



PLAVA LAGUNA OPEN **UMAG**
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DAILY NEWS

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ALEXEI POPYRIN IS CROWNED THE NEW KING OF UMAG!



MAIN DRAW SINGLES



STATUS	NAT				
1	CZE	LEHECKA, Jiri	J. LEHECKA [1]		
2		BYE		J. LEHECKA [1]	
3	AUT	THIEM, Dominic	D. THIEM	63 75	
4	Q	ARG BAGNIS, Facundo	64 75		
5	CRO	CILIC, Marin	F. COBOLLI		M. ARNALDI [7]
6	Q	ITA COBOLLI, Flavio	64 63		36 62 64
7	Q	NED DE JONG, Jesper	M. ARNALDI [7]	63 76(5)	
8	7	ITA ARNALDI, Matteo	63 62		
9	3	AUT OFNER, Sebastian	S. OFNER [3]		A. POPYRIN
10		BYE		A. POPYRIN	67(2) 75 63
11	AUS	POPYRIN, Alexei	A. POPYRIN	64 61	
12	FRA	BONZI, Benjamin	64 75		A. POPYRIN
13	WC	CRO AJDUKOVIC, Duje	D. PRIZMIC		76(2) 75
14	WC	CRO PRIZMIC, Dino	61 62	D. PRIZMIC	
15	HUN	PIROS, Zsombor	Z. PIROS	62 63	
16	5	AUS O'CONNELL, Christopher	63 64		
17	6	SUI WAWRINKA, Stan	S. WAWRINKA [6]		
18	Q	AUT MISOLIC, Filip	63 62	S. WAWRINKA [6]	
19	SUI	HUESLER, Marc-Andrea	F. CORIA	75 61	
20	ARG	CORIA, Federico	64 62		S. WAWRINKA [6]
21	JPN	DANIEL, Taro	T. DANIEL	64 75	
22	WC	ESP LANDALUCE, Martin	16 75 62		
23		BYE		R. CARBALLES BAENA [4]	
24	4	ESP CARBALLES BAENA, Roberto	R. CARBALLES BAENA [4]	63 61	
25	8	ESP RAMOS-VINOLAS, Albert	J. MUNAR		
26	ESP	MUNAR, Jaume	63 36 63	J. MUNAR	
27	HUN	MAROZSAN, Fabian	F. MAROZSAN	64 63	
28	ARG	CERUNDOLO, Juan Manuel	63 62		L. SONEGO [2]
29	ITA	CECCHINATO, Marco	M. CECCHINATO	36 61 62	
30		SHEVCHENKO, Alexander	46 76(0) 63	L. SONEGO [2]	
31		BYE		61 76(7)	
32	2	ITA SONEGO, Lorenzo	L. SONEGO [2]		

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STATUS	NAT.	MAIN DRAW DOUBLES	
1	ITA	BOLELLI, Simone VAVASSORI, Andrea	S. BOLELLI A. VAVASSORI [1] 64 61
2	KAZ	GOLUBEV, Andrey UKR MOLCHANOV, Denys	
3	MON	ARNEODO, Romain AUT WEISSBORN, Sam	S. BOLELLI A. VAVASSORI [1] 64 36 10-2
4	CZE	JEBAVY, Roman CZE LEHECKA, Jiri	
5	3	POR CABRAL, Francisco BRA MATOS, Rafael	S. BOLELLI A. VAVASSORI [1] 64 76(5)
6	FRA	OLIVETTI, Albano ESP VEGA HERNANDEZ, David	
7	NED	ARENDS, Sander NED PEL, David	S. ARENDS D. PEL 64 46 10-5
8	BRA	DEMOLINER, Marcelo AUT OSWALD, Philipp	
9	WC	SLO ROLA, Blaz CRO SERDARUSIC, Nino	B. ROLA/N. SERDARUSIC 46 76(2) 15-13
10	ITA	BORTOLOTTI, Marco NED VERBEEK, Sem	
11	ECU	ESCOBAR, Gonzalo KAZ NEDOVYESOV, Aleksandr	B. ROLA N. SERDARUSIC 62 36 10-8
12	4	URU BEHAR, Ariel CZE PAVLASEK, Adam	B. ROLA N. SERDARUSIC 76(5) 64
13	WC	CRO BABIC, Zvonimir CRO MIKRUT, Luka	
14	COL	BARRIENTOS, Nicolas ARG DURAN, Guillermo	
15	IND	BALAJI, N.Sriram IND NEDUNCHEZHIAN, Jeevan	S. DOUMBIA F. REBOUL [2] 75 67(2) 10-7
16	2	FRA DOUMBIA, Sadio FRA REBOUL, Fabien	S. DOUMBIA F. REBOUL [2] 60 63

