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**SEMIFINALS – SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 28****Magdalena Frech (POL #57) vs. [Q] Zhang Shuai (CHN #86)****Zhang leads 2-1*****Frech:***

- Making her second appearance at Merida, having lost in the first round last year to Avanesyan
- Has reached her 3rd career WTA semifinal, and her first since her title run at 2024 Guadalajara
- Seeking her 3rd career WTA singles final; she holds a 2-0 record in WTA semifinal matches
- Her career-best WTA 500 result is winning the 2024 Guadalajara title (d. Gadecki in final); this is her 2nd semifinal at WTA 500-level
- Has become the first Polish player to make the Merida Open semifinals (the previous best finish by a Polish player at Merida was Linette's quarterfinal run in 2023)
- Holds a 3-1 record this year in Tour-level matches vs. players ranked outside the Top 50

***Zhang:***

- Has reached her first Tour-level semifinal since her semifinal run at Guangzhou last October (l. eventual champion Li)
- Seeking her 7th career WTA singles final, and her first since finishing runner-up at 2022 Birmingham (retired vs. Haddad Maia in final)
- Her career-best WTA 500 results are semifinals at 2014 Birmingham (l. eventual champion Ivanovic), 2022 Tokyo (l. eventual champion Samsonova), and this week
- All of her three WTA singles titles have come on hard court (2013 Guangzhou, 2017 Guangzhou and 2022 Lyon)
- Has become the first Chinese player to make the Merida Open quarterfinals and beyond
- Attempting to become the 3rd qualifier to make a Merida Open singles final (best results by qualifiers at Merida are runner-up finishes by Emiliana Arango in 2025 and Rebecca Peterson in 2023)

**[1] [WC] Jasmine Paolini (ITA #7) vs. Cristina Bucsa (ESP #63)****Paolini leads 2-1*****Paolini:***

- Making her Merida tournament debut, and has reached her first quarterfinal and semifinal of the 2026 season
- Has reached her first semifinal on Tour since Ningbo last October (l. eventual champion Rybakina in semifinals)
- Seeking her 10th career WTA singles final, and her first since her runner-up finish at WTA 1000 Cincinnati last August (l. Swiatek in final)
- This is the 6th WTA 500 semifinal of her career; she has yet to make a final at a WTA 500 event
- Snapped a 3-match losing streak with her 2nd round victory over Hon this week (following 1st round bye)
- Holds a 5-1 record this year vs. players ranked outside the Top 50 (the one loss was to Sakkari at Doha)
- Has become the first wild card to make a Merida Open semifinal
- Best result by an Italian player at Merida was Camila Giorgi's run to the title at the inaugural edition in 2023

***Bucsa:***

- Making her Merida Open tournament debut
- Entered Merida on a 5-match losing streak, but snapped that with three wins this week so far
- This is her 2nd career Tour-level semifinal; she is seeking her 2nd career WTA singles final, after her runner-up finish at Hong Kong last November (l. Mboko in final)
- This is her new career-best result at a WTA 500 event; her previous career-best WTA 500 result was quarterfinals at 2024 Abu Dhabi (l. eventual champion Rybakina)
- Seeking the first Top 10 win of her career (she is currently 0-10 vs. Top 10 players, having lost each of those matches in straight sets)
- Has become the first Spanish player to reach the Merida Open semifinals (previous best results by Spanish players at Merida were quarterfinals by Paula Badosa in 2025 and Sara Sorribes Tormo in 2024)
- She is also in this week's Merida Open doubles final (w/Jiang Xinyu)



