

# Implacable Sinner overpowers Lehecka to win Miami Open

World number two beats Lehecka 6-4, 6-4 to become first man since Federer to sweep Sunshine Double

● Sinner completes Indian Wells-Miami double

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AFP | Miami

World number two Jannik Sinner powered past Jiri Lehecka 6-4, 6-4 to win the ATP Miami Masters 1000 for a second time on Sunday, adding the title to his Indian Wells crown.

Sinner had to wait out rain delays before and during the match to complete his "Sunshine Double," becoming the first man to sweep the elite hard court tournaments in California and Florida since Roger Federer in 2017 and the first to do so without dropping a set.

In fact, Sinner -- who won Miami in 2024 but missed last year as he served a three-month doping ban -- has now won three straight Masters 1000 events, starting with a victory in Paris last year.

"It's a very, very special moment," Sinner said. "Coming here, performing again in a very good way after Indian Wells means a lot to me."

"It's something I never would've thought (I'd win) because it's difficult to achieve."

Sinner's victory, coupled with Aryna Sabalenka's triumph over Coco Gauff on Saturday, mark the first time the Indian Wells-Miami sweep was achieved on both the men's



Jannik Sinner of Italy celebrates match point against Jiri Lehecka of Czechia

and women's sides since Novak Djokovic and Victoria Azarenka both did it in 2016.

It also saw the Italian gain a bit on Spain's Carlos Alcaraz -- who was upset in the third round -- in the race for world number one as the clay court season beckons.

Early showers saw the match delayed for more than an hour. Sinner had just pocketed the first set when the showers hit again, halting the match for 90 minutes.

It wasn't enough to unsettle Sinner, who fired 10 aces and won 33 of 36 points when he put his first serve in play.

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consecutive ATP Masters 1000 titles have now been claimed by Jannik Sinner, a dominant streak that began with his victory in Paris late last year

His return game was also spot on as he handed 22nd-ranked Czech Lehecka his first service break of the tournament for a 2-1 lead in the opening frame.

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Sinner trailed 0-40 in the following game but fired three service winners and a pair of aces

to hold.

"I tried to be focused," Sinner said. "I tried to understand why I missed the first serves before. In the beginning, the conditions were very different ... very, very heavy balls. I missed a couple of first serves in the net because they were quite heavy."

'Very precise'

He said Lehecka's aggressive return game also gave him pause.

"You have to hit very precise. If not, he has it on the racquet," Sinner said.

But he made the advantage stand up and gave himself a first

set point in the ninth game with a blistering cross-court forehand service return winner.

Lehecka saved that one with a service winner and saved another set point with a volley, going on to seal the hold on his sixth game point before Sinner pocketed the set with a love game.

Lehecka fought off five more break points before Sinner pounced for the lone break of the second set and a 5-4 lead, the Czech gifting Sinner a break chance with a loose forehand.

Sinner didn't face a break point in the second set and gave himself a match point with a forehand volley winner, thought he had it on a serve that was called a let, and polished it off with another winner at the net.

While Lehecka, playing in his first Masters 1000 final, couldn't follow compatriot Jakub Mensik into the Miami winner's circle, he reached a career-high 14th in the world rankings yesterday.

"I came here with not good form and I was able to come back to the tennis that I want to play," Lehecka said at the trophy ceremony.

## Tottenham close in on De Zerbi as next boss - reports

AFP | London

Tottenham have targeted Roberto De Zerbi as their preferred candidate to lead the troubled Premier League club's fight to avoid relegation, according to reports yesterday.

De Zerbi is available after leaving Marseille by mutual consent in February.

Tottenham parted ways with interim boss Igor Tudor on Sunday after just seven games and 44 days in charge.

The north Londoners sit just one point above the relegation zone with seven matches left, having failed to win a league game in 2026.

De Zerbi established a positive reputation for himself in England during a two-year spell as Brighton boss between 2022 and 2024.

The Italian had reportedly

been reticent to take the Tottenham job before knowing which division they will be playing in next season.

However, The Athletic and Talksport reported that progress has been made in talks, with Tottenham offering a lucrative long-term deal to convince the 46-year-old to take charge now.

Tottenham have not tasted life outside the top flight of English football since 1977-78.

Despite boasting a new 63,000-capacity stadium, state-of-the-art training ground and revenues that make them among the top 10 richest clubs in world football, they are at severe risk of a humiliating relegation to the Championship.

Just a few years ago they were Champions League regulars under former manager Mauricio Pochettino, reaching the final in 2019.

## NBA-best Thunder beat Knicks as Boston seal playoff spot

AFP | New York

Shai Gilgeous-Alexander scored 30 points and the NBA-best Oklahoma City Thunder beat the New York Knicks 111-100 on Sunday while the Boston Celtics clinched a playoff berth.

Jalen Williams added 22 points while Isaiah Hartenstein grabbed 13 rebounds as the reigning NBA champion Thunder improved to 59-16, 2.5 games ahead of San Antonio atop the Western Conference.

Reigning NBA Most Valuable Player Gilgeous-Alexander extended his NBA record run of games with 20 or more points to 135 in a row.

"He's MVP for a reason," Thunder guard Luguentz Dort said of "SGA". "He knows the type of shot he's going to get and he's never going to lay down and we know he's always going to be aggressive for us, which he did throughout the whole game."

The visiting Knicks, led by 32



Shai Gilgeous-Alexander of the Oklahoma City Thunder shoots around New York's O.G. Anunoby

points from Jalen Brunson, fell to 48-27 and missed a chance to clinch a playoff berth.

Josh Hart's three-pointer at the buzzer lifted New York within 53-52 at half-time, but the Thunder stretched the advantage to 84-78 after three quarters.

A 10-0 run pulled New York within 92-91 but Gilgeous-Alexander made back-to-back three-pointers and a jumper in an 10-0 run soon after that gave the Thunder a 106-95 edge on the way to a 14th victory in 15 games.

"They're a good team. We

knew it was going to be a tough one," said Dort, who scored 12 points. "We just had to stay in there throughout the whole game and we did."

"Every time we play together like that we're hard to beat."

Jayson Tatum delivered 32 points, eight assists and five rebounds as the Boston Celtics sealed a playoff berth with a 114-99 victory at Charlotte.

Payton Pritchard added 28 points for Boston (50-24), which pulled within four games of Eastern Conference leader Detroit.

The Los Angeles Clippers (39-36) stretched their win streak to five games as reserve Benedict Mathurin scored 28 points and Kawhi Leonard added 20 in a 127-113 victory at Milwaukee, which got 36 points from Gary Trent in a losing cause.

Houston's Alperen Sengun had 36 points and 14 rebounds while Kevin Durant added 20 points to spark the Rockets in a 134-102 victory at New Orleans.



Sinner won every match of both tournaments without losing a single set -- a rare feat at this level