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ALEXEI POPYRIN IS A NEW NAME ON THE LIST OF UMAG CHAMPIONS AFTER DEFEATING STAN WAWRINKA

Alexei Popyrin joins the list of Umag winners! In the final match of the 33rd Plava Laguna Croatia Open Tournament, the 23-year-old Australian player won 6:7 (5), 6:3, 6:4 against Swiss representative Stan Wawrinka, bringing an excellent week to an end. Just like in Singapore two years ago, once again he lost the first set, but managed to win in the end. He wasn't even held back by an injury – at the start of the third set, he had to call for a physical therapist due to a cramp or pulled muscle, and just as it seemed that this might make it easier for the Swiss player to win the title, especially as he made it to a break point for 4:2, the Australian fought him off. He won the break point for 5:3, and then served for the win without a hitch.

"I feel really, really well. All of my hard work has paid off,

and I don't want it to end here, I want to go on. It feels different from when I won my first title. Back then I felt relieved to have won it, but now I took it a step further," said Popyrin, who has now become the first Australian player to win a title at an ATP tournament played on a clay court ever since Lleyton Hewitt, who won the Houston tournament back in 2009. When asked about his injury, he added: "At first, it felt like I'd pulled a muscle, and later I felt a cramp in the same place. I'll find out what it was on Monday." Popyrin came to Umag as the 90th player in the world, and on Monday his name should be in the 57th spot, i.e. two spots higher than his best ever ranking. No time to rest, as he faces the first round match in Kitzbühel on Tuesday, where he was supposed to play in the qualifiers, but placed in the

main tournament as a "special exception" at the moment he made it into the semi-finals in Umag.

Just like the day before when he played in the semi-finals against Italian Arnaldi, Popyrin lost the set in which he'd had a lead. He was leading 5:3 before losing a tie break, but he definitely dominated in the rest of the match. He started the third set with a break, then he lost a serve, and when he saved a break point at 2:3, those who thought he might forfeit due to injury were proved wrong. He bounced back, and after 28 European and 4 South American winners in Umag, the trophy went into the arms of an Australian. Before this season there has never been an Australian player who made it further than the first round in Umag (Simon Youl in 1994 and Christopher O'Con-

nell this year), but Popyrin now took the crown.

"This is where I won my first tournament a long time ago, and all of those happy memories came rushing back," said Stan Wawrinka in an emotional speech at the trophy ceremony, and then he had to stop for a second as he was overcome with emotion and his eyes welled up. "The fact that I won my first title here and had a chance to repeat that today make this moment so emotional for me. It was an amazing final match, but little by little I ran out of fuel in the second set. I had my chance, but I messed up my backhand at the 4:2 break point. It is what it is," said Wawrinka. The Swiss player won the title in Umag in 2006, and thus far he has won 16 tournaments, including three Grand Slams.



If he had won on Sunday, he would have become the oldest winner of a tournament since Ken Rosewall, who won Hong Kong in 1977, when he was 43 years and 5 days old.

This was the first time Popyrin competed at the Umag ATP tournament, but it wasn't his first time in Istria or Umag. He played twice at the Smrikva Bowl in Pula, which was, as he says, his first international tournament. He also played in the 32nd edition of the Perin Memorial in Umag in 2016, where he made it to the quarter-finals. He had some excellent results as a junior player later on, and was even the second best player in the world, and in 2017 he won the French Open at Roland Garros.





ITALIAN LUCA ARCA WINS THE TITLE AT THE ITF WHEELCHAIR CROATIA

The fourth edition of the ITF Wheelchair Croatia Open by HEP, tournament for wheelchair players, was won by Italian Luca Arca. In the final match, played at the Grand Stand court, the second largest court at the Stella Maris centre, he defeated Austrian Josef Riegler 6:4, 4:6, 7:5.

The match was very exciting and well-played, lasting 2 hours and 20 minutes, and it made the tournament even more successful, rounding up a competition played over three days at the courts of the Umag Tennis Academy and Stella Maris within the ATP zone.

Luca Arca became the fourth winner of the Umag wheelchair tennis championship, preventing Riegler from becoming the first player with two titles at the tournament. The 48-year-old Austrian played the final match in all four editions of the tournament start-

ing in 1919, but he only won the title in 2021. The list of winners also includes Israeli Guy Sasson (2019) and Polish player Kamil Fabisiak (2022), who are now joined by Arca.