# MATCH NOTES

MÉRIDA OPEN - MÉRIDA, MEX  
2026-02-23 - 2026-03-01 | \$ 1,206,446



1  
WIN

3  
MATCHES  
PLAYED

2  
WIN



57

**MAGDALENA  
FRECH**  
POLAND

**SHUAI  
(Q) ZHANG**  
CHINA

86

1997-12-15	<b>Date of Birth</b>	1989-01-21
Lodz, Poland	<b>Residence</b>	Tianjin, China
Right-handed	<b>Plays</b>	Right-handed (two-handed backhand)
5' 7" (1.71m)	<b>Height</b>	5' 10" (1.77m)
22	<b>Career-High Ranking</b>	22
\$4,338,120	<b>Career Prize Money</b>	\$12,372,093
\$207,989	<b>Season Prize Money</b>	\$468,427
0 / 1	<b>Singles Titles YTD / Career</b>	0 / 3
14-19 (Round of 16: 2024 AUSTRALIAN OPEN)	<b>Grand Slam W-L (best)</b>	40-50 (Quarter-Finalist: 2019 WIMBLEDON; 2016 AUSTRALIAN OPEN)
3-0 / 3-1 (Semi-Finalist: 2026)	<b>YTD / Career MÉRIDA W-L (best)</b>	3-0 / 3-0 (Semi-Finalist: 2026)
7-4 / 82-121	<b>YTD / Career W-L</b>	4-2 / 224-275



# MATCH NOTES

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**MAGDALENA  
FRECH**

**SHUAI  
(Q) ZHANG**

## HEAD TO HEAD RECORD

YEAR	TOURNAMENT	SURFACE	ROUND	WINNER	SCORE/ RESULT	TIME
2024	BEIJING	HARD	4r	Shuai Zhang	6-4 6-2	1h 30m
2023	ROLAND GARROS	CLAY	1r	Magdalena Frech	6-1 6-1	47m
2018	HIROSHIMA	HARD	1r	Shuai Zhang	7-5 6-3	1h 29m

## RANKING HISTORY

TOP RANK	YEAR-END	YEAR	TOP RANK	YEAR-END
55	-	2026	73	-
24	59	2025	102	102
22	25	2024	206	219
63	63	2023	22	208
82	116	2022	24	24
99	102	2021	35	63
155	156	2020	30	35
149	198	2019	31	46
115	151	2018	27	35
165	166	2017	23	36



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**MAGDALENA  
FRECH**

**SHUAI  
(Q) ZHANG**

## TOURNAMENT HISTORY

### CURRENT TOURNAMENT

1r: d. M. TIMOFEEVA (#155) 6-4 7-6 (2h 15m)  
2r: d. J. BOUZAS MANEIRO (#48) 6-0 6-3 (1h 15m)  
QF: d. M. BOUZKOVA (#34) 6-3 4-6 6-3 (2h 58m)

*Total time on court: 6h 28m*

### PLAYER NOTES

- Making 2nd appearance at Merida; she lost in last year's 1r to Avanesyan
- Defeated qualifier Maria Timofeeva, No.7 seed Jessica Bouzas Maneiro and No.4 seed Marie Bouzkova so far this week
- Has made her 3rd career Tour-level SF, and she is seeking her 3rd career WTA singles final (2-0 record in WTA SF matches)
- This is her first SF since her title run at 2024 Guadalajara; she was also a R-Up at 2024 Prague (l. Linette in all-Polish F)
- Career-best WTA 500 result is winning the 2024 Guadalajara title (d. Gadecki in F); this is her 2nd SF at WTA 500-level
- Faces No.86 Zhang Shuai in SF today; Frech is 3-1 this year in Tour-level matches vs. players ranked outside the Top 50
- Owns 5-4 career Tour-level record against players from China; her most recent match vs. a Chinese player was a loss to Zheng Qinwen at 2025 Rome
- Owns 13-10 career Tour-level record against qualifiers (1-0 this year, d. Timofeeva in 1r this week)
- Career-best result on hard court is her run to the 2024 Guadalajara title
- One of 2 players from Poland in this week's main draw (No.8 seed Linette lost in 2r)
- Has become the first Polish player to reach the Merida SF (previous best finish by a Polish player at Merida was Linette's QF run in 2023)
- Is currently ranked No.57; this time last year was ranked No.31. Reached career-high ranking of No.22 in October 2024

