

## Somdev Devvarman storms into semi-finals of Chennai Open

Somdev Devvarman continued his dream run in the \$450,000 ATP [Chennai](#) Open tennis tournament, by defeating fourth seeded Ivo Karlovic of Croatia 7-6 (4), 6-4, in 86 minutes to enter the semi-finals here Friday night.

The 23-year-old wild card entry Devvarman, ranked 202, thus became the first Indian since Leander Paes in 1998 to reach the semi-finals of this tournament and will next meet fifth seeded Rainer Schettler who needed all his experience to get past fellow-German and doubles partner Bjorn Phau 6-2, 7-5.

Also through to the semi-finals was third seeded Marin Cilic (Croatia) who shrugged off a wayward second set to beat Janko Tipsarevic (Serbia), the seventh seed, 6-4, 0-6, 6-4 and set up a clash with eighth seeded Marcel Granollers (Spain), a 7-6, 2-6, 6-4 winner over wild card Lukas Dlouhy (Czechoslovakia).

Devvarman, the India No.1, who had beaten sixth seeded Carlos Moya in the previous round, denied pace for Karlovic to work with as he opted for lobs and heavily spun returns. Also with the first serve working well, Devvarman was rarely in trouble of getting broken.

Devvarman, who is based in the US, played brilliantly in the first set, keeping pace with the 29-year old Karlovic, ranked No.25, who had topped the Match Fact list with 961 aces in 2008, to force the tie-breaker.

In the shootout, Devvarman took decisive 3-0 and 5-2 leads before closing out the 51-minute set as Karlovic committed yet another unforced error.

The second set was a near-repeat of the first with both players holding serve until the 10th game. The only time Devvarman looked to be in trouble was in the third game when he was down 0-30 on serve, but survived.

Leading 5-4, Devvarman, a quarter-finalist in the Washington tournament last year when he climbed over 800 spots in rankings, profited on two unforced errors by Karlovic to get to his first match-point but blew it by over-hitting a forehand.

But Devvarman gained his second matchpoint with a brilliant forehand crosscourt winner and then took the final point when Karlovic hit a forehand long.

Earlier, the towering Cilic, with a 6ft-6in frame, after winning a tight, 50-minute first set on a break of serve in the third game, turned erratic in the second.

With the first serve deserting Cilic, Tipsarevic made the best of the offerings for three breaks in the second, fourth and sixth games to take the set at 6-0.

In the process, Tipsarevic, who lost to Roger Federer in five sets at the 2008 Australian Open, had to contend with a blistered right middle finger and took a medical break in the second set when leading 4-0.

Cilic picked up his game in the third set and broke in the ninth for a decisive 5-4 lead before serving out the match.

In fact, the 24-year old Tipsarevic came under increasing pressure in the decider as Cilic raised his game. He saved three breakpoints in the fifth before dropping serve in the ninth to lose the match.

'After I won the first set, I was down on my serve in the second and I gave away too many easy balls. But I got my rhythm back in the third set,' said Cilic in summing up the match.

Schuettler, the 32-year old Wimbledon semi-finalist and ranked No.33, raced through the first set, but was in danger of losing the second as the players trading two breaks apiece.

Down 4-5, Schuettler broke the 29-year old Phau to level while winning three games in a row to wrap up the match in 98 minutes.

Schuettler said Phau let him off the hook in the second set. 'It was difficult to play Phau. We are good friends, play doubles together and in fact, we practiced this morning. But I am happy to have won after two breaks against me.'

The results:

Singles (quarter-finals): Somdev Devvarman (IND) bt 4-Ivo Karlovic 7-6 (4), 6-4; 3-Marin Cilic (CRO) bt Janko Tipsarevic (SRB) 6-4, 0-6, 6-4; 5-Rainer Schuettler (GER) bt Bjorn Phau (GER) 6-2, 7-5; 8-Marcel Granollers (ESP) bt Lukas Dlouhy (CZE) 7-5, 2-6, 6-4.

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