This was the 11th tournament won thus far by this 30-year-old Italian, currently holding the 142nd spot in the ITF wheelchair tennis rankings, although he was in the high 24th spot last year. He has also won 55 points towards placing at the Paralympics in Paris 2024, where 48 players will compete.

The qualifying period for the Paralympics started recently, and the Umag tournament was one of the first competitions where players could win points.

Out of the five Croatian players included in the draft of the tournament, whose prize fund amounted to USD 3,000,

the best results were achieved by Anto Joskić, who made it to the semi-finals, where he was defeated by Riegler. Sven Maretić made it to the quarter-finals. However, Joskić made sure that the Umag tournament has a Croatian champion in the doubles competition. He and Austrian player Martin Legner defeated the Hungarian team, Attila Farkas and Roland Nemeth in the final match (7:5, 6:2). This was the first title for Joskić at the clay court in Umag after playing in two doubles finals (2019 and 2021) and one semi-final (2022). Overall, this was his 14th title in doubles tournaments, while for his partner in this tournament, the legendary Austrian Legner (who has played in all Paralympics starting with Barcelona in 1992) this makes a total of 266 doubles tournaments won, as well as the 350th trophy at the ITF Wheelchair Tour in his career, since he has 84 titles in singles competitions.

Before Joskić, the Umag doubles tournament was won by a Croatian player two more times, namely by Dražen Miškić in 2019 and 2021, both times with Josef Riegler.

“Once again, everything went well when it comes to the organisation of the tournament. We are very happy with the turnout of the players, and the final match was a true treat, as it lasted nearly two and half hours, and Josef Riegler had as many as five match points in the third set, but Arca managed to turn it all around and win,” said Anto Joskić, thanking the sponsor of the tournament, HEP, as well as Plava Laguna, the main sponsor and organiser of the Plava Laguna Croatia Open Umag, for their cooperation and assistance.



Energija koja pokreće Hrvatsku

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KARLO SUEVICH AND MATIJA SELAK DEFEAT BOTH CROATIAN CHAMPIONS IN THE BATTLE FOR THE TITLE IN UMAG

The late-night final match played under the bright spotlights brought to an end the first international padel tournament Edel Sport Umag, which took place at the Stella Maris complex during the Plava Laguna Croatia Open Umag. This three-day competition wrapped up with the triumph of Croatian team Karlo Suevich – Matija Selak, who defeated Luka Belić and Roko Glasnović in the final match of the tournament (7:6 (4), 6:3).



The organisers were faced with some smaller problems and scheduling issues due to rain, but all 37 matches in the men's competition and 12 matches in the women's competition still took place at the Umag Padel Centre courts, as well as the artificial grass court constructed specifically for this tournament within the ATP zone at Stella Maris.

A total of 38 doubles teams entered into the men's tournament, and the only undefeated pair in five matches were Suevich and Selak. Moreover, on their road to this valuable title they beat current Croatian champions twice – first, in the semi-finals they defeated (3:6, 7:6 (6), 6:4) our indoor court champions Boran Poljančić and Arthur Vašarević who were the top-seeded pair in the tournament, and then in the final match they outplayed Belić and Glasnović, national outdoor court champions and the second-seeded pair in the tournament. Until then, Belić and Glasnović dominated their matches and made it to the finals without a lost set, but Suevich and Selak were particularly inspired on Sunday.

The trophy and sponsor awards also came with the largest portion of the prize fund amounting to a total of EUR 1,000, making the Edel Sport Umag tournament the first padel tournament in Croatia with a monetary prize for the best pair.

In the women's competition, due to a smaller number of registrations, seven doubles teams were divided into two groups, and the top two teams from each group played in the semi-finals. The winning title went to Tereza Mrdeža and Maja Pribanović after an exciting final match, where they defeated Martina Klimić and Nataša Koraca (6:7 (4), 6:3, 6:2).



There was a total of 90 participants in this tournament, included in the calendar of the Croatian Padel Association and the points go towards the national rankings, and it included players from Croatia, Slovenia, Belgium and Chile. These exciting matches rounded up the sports offer at the Plava Laguna Croatia Open Umag.





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TOMISLAV POLJAK, TOURNAMENT DIRECTOR

WE'VE MADE IT THROUGH THE STORMS AND HAD AN AMAZING TOURNAMENT



A new king of the Plava Laguna Croatia Open Umag tournament has been crowned. Alexei Popyrin deserved every single one of the 250 points he's won, as well as everything else that this title might bring. A positive, down-to-earth, fine young man. I've known him for a while, back from his junior days, when he did some fantastic things and promised an even bigger career than he has made thus far. He's still young enough to go all the way.

