

Fritz outguns Jodar to win ATP Washington title

Fritz overcomes five match points and delays to lift Washington trophy

● Fritz claims first title of 2026

● Jodar reaches career-high ranking

AFP | Washington

World number 10 Taylor Fritz held off 19-year-old Spaniard Rafael Jodar 7-6 (7/2), 6-4 to claim his first ATP title of 2026 in the rain-delayed final at Washington.

Fritz, seeded third in the 500-level hard court tournament, needed five match points to subdue the 24th-ranked teen and capture his 11th title, and his first since Eastbourne last year.

After seizing control in the first-set tiebreaker, Fritz roared to a 3-0 lead with a pair of service breaks in the second.

He gave back a break in the fourth game with a double fault on break point, and Jodar climbed out of a 0-30 hole to hold serve and narrow the gap to 3-2.

But Jodar couldn't find another break. He held for 5-4 to force Fritz to serve it out, the American's chance delayed just slightly as Jodar had treatment on his left wrist after taking a tumble in the ninth game.

The final game was a slugfest. Fritz squandered a pair of match points at 40-15 and gave himself another with a booming forehand.

Jodar fought off two more match points before earning a break point that Fritz saved with another forehand winner.

Fritz finally got the job done after one hour and 49 minutes,



Taylor Fritz of the United States holds the championship trophy after winning the final

Jodar misfiring on a pair of forehands to bring it to a close.

Fritz, who was playing his third final of the season, collapsed to the court when it was done before rising to salute the crowd.

"It was just relief, like thank God I got it done," Fritz said of his reaction to sealing the win. "It wasn't so much as like a celebration, just thank God I'm done. I can just lay down for a second."

Fritz said wind contributed to errors from both players in the tight first set.

"It was very windy in the beginning. I felt like it was very hard to control the ball," he said. "There was a lot of errors and mistakes early on, but I did a great job of just serving well the

11 career titles have now been won by Taylor Fritz after his Washington victory

whole first set.

"Even though I maybe wasn't playing amazing, I still was holding and being in the match.

"I felt like I reeled it together really nicely in the tiebreaker. It was one of the better tiebreakers I have played in a while.

"I think I made all my first serves and put returns in the court. Just a very, very good

breaker.

"Then I followed up, I played two very good return games to start the second set. That gave me the lead that I needed that I could hold onto for the match."

The contest was postponed from Sunday after heavy rain halted the WTA final between Jessica Pegula and Alexandra Eala.

Jodar missed out on a second ATP title, after winning in Morocco in April. But by reaching the final he's assured of reaching a career-high 15th in the rankings.

"It was a great tournament," Jodar said. "I think overall I played great matches against tough opponents. I'll take all the learning from this week to try to add it to the next week."

Osaka out to improve Toronto fortunes with eye on US Open



Naomi Osaka

AFP | Toronto

Naomi Osaka is hoping her success last year in Montreal, where she finished runner-up to Victoria Mboko, will translate as the WTA's 1000 event in Canada shifts to Toronto.

The four-time Grand Slam champion from Japan is coming off a semi-final run on the hard courts of Washington, where she fell to eventual champion Alexandra Eala of the Philippines.

"I did better than last year in DC, so I'm just hoping to keep the ball rolling," Osaka said.

"I haven't historically played super, super well here, so I'm just hoping to change that this year.

"I can try to recall Montreal, but I would like to kind of treat the cities separately," added Osaka, whose best run in Toronto -- which alternates hosting duties with Montreal each year -- was a quarter-final appearance back in 2019.

The former world number one is seeded 11th this year and aiming to build momentum as the August 31 start of the US Open approaches.

Osaka earned the last of her four major titles at the 2021

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Australian Open and has yet to regain the heights she reached before taking an extended maternity leave in 2023.

But she made it to the US Open semi-finals last year and reached the last 16 at the French Open for the first time this year before a career-best quarter-final at Wimbledon.

"I would just hope to gain a lot of confidence leading into New York," she said.

"I lost my last match, but it's helped me figure out what I want to do exactly, or how I want to take my tennis."

Osaka is in the same quarter as second-seeded Australian Open champion Elena Rybakina and in the fourth round she could find herself up against fifth-seeded French Open champion Mirra Andreeva.

Eala powers past Pegula for first WTA title



Alexandra Eala of the Philippines holds the Championship Trophy as Jessica Pegula of the United States holds the Finalist Trophy

AFP | Washington

Alexandra Eala capped her giant-killing run at the Washington Open with a 4-6, 6-4, 6-0 victory over top-seeded Jessica Pegula to become the first player from the Philippines to win a WTA title.

Eala, ranked 28th, overpowered Pegula over the final two sets as play resumed in the final suspended after lengthy weather delays on Sunday.

The 21-year-old left-hander

produced a rock-solid service display and an impressive array of winners to deny third-ranked Pegula a 12th career title and a third this year.

She won the last nine games of the contest, surrendering just eight points in the third set.

"Just pure happiness," Eala said of her first title, which comes after she agonizingly failed to convert four championship points in her only prior final at Eastbourne last year.

Defending champ Shelton finding tournament sweet spot in Montreal

AFP | Montreal

Ben Shelton doesn't want to miss his chances on court as he begins the defense of his ATP Montreal Masters title with the goal of arriving in full flow at the US Open.

With the last major of the season starting on August 31 in New York, the American has programmed a full run-up schedule: Washington last week, Montreal and Cincinnati still to come.

"Three tournaments is the perfect amount. I'd like to get as many matches as possible," the fifth seed said on a rainy Monday that saw the start of play delayed several hours with more afternoon rain interruptions.

"I'm the type of player, the more matches I play, the better I play, as long as my body can hold up," Shelton added. "It's a great three-tournament run before having a week off leading up to the US Open. I'm just kind of going for it."

The weather is playing a ma-



Ben Shelton reacts during a match (file photo)

jor role in the controversial 12-day extended Masters, a tournament where world number one Jannik Sinner and 24-time Grand Slam champion Novak Djokovic are high-profile absentees.

Among first-round matches completed, Italy's former top 10 contender Matteo Berrettini, coming back from an abdominal injury, played his first match

since Wimbledon and lost 6-3, 6-7 (5/7), 6-3 to Argentine Mariano Navone.

Colombian Nicolas Mejia defeated rising Spanish talent Martin Landaluce 4-6, 6-4, 6-3, Canada lost its first player with number 174 Alexis Galarneau going out to Czech Vit Kopriva 6-4, 6-4.

James Duckworth beat Chris O'Connell 6-3, 6-1 in an all-Aus-

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sie clash.

Roland Garros title holder and Wimbledon finalist Alexander Zverev is the top seed ahead of Canadian Felix Auger-Aliassime.

Shelton, the ATP number 10 who reached last week's Washington quarters, is not bothered by the bloated length of the event which continues to attract criticism throughout the sport and could be ripe for future change.