

# NEW ORDER: ON WIMBLEDON'S NEW CHAMPIONS

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July 18, 2023 12:10 am | Updated 12:10 am IST

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One of sport's eternal qualities is its uncanny knack of replenishing itself. The old gives way to the new and the past yields place to the future. Men's tennis though was resistant to this, where every new dawn — like Dominic Thiem's and Daniil Medvedev's US Open victories in 2020 and 2021 — ended up being a false hope. [Wimbledon 2023](#) however made the sport feel young again as 20-year-old Carlos [Alcaraz dethroned four-time defending champion and record 23-time Major winner Novak Djokovic](#) following a five-set thriller that lasted nearly five hours. The youngest since a 17-year-old Boris Becker secured the men's crown at SW19 in 1985, Alcaraz, the reigning US Open champion and World No.1, is only the sixth multiple Grand Slam titlist in the last two decades after Roger Federer, Rafael Nadal, Djokovic, Andy Murray and Stan Wawrinka. Just recently, the Spaniard had succumbed to Djokovic — 16 years his senior — in the French Open semifinals owing to stress-induced, full-body cramps. On Sunday, after he lost the first set and was a set-point down in the second, Alcaraz's odds nose-dived. The Serb had lost just six of 329 completed best-of-five-set contests in which he had won the first set and just one of 272 in which he had won the opening two. But Alcaraz turned it around with a nerveless display of audacious shot-making to usher in the new order.

There was however one tradition in the men's game that Alcaraz kept up. Ever since Federer won his first Major at Wimbledon 2003, prodigiously talented players have toppled the established rather than wait for a void to slip into. Nadal did that to Federer with his triumph at Wimbledon 2008, and Djokovic to both Nadal and Federer, across surfaces, for a good part of the last decade. Alcaraz has embarked on a similar path, to first fell his predecessors and carve out a niche for himself before supplanting them to become the next leader. The women's game has not quite lent itself to such immaculate succession plans, and in Marketa Vondrousova it had another first-time Slam winner. The crafty 24-year-old from the Czech Republic was up against the sentimental favourite in Tunisia's Ons Jabeur, who was gunning for her own maiden Slam crown after two failed attempts last year. But Vondrousova drew well from her experience of having played an equally talented but less flashy opponent in Ash Barty in the 2019 French Open final, to dismantle Jabeur, the World No.6, and become the first unseeded Wimbledon women's singles champion in the Open Era (from 1968) and the sixth different in as many editions.

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