We won't hide the fact that we were all probably pulling for Stan Wawrinka. He's a legend, and there would have been a certain sense of closure had he won. Today, the victory went to the better player at the court. Alexei had some issues with an injury in the third set, powered through it, and in the end deserved his prize.

Once again, I have to express my gratitude to everyone who is making this tournament possible, especially Plava Laguna and the Lukšić family. The effort put in by this team, led by Plava Laguna, was remarkable. After everything that came at us this year at Stella Maris, all of the storms and bad weather, all the damage was removed and repaired as if nothing had happened. The courts ab-

sorbed a tremendous amount of water so I have to thank the court servicing team.

Another thanks goes to our indispensable ball boys and girls who had to work late into the night, as well as all of the services involved in removing the damage caused by the weather. All in all, everyone who contributed in any way to the 33rd Plava Laguna Croatia Open tournament. Many of them are somewhat "invisible", but that doesn't mean that their work is any less important. None of this would ever be possible without their help.

Now all that's left is to wait for the next year's tournament, and hope it's at least as good as this one was. We'll need a couple of days to settle down after this tournament, as we recall the best moments (and there were many), and then we turn our attention to what comes next. These past 33 years speak for themselves, this tournament is a wonderful tradition that we need to be proud of and use it well in the future. Umag has once again outdone itself, the tournament was a success, and there's no better proof than the stands that were filled to the last seat from start to finish.

COLUMN BY GORAN IVANIŠEVIĆ

POPYRIN DESERVED THE TITLE, IT JUST WASN'T STAN'S DAY



I think Alexei Popyrin really deserved to win the title. He played better in the final match and his success is spotless. In fact, he should have won the first set where he had a 5:3 lead, but he fell back a bit and gave Wawrinka a chance to get back in the game, which he took advantage of. Still, I don't think Stan played well enough in the final match, this may have been his worst match of the week. I do think he could have made it – I'd say that he was presented with a chance to win out of nowhere, but that backhand at the break point in the third set when the result was 3:2, sent the ball into the net. I think we'll remember that moment for a long time, as it was when it all went downhill. Instead of creating a better advantage and draw closer to the victory, he brought Popyrin back into the game.

Of course, it's not the first time this happened in a match and it will certainly not be the last, but I have to reiterate that Popyrin was simply better. This guy is an excellent player, and his 90th spot in the rankings clearly means nothing. He's had some amazing victories this season, three of them against players in the top 10 at the time, and that speaks for itself. This definitely wasn't his last great

accomplishment – he's young, he's playing very well, so we're bound to see more from him.

Wawrinka was one step away from another title. He's a great player, you could see how the audience supported him, which is truly deserved for a player of his calibre. It's been 17 years since his first triumph in Umag and this final match, which is a very long time. I congratulate him on everything he showed at the tournament.

The whole tournament was very good, and we had a chance to enjoy many amazing matches. The weather wasn't the best, but we made it through it all. The fact that the stadium was full from the very first day speaks for itself – the programme was top-quality from the very start, and it's a big deal. The atmosphere was excellent, I'm sure the spectators had a good time and that's what keeps us going. The doubles tournament was also excellent!

This tournament flies by so quickly for me, and it passes by faster with each year. I see it as a good sign, showing that a lot is happening and we're keeping it interesting. The next tournament will be here sooner than we think, so I'll see you next year!

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PHOTOS: PLITVICE LAKES NATIONAL PARK (GORAN ŠAFAREK);
KOPAČKI RIT NATURE PARK (MARIO ROMULIĆ & DRAŽEN STOJČIĆ)



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MIHOVIL ŠVIGIR AND BORO VUJOVIĆ WIN THIS YEAR'S VIP TOURNAMENT BY PODRAVKA



Mihovil Švigir and Boro Vujović have won this year's VIP tournament by Podravka. In the final match, they defeated Mate Matic and Daniel Dimić 6:2, and the third place went to Jadran Mimica and Krešimir Šamija.

The VIP tournament by Podravka is an indispensable part of the Plava Laguna Croatia Open Umag, and this year there were 24 participants who traditionally played their matches over two days at the Umag Tennis Academy courts.

In addition to tennis, the tournament was also a place for a good time with friends and some good fun, and all of the participants said they would return next year as well.





