories
Wells, TOR	19
Pettite, NY	18
P.Martinez, BOS	16
Hudson, OAK	16

#### Strikeouts

Player	Strikeouts
P.Martinez, BOS	259
Mussina, BAL	186
Colon, CLE	174
Clemens, NY	165
Finley, CLE	164

#### National League--Batting

Player	Batting Average
Helton, COL	.379
Alou, HOU	.358
V. Guerrero, MT	.354
Hammonds, COL	.347
Castillo, FLA	.341

#### Home Runs

Player	Home Runs
Sosa, CHI	49
Bonds, SF	45
Bagwell, HOU	42
Sheffield, LA	41

#### National League--Pitching

Player	Victories
Glavine, ATL	19
Johnson, ARI	17
Kile, STL	17

#### Strikeouts

Player	Strikeouts
Johnson, ARI	313
Astacio, COL	192
Leiter, NY	187
Dempster, FLA	185
Brown, LA	183



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