### CURRENT TOURNAMENT

1r: d. V. LEPCHENKO (#152) 6-2 6-1 (1h 7m)  
2r: d. E. NAVARRO (#20) 6-4 6-4 (1h 23m)  
QF: d. V. JIMENEZ KASINTSEVA (#122) 6-1 6-3 (1h 32m)

*Total time on court: 4h 2m*

### PLAYER NOTES

- Making her Merida Open tournament debut, as a qualifier
- Defeated qualifier Varvara Lepchenko, No.2 seed and defending champion Emma Navarro, and qualifier Victoria Jimenez Kasintseva so far this week
- Has reached her 1st Tour-level SF since her SF run at Guangzhou last October (l. eventual champion Li)
- This is her 20th career Tour-level SF; she is 6-13 in WTA semifinal matches
- Seeking her 7th career WTA singles final, and her first since finishing R-Up at 2022 Birmingham (ret. vs. Haddad Maia in F)
- Faces No.57 Magdalena Frech in SF today; Zhang is 2-1 this year in Tour-level matches vs. players ranked outside the Top 50
- Owns 7-5 career Tour-level record against players from Poland; her most recent Tour-level match vs. a Polish player was a win over today's opponent Frech at 2024 Beijing
- Career-best WTA 500 results are SFs at 2014 Birmingham (l. eventual champion Ivanovic), 2022 Tokyo (l. eventual champion Samsonova), and this week
- All of her 3 career WTA singles titles have come on hard court (2013 Guangzhou, 2017 Guangzhou and 2022 Lyon)
- Only player from China in this week's main draw
- Has become the first Chinese player to make Merida Open QF and beyond
- Best results by qualifiers at Merida are R-Up finishes by Emiliana Arango in 2025 and Rebecca Peterson in 2023
- Is currently ranked No.86; this time last year was ranked No.168. Reached career-high ranking of No.22 in January 2023



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**MAGDALENA  
FRECH**

**SHUAI  
(Q) ZHANG**

## RECENT TOURNAMENT HISTORY

2025	Result	Rank: 31	Seed: 7
1r	L	E. AVANESYAN (#45) 4-6 6-3 6-3	

- Making her tournament debut in Main Draw Singles



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FRECH**

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(Q) ZHANG**

## SEASON 2026 HISTORY

- Fell in 1r at Dubai (as LL, l. Stearns)
- Played 2r at Doha (as LL, l. Li)
- Made 2r at Australian Open (l. Paolini)
- Reached 2r at Hobart (withdrew through injury prior to her match vs. Raducanu)
- Made 2r at Brisbane (l. Noskova)

- Fell in 1r at Australian Open (l. Preston)
- Made 2r at Brisbane (l. Rybakina)

VALUE	WTA RANK	MATCH STATS	VALUE	WTA RANK
28	34	<b>Aces</b>	13	80
62.5%	67	<b>First serve %</b>	66.2%	30
65.2%	51	<b>First Serve points won %</b>	63.3%	65
46.7%	46	<b>Second serve points won %</b>	50.7%	15
58.2%	48	<b>Overall service points won %</b>	59.0%	36
68.5%	50	<b>Service games won %</b>	70.8%	40
60.2%	25	<b>Break points saved %</b>	65.5%	8
36.3%	60	<b>First serve return points won %</b>	37.9%	36
57.6%	33	<b>Second serve return points won %</b>	57.9%	29
46.5%	64	<b>Break points converted %</b>	49.1%	43
37.1%	45	<b>Return games won %</b>	41.5%	23
44.9%	35	<b>Return points won %</b>	45.3%	31



