

First Stop in the Sunshine: Indian Wells 2025 Revisited



By the time the tour reaches Indian Wells, the season has already started to find its rhythm. From hard courts in Melbourne, the tour goes through big stops like Doha and Dubai before moving to the desert air of California and then to the heat of Florida. Indian Wells and Miami come one after another on the calendar. Both are very big events, just below the Grand Slams. Together, people call them the “Sunshine Swing”.

For the players, this part of the year is a big test. Two huge tournaments, back to back, almost no rest in between. If someone can play well across both Indian Wells and Miami, it usually tells you a lot about their level.

Indian Wells is the first part of that swing. The draw was packed with almost all the top players, which usually happens like this every year, and 2025 was no different. The courts were slow, the air was dry in the daytime and cooler in the evening. It felt very different from Melbourne, but the tournament was almost as important. Many fans even call Indian Wells the “Fifth Grand Slam”, and when you see the stadiums and the crowds, it makes sense.

On the women’s side, one name stood out again. It’s Mirra Andreeva, the 17 year old had already won Dubai earlier in the season. She arrived in Indian Wells as a teenager everyone was talking about. By the time she left, she had gone one step higher. In the final, she came back from a set down to beat world No. 1 Aryna Sabalenka 2-6 6-4 6-3 and win the biggest title of her career so far.

It was her second WTA 1000 title and her third tour trophy overall, all before turning 18. Very few teenagers have done what she did there. She defeated top seeds, handling the pressure, and closing out a big final against the world No. 1.

Asian tennis had some strong moments in the desert as well. China’s Zheng Qinwen put together a steady and impressive run. She reached the quarterfinals at Indian Wells for the first time. On the way, she beats Victoria Azarenka, Lulu Sun and Marta Kostyuk, all in straight sets. Then she lost to Iga Swiatek in the last eight. It was not a shock result, but it was a kind of tournament that keeps her in the top group and shows why she is now one of the main names on the women’s tour.



Another Chinese player, Wang Xinyu, scored one of the early surprise results. She beats former Grand Slam champion Jelena Ostapenko 6–4 6–4 in the second round. For many, it was a reminder of how strong Chinese women's tennis has become in the last few years. It is no longer about just one or two big names. More Chinese players are now good enough to beat top seeds at big tournaments like Indian Wells.

It was her first match since she had to stop at the Australian Open because of injury, and she lost 6–4 6–4 in the first round to Camila Osorio. Osaka later said herself that it was one of her worst matches. For fans who have watched her from her early days to her Grand Slam wins, it was hard to see. But this is also how comebacks often look in real life. After injury and after becoming a mother, it takes time to find the old timing, fitness and confidence again.

On the men's side, it was all about a young British sensation. Jack Draper, 23 years old and often stopped by injuries in earlier seasons, finally had his big breakthrough. He beats Holger Rune 6–2 6–2 in a one sided final to win his first Masters 1000 title. On the way, he also defeated Carlos Alcaraz, one of the two men who have almost turned men's tennis into a duopoly this season along with Jannik Sinner. The title pushed Draper into the world's top 10 for the first time.

Japan's Yosuke Watanuki arrived in Indian Wells as a qualifier, ranked 349 in the world. In the space of a few days he beat Alexander Bublik, Tomas Machac and then Frances Tiafoe 6–4 7–6 to reach the fourth round. The win over Bublik was extra big. The Kazakh is the leading men's player from Asia right now, and 2025 has been the best season of his career, with four ATP titles and a real push for the ATP Finals right up to the Paris Masters. For Watanuki, coming back from injury and with his ranking so low, to beat a player in that kind of form was a huge moment.



All these moments together gave Indian Wells its own story in 2025. Andreieva lifted the trophy. Jack Draper won his first big Masters title. Zheng Qinwen reached the quarterfinals. Wang Xinyu beats a Grand Slam champion. Naomi Osaka tried to restart her season. Yosuke Watanuki came from qualifying and made a surprise run. Indian Wells is where the sun of the season first hits the American hard courts. The matches are long, the courts are slow and the days are bright and dry. From there, the tour packed its bags and moved east to Florida. Louder crowds, more humidity and the second part of the Sunshine Swing. Miami would tell its own story. That is the next chapter.