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## Rafael Nadal enters semi-final with thumping victory



## **Monte Carlo**

Rafael Nadal produced a stunning performance to thrash Austrian fifth seed Dominic Thiem and reach a record 14th Monte Carlo Masters semi-final.

World number one Nadal, bidding for his 11th victory at the clay court event, won 6-0 6-2 in iust 67 minutes.

Nadal, 31, will meet Bulgarian fourth seed Grigor Dimitrov in the last four.

Dimitrov reached his first Monte Carlo semi-final with a 6-4 7-6 (7-5) win over Belgium's David Goffin, who was leading 5-1 in the second set.

Croatian second seed Marin Cilic was beaten by Japan's Kei Nishikori, while Alexander Zverev faces Richard Gasquet in the last

quarter-final later on Friday.

Thiem, 24, was considered by many as Nadal's biggest threat in Monte Carlo, having beaten the Spaniard on his favoured clay surface in Rome last year and winning against Novak Djokovic to set up the quarter-final match.

However, the world number seven - aiming to become the first player to beat Djokovic and Nadal in the same clay-court tournament was completely outclassed.

Nadal took the first set in just 31 minutes, winning four of his 11 break points and not facing one against his own serve.

Thiem avoided a double-bagel defeat by holding serve to trail 3-1 in the second set and was rewarded with a sympathetic ovation from the crowd.

But he failed to threaten Nadal's serve and the 16-time Grand Slam champion eased to an emphatic victory.

Nadal, who is aiming for a record-extending 11th French Open title when the tournament gets under way on 27 May, has now won 31 of his past 32 matches on clay.

"I think I played a great match the best of the tournament," said Nadal.

"I played very aggressive, I knew I couldn't give Dominic time to hit the ball and I didn't." (BBC)