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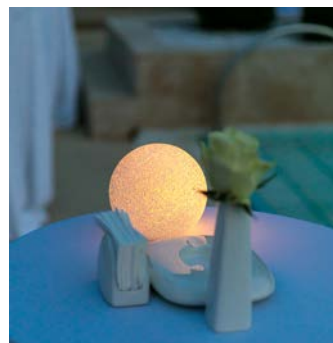
THE GALA EVENING OF THE PLAVA LAGUNA CROATIA OPEN UMAG DRAWS IN MANY FAMILIAR FACES

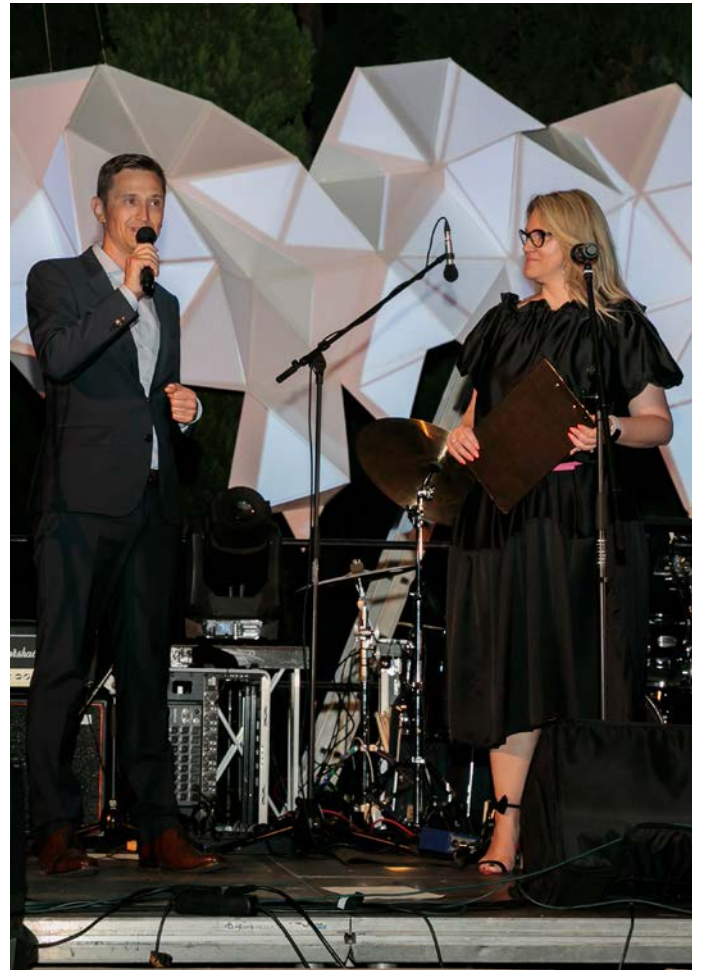
In anticipation of the closing weekend at the Plava Laguna Croatia Open Umag, the traditional gala evening was held at the Coral Plava Laguna hotel, attended by more than 400 esteemed guests, sponsors, partners and friends of the Umag tournament. They all came to express their support for the most important tennis tournament in the region, whose main sponsor and organiser is the Plava Laguna hotel company.

Some of the attendees were Plava Laguna Supervisory Board President Davor Lukšić, Plava Laguna Management Board President Dragan Pujas, Minister of Tourism and Sports Nikolina Brnjac, Croatian National Tourist Board President Kristijan Staničić, CNTB Strategic Project Sector President Ivana Curić Čabraja, CNTB Business Communication

Sector President Kristina Mamić, Ambassador of the People's Republic of China Qi Qianjin, Zagrebačka pivovara Management Board president Miroslav Holjevac, Studenac Management Board President Michał Wojciech Seńczuk, Studenac Management Board member Nina Mimica, Hrvatski Telekom Management Board member Marijana Bačić, Monri General Manager Robert Penezić, Histris owner and president Ivica Milotić, IRONMAN President for Europe, Middle East and Africa Stefan Petschnig, Croatian Chamber of Economy Vice-President Mirjana Čagalj, President of the Umag Tourist Board Milovan Popović, President of the Brtonigla County Tourist Board Michelle Pilat, and Plava Laguna Croatia Open Umag Executive Board President Arlen Brozić.

Alongside the beautiful decor and lighting, the atmosphere was further perfected by the impressive performance of the talented young singer Nika Turković, accordion and cello player Martin Kutnar, and DJ Neeksha, and the attendees could enjoy the carefully selected wines and delicious dishes late into the night.







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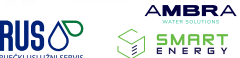
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