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(Q) ZHANG**

## TITLES

### SINGLES FINALS

Champion (1)  
2024 - GUADALAJARA 500  
Runner-Up (1)  
2024 - PRAGUE

### SINGLES FINALS

Champion (3)  
2022 - LYON  
2017 - GUANGZHOU  
2013 - GUANGZHOU  
  
Runner-Up (3)  
2022 - BIRMINGHAM  
2021 - NOTTINGHAM  
2020 - HOBART

### DOUBLES FINALS

Champion (17)  
2026 - AUSTRALIAN OPEN (w/Mertens), ADELAIDE (w/Siniakova)  
2025 - WASHINGTON DC (w/Townsend)  
2024 - GUANGZHOU (w/Siniakova)  
2023 - ABU DHABI (w/Stefani)  
2022 - NOTTINGHAM (w/Haddad Maia)  
2021 - OSTRAVA (w/Mirza), US OPEN (w/Stosur), CINCINNATI (w/Stosur)  
2019 - AUSTRALIAN OPEN (w/Stosur)  
2018 - HONG KONG (w/Stosur), HIROSHIMA (w/Hozumi), ISTANBUL (w/Liang)  
2014 - PATTAYA CITY (w/Peng)  
2012 - GUANGZHOU (w/Tanasugarn), ESTORIL (w/Chuang)  
2011 - OSAKA (w/Date)  
  
Runner-Up (20)  
2025 - MONTREAL (w/Townsend), STUTTGART (w/Alexandrova), AUSTIN (w/Kessler), ABU DHABI (w/Mladenovic)  
2024 - SEOUL (w/Kato), US OPEN (w/Mladenovic), BIRMINGHAM (w/Kato)  
2022 - WIMBLEDON (w/Mertens), BIRMINGHAM (w/Mertens), STUTTGART (w/Gauff)  
2021 - COURMAYEUR (w/Hozumi)  
2020 - HOBART (w/Peng)  
2019 - NANCHANG (w/Peng), MIAMI (w/Stosur)  
2017 - ZHUHAI (w/Lu), BIRMINGHAM (w/Chan)  
2014 - HOBART (w/Raymond)  
2013 - OSAKA (w/Stosur), KUALA LUMPUR (w/Husarova)  
2012 - MONTERREY (w/Date)



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FRECH**

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(Q) ZHANG**

## GRAND SLAMS

AUSTRALIAN OPEN	ROLAND GARROS	WIMBLEDON	US OPEN		AUSTRALIAN OPEN	ROLAND GARROS	WIMBLEDON	US OPEN
2r				<b>2026</b>	1r			
3r	2r	1r	3r	<b>2025</b>	2r		1r	1r
4r	1r	1r	1r	<b>2024</b>			1r	1r
	2r	1r	2r	<b>2023</b>	4r	1r	1r	
1r	1r	3r	1r	<b>2022</b>	3r	1r	3r	4r
				<b>2021</b>	1r	1r	1r	2r
				<b>2020</b>	3r	4r		1r
			1r	<b>2019</b>	3r	2r	QF	3r
1r	2r			<b>2018</b>	2r	2r	1r	1r
				<b>2017</b>	2r	3r	1r	3r
				<b>2016</b>	QF	2r	1r	3r
				<b>2015</b>	1r	1r		
				<b>2014</b>	1r	1r	1r	1r
				<b>2013</b>				
				<b>2012</b>	1r	1r		
				<b>2011</b>	1r	1r	1r	1r
				<b>2010</b>		1r		
				<b>2009</b>				
				<b>2008</b>				1r



