

WIMBLEDON 2008



Erakovic shines in win over Goerges

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New Zealand's Marina Erakovic moved into the third round with a 6-2, 7-6 (7-5) masterclass on grass, defeating Julia Goerges of Germany in a battle of contrasting styles.

After a cautious start from both players where serve dominated proceedings, they eventually settled down into their rhythm and began to produce some well-constructed points.

Erakovic went into the match with what seems an astonishing statistic. She is third in the all-time grass court leaders, behind Martina Navratilova and Chris Evert, with a win percentage of 87.5%, just ahead of Maria Sharapova and Venus Williams. With her 35 wins and five losses record on the surface, she controlled the match against the promising 19-year-old German, conqueror of the 23rd seeded Slovenian Katarina Srebotnik in the opening round.

Twenty-year-old Erakovic set to work straight away on neutralising the German's game plan of hitting hard, being aggressive and getting to the net. She did so with skill and variety, mixing up her shots surprisingly well for someone so young. She intelligently moved her opponent all over the court, keeping Goerges guessing where, and how, the next shot would be delivered.

Like Justine Henin, the New Zealander is an amazing striker of the ball and has every shot in the book. Furthermore, she showed great maturity for her age in knowing what shot to play.

After being broken in the third game, the German responded immediately to level at 2-2. From then on Erakovic pulled ahead, to the delight of the large number of New Zealand supporters. She took the set 6-2 as she stepped up the pressure, forcing mistakes from Goerges.

This pattern continued into the second set where Marina took the early break. However, Goerges, who is also capable of putting pressure on her opponents, began to guide her immense forehand into the court a lot more than in the first set. This was the key to her recovery as she finally started to control her powerful ground strokes and put her volleys away.

Goerges lead the set all the way into the tie-break. For a while it seemed as though the match was finally in her grasp but Erakovic showed her fighting spirit by drawing level when it mattered most. So at 4-2 down in the tie-break, Erakovic put all her efforts into winning the match. And she did just that, taking five of the next six points. She will next play the in-form Thai, Tamarine Tanasugarn.