

Errani, Vavassori retain US Open mixed doubles title in revamped event

Defending champions outlast Swiatek and Ruud in tense match tiebreak decider

- 6-3, 5-7, 10-6 victory in final
- \$1 million first prize awarded
- Second major mixed title of 2025

AFP | New York

Sara Errani and Andrea Vavassori retained their US Open mixed doubles title on Wednesday, beating Iga Swiatek and Casper Ruud to claim the \$1 million top prize in the new-look competition that kicked off action at the last Grand Slam of the year.

The Italians capped two days of intense work in the 16-team event with a 6-3, 5-7, 10-6 victory over Swiatek and Ruud -- who were among a slew of singles stars drawn not only by the big purse but also by the chance to contest mixed doubles before singles action begins on Sunday.

Poland's Swiatek, a six-time Grand Slam champion ranked second in the world, battled through a two-hour tussle with Jasmine Paolini to win the Cincinnati Open on Monday then hot-footed it to New York to team up with Norway's Ruud in the revamped competition.



Italy's Andrea Vavassori and Sara Errani celebrate after beating Iga Swiatek and Casper Ruud

Carlos Alcaraz, men's champion in Cincinnati, also turned out but he and British playing partner Emma Raducanu were eliminated on Tuesday, as was superstar Novak Djokovic, who teamed with fellow Serb Olga Danilovic.

The star names drew big crowds but the chemistry between Italians Errani and Vavassori, cultivated over a two-year

on-court partnership that also saw them win the French Open title this year, proved decisive.

Errani hoped it showed that committed doubles teams -- many of whom were shut out of the field -- have plenty to offer.

"I think this one is also for all the doubles players that couldn't play this tournament," Errani said as she and Vavassori accepted the trophy. "I think this one is

also for them."

Errani and Vavassori roared to a 4-1 lead in the opening set of the championship match and after Swiatek and Ruud regained one break, closed it on a confident hold from Vavassori.

Down a break at 4-5 in the second, Swiatek and Ruud won three straight games to force the 10-point match tiebreaker.

The Italians grabbed a 4-0

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SARA ERRANI

lead in the tiebreaker and held on.

"Congratulations," Swiatek said at the trophy presentation. "You proved that, I guess, mixed doubles players are smarter tactically than singles players.

"But we pushed until the end. We tried to make it competitive."

The first three rounds -- including the semi-finals on Wednesday night -- were played with short sets with no-advantage scoring and a 10-point match tiebreak in lieu of a third set, before the final revert-ed to traditional sets with a 10-point match tiebreak.

Goosebumps

Swiatek and Ruud had clawed their way past top seeds Jessica Pegula and Jack Draper with a 3-5, 5-3, 10-8 semi-final victory, winning the last six points to advance.

Errani and Vavassori romped past the American duo Danielle Collins and Christian Harrison

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The final was the only match using traditional scoring - all previous rounds featured short sets to 4 games with no-ad scoring

4-2, 4-2 to reach the final.

Vavassori admitted he and Errani were on a "mission" to prove themselves against the singles stars.

But both relished the electric atmosphere under the lights on the jam-packed Arthur Ashe Stadium Court.

"It's the court where I feel goosebumps every time here," Errani said.

Vavassori also enjoyed the "amazing atmosphere" and thanked organizers for putting mixed doubles in the spotlight.

"I have to say that we showed today that doubles is a great product," he said. "I think it was amazing to play on this court with so many people and I have to say thanks from the bottom of my heart for the atmosphere."

Arsenal could hijack Spurs' bid for Palace star Eze - reports

AFP | London

Arsenal are poised to snatch Eberechi Eze from under the noses of arch-rivals Tottenham Hotspur in what could be one of the most audacious moves of the Premier League's summer transfer window, it was reported Wednesday.

Spurs appeared to be on course to bring the 27-year-old Crystal Palace attacking midfielder to their corner of north London.

But it is now being suggested Arsenal, amid concerns over a knee injury to Kai Havertz, will scupper the deal and bring England international Eze, released by the Gunners as a 13-year-old, to the Emirates.

The Athletic said Arsenal had reached agreement in principle with Palace to sign Eze, with the deal worth in the region of the expired £68 million (\$91 million) release clause, matching the level of fee Spurs were prepared to pay.

Arsenal's interest increased after Havertz suffered an injury setback.

The Germany international came on in the second half of Sunday's victory over Manchester United and completed the game but was absent from Arsenal's open training at the Emirates on Wednesday.

Arsenal finished runners-up to Premier League champions Liverpool last season and are expected to challenge for the title again where-as Spurs, who won the Europa League final, ended the campaign in a lowly 17th place -- one spot above the relegation zone.

Eze played 84 minutes of the weekend draw at Chelsea and trained on Wednesday ahead of Palace's Conference League play-off at home to Fredrikstad, with coach Oliver Glasner insisting he and Eagles captain Marc Guehi, a target for Liverpool, would both start the European tie.

"Before Chelsea, I think many of you were surprised that Marc and Ebs started and played almost the whole game," Glasner told a pre-match press conference earlier Wednesday.

"Most of you will be surprised that they will start again tomorrow because of all the rumours. But again, they are committed."

Glasner, who also guided Palace to Community Shield glory in a penalty shoot-out win over Liverpool, added: "They are committed to the team, they have a contract here, they played a crucial part that we could be so successful, and they will play a crucial part as long as they are here."



Eberechi Eze

South Africa spinner Subrayen cited for suspect action

AFP | London

South African off-spinner Prenelan Subrayen has been reported for a suspect bowling action during the team's thumping 98-run victory over Australia in the first one-day international in Cairns.

The 31-year-old made his 50-over debut in the game on Tuesday, taking 1-46 including the key wicket of Travis Head.

But in the match officials' report, concerns were raised about the legality of his bowling action, the International Cricket Council noted yesterday.

"The bowler will undergo an independent assessment of his bowling action at an ICC-accredited testing facility," the governing body said.

The news is another setback for the Proteas who are already without injured pace spearhead Kagiso Rabada.



Prenelan Subrayen

Shilton congratulates Brazilian goalkeeper Fabio on breaking record



Peter Shilton

AFP | London



Fabio

England goalkeeping legend Peter Shilton hailed Fluminense shot stopper Fabio breaking his record for most competitive appearances in men's football as a "brilliant achievement".

Fabio, 44, broke Shilton's mark on Tuesday when he played for a 1,391st time in the 2-0 win over Colombia's America de Cali at the Maracana in Rio de Janeiro.

"Huge congratulations to Fabio Deivson Lopes Maciel for beating my @GWR a record I was proud to hold for over 28 years for the most competitive matches in the history of football," said Shilton in a post on X, formerly Twitter.

"Keeping the record within the keepers union BRILLIANT achievement Fabio #proud @FIFACOM @FA."

Fluminense and Brazilian media say Fabio now stands alone in football history, although neither FIFA nor regional body CONMEBOL has declared it a record.

"Sometimes we don't realise the importance of such a significant achievement as breaking this record, which has stood for many years," Fabio, who has spent his entire career in Brazil, said following his clean sheet in the Copa Sudamericana last 16 second leg.

The home fans chanted, "Fabio is the best goalkeeper in Brazil," and he received a commemorative plaque to mark the achievement.

"No one plays so many matches without a level of professionalism like his," said Fluminense coach Renato Gauchio.

"He'll undoubtedly continue to play for a long time."