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FRECH**

**SHUAI  
(Q) ZHANG**

## CAREER MILESTONES

- Best results in 2025 were QF runs at Washington DC (l. Rybakina) and Guadalajara (l. Bartunkova). Registered second Top 10 win of her career over No.6 Mirra Andreeva at Berlin (after No.8 Navarro at Wuhan 2024)
- In 2024 reached a career-high ranking of No.22 by reaching her career-first final at Prague (l. Linette in final) followed by her first-ever title win at Guadalajara (d. Gadecki in final); also made QF at Wuhan (l. eventual champion Sabalenka) and at Nottingham (l. eventual champion Boulter) and achieved her best result to date at a Grand Slam (R16 at the Australian Open; l. Gauff)
- In 2023 reached back-to-back QF on grass at Nottingham (l. Burrage) and Birmingham (l. eventual champion Ostapenko); advanced to 3r at Miami (l. Gracheva) and posted 2r efforts at Indian Wells, Madrid, Rome, Guadalajara and Hong Kong; at the Slams, best results were 2r at Roland Garros (l. Rakhimova) and US Open (l. Muchova); ended season on career-high ranking of No.63 after winning a 100k ITF event in Spain (d. Errani in F)
- Highlight of 2022 season was 3r run at Wimbledon - best career result at a major. Also made 2r on nine occasions
- Broke into Top 100 on October 18, 2021, following run through qualifying to 2r at Indian Wells
- Advanced to 2r three more times last season and won titles at WTA 125K Series event in Concord and W60 Prague ITF Circuit event
- Campaign in 2020 was highlighted by maiden WTA QF, at Prague (as LL, l. eventual champion Halep) - first back-to-back main draw wins at a WTA event
- Only other WTA main draw appearance in 2020 was 1r exit at Lyon (as qualifier, l. Tomova); also won her fourth career singles title on ITF Circuit, at \$25K Bendigo-AUS and contested qualifying at Australian Open, Dubai and Doha
- Appeared in six WTA main draws in 2019, falling in 1r at Dubai (l. Kasatkina), Charleston (l. Buzarnescu), Lugano (l. Peterson), Nottingham (l. Mladenovic), US Open (l. Siegemund) and Guangzhou (l. Stojanovic)
- In 2018, made 2r at Roland Garros (as qualifier, l. Stephens), Rabat (l. Fett), Nottingham (l. Jakupovic) and San Jose (l. Tomljanovic). Also fell in 1r at six other tour-level events, including qualifying for Grand Slam debut at Australian Open
- Strong singles results on Tour in home nation of China in 2025, making Guangzhou SF (first WTA Tour SF since 2022; l. eventual champion Li) and defeating No.14 Navarro to make Wuhan R16 (l. eventual champion Gauff)
- Also in 2025, posted Top 20 year-end ranking in doubles, winning Washington D.C. title (w/Townsend) and making four additional WTA Tour doubles finals
- In 2024, broke a streak of 24 losses to reach WTA 1000 quarterfinal at Beijing. In doubles, won her 14th career title at Guangzhou, paired with Katerina Siniakova for the first time
- Reached R16 at 2023 Australian Open (l. Pliskova) taking her ranking to a career-high of No.22; failed to win a singles match after Lyon in January and ended her season early after Montreal (l. Blinkova)
- In doubles, won the 2023 title at Abu Dhabi (w/Stefani) and reached semifinals at Doha (w/Olmos) and Wimbledon (w/Dolehide)
- In 2022, won third career singles title at Lyon (d. Yastremska in F) and 12th doubles title at Nottingham (w/Haddad Maia). Finished the season at No.24, very close to previous best career ranking of No.23 (Nov 14, 2016); in doubles climbed as high as No.2 on July 11, 2022
- Reached fourth singles final of career in 2021, finishing R-Up at Nottingham (l. Konta). Also advanced to SF at Palermo and QF at San Jose
- Enjoyed strong campaign in doubles in 2021, winning her 2nd Grand Slam title at US Open (w/Stosur), as well as additional titles at Cincinnati (w/Stosur) and Ostrava (w/Mirza). Qualified for WTA Finals (w/Stosur), however failed to progress from group stage
- Season highlight in 2020 was reaching third career WTA singles final (l. Rybakina in F) and finishing R-Up in doubles at Hobart (w/Peng), which marks the first time she made it through to the championship match in both singles and doubles at the same Tour-level event
- Also in 2020, made R16 at Roland Garros for the first time; now has advanced to second week at Grand Slams across hard, grass and clay
- Standout singles results of 2019 season were reaching second Grand Slam singles QF of career at Wimbledon (l. eventual champion Halep), finishing R-Up at WTA 125 event in Anning (l. S.Zheng) and closing out season by winning \$100k ITF/Tokyo-JPN (d. Paolini in F)
- Won first Grand Slam doubles title at 2019 Australian Open (w/Stosur; d. Babos/Mladenovic in F); also reached final at Miami w/Stosur (l.

