

‘DIFFICULT, NOT IMPOSSIBLE’: DJOKOVIC STUNS SINNER IN THE SEMIS



Rod Laver Arena got a classic Djokovic night again. And that night doesn't feel like a new chapter. It feels like the old story returning, the one people grew up with. In the Center court of Melbourne, the maestro, Novak Djokovic, 38, produced one more of those performances, fighting through five sets to beat 24 year old Jannik Sinner in the Australian Open semifinals, 3-6 6-3 4-6 6-4 6-4.

On paper, it looked like Sinner had the edge. He was the two time defending champion, 14 years younger, and playing with a lot of confidence. Djokovic came in with the same questions people ask now, how much he has left or whether his body can still handle a long, five set fight. Djokovic himself had admitted it last season after his semi-final loss in the US Open, that in best of five, players like Sinner and Alcaraz are a brutal challenge now. And coming into this Melbourne night, Sinner had also beaten him in their last four meetings. So for a while, it really did look like the match was moving Sinner's way.

Sinner took the first set 6-3. Djokovic hit back with 6-3 in the second. Then Sinner moved in front again, taking the third 6-4. Twice, Djokovic was behind, and for a moment it felt like the match was starting to get away from him. There was even a point where he sat down at the changeover and put a hand on his chest, like he was trying to steady himself. But he didn't go anywhere. He kept making Sinner play one more ball, kept hanging on in the tight games, and waited for the match to open up again.

The fourth set was a mental test more than anything. Sinner was still hitting hard, especially off his backhand, and he was moving smoothly all over the court. But Djokovic kept dragging the rallies out and kept asking Sinner to play one more shot. When Djokovic won the set 6-4, the feeling inside the arena changed. People knew it was going to a fifth, and they also know what Djokovic can do when a match reaches that stage.

In the fifth set, it became a pure pressure match and started being about nerve. Both men held serve for a while, and every game felt like it could decide the match. Then came the turning moment. Djokovic dug himself out of trouble at 15-40, won five straight points, and broke Sinner. From there, he didn't let go. He held his own serve, kept the rallies tight, and then served it out, 6-4, like a man who has lived through nights like this in Melbourne for years.

After it ended, Djokovic tried to put it into words and said, "It feels surreal." He brought up something he had said earlier, about how hard it is to beat players like Sinner and Alcaraz over five sets, then smiled and made his point clearly. "I wasn't wrong, I said it would be very difficult, not impossible. They are playing on a different level, so I had to find that level myself. And tonight, I managed to do that." Then came the Djokovic humour. "He won the last five matches against me, he had my mobile number, so I had to change my number for tonight," he said, as the crowd laughed along.



Then he looked up into the stands and said, "Some legends stayed up to 2 AM. Margaret Court, thank you so much for being here tonight." And then he turned to the crowd and said, "You guys have been incredible tonight. Tonight has been one of the, if not the best night, support wise I have ever had in Australia. Thank you for the support"

Sinner, in his on court moment after a loss like that, kept it honest. "It was a good match from both of us. Yeah, I had many chances. Couldn't use them, and that's the outcome. It hurts, for sure," he said. He also made it clear he wasn't shocked to see Djokovic rise again on this stage, saying he wasn't surprised because of what Djokovic has done for so many years.



For Djokovic, the win sent him into another Australian Open final. It also ended the Sinner vs Alcaraz final many people were expecting. Instead, the tournament went a different way. Sinner will be back. He is just 24 and he is too good to stay away from big matches like this. But this night will be remembered, not just for the score, but for how it felt when Djokovic started pulling it back. You could sense it in the crowd, and you could see it in Sinner's face too. And Djokovic's message was clear again, hard, yes, but not impossible for someone like him.