- Achieved career high singles ranking of No.115 after 2018 Roland Garros run (July 2, 2018)
- Won two of her four ITF singles titles in 2017, at \$25k ITF/Leipzig-GER and \$25k ITF/Braunschweig-GER - both on clay
- Played first WTA qualifying event at home tournament in Katowice in 2013, falling to Olaru. Made WTA main draw debut at Katowice the following year (as wildcard, l. Meusburger in 1r)

- Team qualified for WTA Finals in Shenzhen (Zhang's debut at the season finale) where they advanced to SF (l. eventual champions Babos/Mladenovic)
- Won her 2nd WTA Tour singles title at 2017 Guangzhou (d. Krunic in final)
- Enjoyed Grand Slam breakthrough at 2016 Australian Open, where she advanced to QF as qualifier (l. Konta). Run also marked first time winning back-to-back main draw matches since semifinal run at 2014 Birmingham
- In that 2016 Australian Open run, defeated No.2 Halep in 1r and No.17 Keys in R16; ranked No.133, became lowest-ranked player to advance to last eight at Australian Open since unranked Henin reached final in 2010, and first qualifier to do so since Gavaldon in 1990
- Contemplated retirement after ending 2015 ranked No.186, her lowest year-end finish since 2008 (No.212) and down from No.62 in 2014
- Won her 1st WTA Tour singles title at 2013 Guangzhou (d. King in final)
- First broke into Top 100 on August 9, 2010 and Top 50 on February 3, 2014
- Scored first Top 10 win over then No.1-ranked Safina in 1r at 2009 Beijing; at No.226, was the lowest-ranked player ever to beat a World No.1
- Made WTA qualifying debut at 2006 Beijing; made WTA main draw debut at 2006 Guangzhou
- Winner of 23 singles titles and eight doubles titles on ITF Circuit

## OTHER INFORMATION

- Coached by Andrzej Kobierski
- Started playing tennis aged six

- Coached by Liu Shuo
- Father, Zhang Zhi Qiang, was a soccer player; mother, Wang Feng Qin, was a basketball player. Started playing tennis aged five when parents took her to local club
- Started working with Chinese Tennis Association at age 12
- Idolized Roger Federer and Rafael Nadal
- Best tennis memory was playing mixed doubles with Pete Sampras in 2011, winning Australian Open doubles championship in 2019 with best friend Sam Stosur, and quarterfinals at 2016 Australian Open and 2019 Wimbledon
- Relaxes by listening to music, taking photos and exploring the places she travels to



# MATCH NOTES

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**2**  
WIN

**3**  
MATCHES  
PLAYED

**1**  
WIN



**7** **JASMINE PAOLINI (WC) (1)**  
ITALY

**CRISTINA BUCSA** **63**  
SPAIN

1996-01-04	<b>Date of Birth</b>	1998-01-01
Bagni di Lucca, Italy	<b>Residence</b>	Cantabria, Spain
Right-Handed	<b>Plays</b>	Right-Handed
5' 4" (1.63m)	<b>Height</b>	5' 9" (1.76m)
4	<b>Career-High Ranking</b>	50
\$14,915,001	<b>Career Prize Money</b>	\$4,355,337
\$624,009	<b>Season Prize Money</b>	\$250,024
0 / 3	<b>Singles Titles YTD / Career</b>	0 / 0
32-25 (Runner-Up: 2024 WIMBLEDON, ROLAND GARROS)	<b>Grand Slam W-L (best)</b>	12-17 (Round of 16: 2025 US OPEN)
2-0 / 2-0 (Semi-Finalist: 2026)	<b>YTD / Career MÉRIDA W-L (best)</b>	3-0 / 3-0 (Semi-Finalist: 2026)
5-4 / 166-131	<b>YTD / Career W-L</b>	4-5 / 49-80



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**JASMINE  
PAOLINI (WC)**

**CRISTINA  
BUCSA**

## HEAD TO HEAD RECORD

YEAR	TOURNAMENT	SURFACE	ROUND	WINNER	SCORE/ RESULT	TIME
2024	ADELAIDE	HARD	1r	Cristina Bucsa	6-3 6-3	1h 33m
2023	CINCINNATI	HARD	2r	Jasmine Paolini	6-1 6-3	1h 4m
2016	VALENCIA	CLAY	SF	Jasmine Paolini	4-6 6-1 6-3	0m

## RANKING HISTORY

TOP RANK	YEAR-END	YEAR	TOP RANK	YEAR-END
7	-	2026	50	-
4	8	2025	54	54
4	4	2024	56	71
29	30	2023	65	83
44	59	2022	104	107
51	53	2021	149	159
93	95	2020	154	161
114	117	2019	164	164
130	190	2018	331	346
130	137	2017	398	415



# MATCH NOTES

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**JASMINE  
PAOLINI (WC)**

**CRISTINA  
BUCSA**

## TOURNAMENT HISTORY

### CURRENT TOURNAMENT

2r: d. P. HON (#136) 6-0 6-2 (1h 11m)  
QF: d. K. BOULTER (#69) 0-6 6-3 6-3 (1h 53m)

*Total time on court: 3h 4m*

### PLAYER NOTES

- Making her tournament debut as No.1 seed and a wild card
- After 1r bye, defeated lucky loser Priscilla Hon and wild card Katie Boulter so far this week
- Snapped a 3-match losing streak with her victory over Hon
- Has reached her first QF and SF of the 2026 season this week
- Has made her first SF since Ningbo last October (l. eventual champion Rybakina in SF)
- Seeking her 10th career WTA singles final, and first since her R-Up finish at WTA 1000 Cincinnati last August (l. Swiatek in F)
- Faces No.63 Cristina Bucsa in SF today; Paolini is 5-1 this year vs. players ranked outside Top 50 (the 1 loss was to Sakkari at Doha)
- Owns 5-4 career Tour-level record against players from Spain; her last meeting vs. a Spanish player was a win over Sorribes Tormo at 2024 Wimbledon
- Attempting to make her first WTA 500 final; her career-best WTA 500 results are 6 semifinals, including this week
- 2 of her 3 career WTA singles titles have come on hard court: WTA 1000 Dubai in 2024, and Portoroz in 2021
- Is No.1 seed this week; has been top seed at 2 WTA tournaments in her career (also 2023 Monastir, finished R-Up to No.2 seed Mertens)
- Only player from Italy in this week's main draw
- Best result by Italy at Merida was Camila Giorgi's run to the title at the inaugural edition in 2023
- Has surpassed the previous best result by a wild card at Merida, which was QF run by Zeynep Sonmez in 2025
- Is currently ranked No.7; this time last year was ranked No.6. Reached career-high ranking of No.4 in October 2024

### CURRENT TOURNAMENT

1r: d. D. VEKIC (#100) 6-3 6-2 (1h 24m)  
2r: d. M. STAKUSIC (#142) 7-6 6-3 (1h 41m)  
QF: d. Z. SONMEZ (#81) 6-3 6-4 (1h 37m)

*Total time on court: 4h 42m*

### PLAYER NOTES

- Making Merida Open tournament debut
- Entered Merida on 5-match losing streak but snapped that with 3 wins so far this week
- Defeated Donna Vekic, wild card Marina Stakusic and 2024 champion Zeynep Sonmez this week, making her 1st Tour-level SF since her R-Up finish at Hong Kong last November (l. Mboko in F)
- Has reached her 2nd career Tour-level SF and is seeking her 2nd WTA singles final, after 2025 Hong Kong
- Faces No.7 Jasmine Paolini in SF today; Bucsa is seeking her 1st career Top 10 win (currently 0-10 vs. Top 10 players - and 0-20 in sets)
- This is her career-best result at a WTA 500 event; her previous best WTA 500 result was QF at 2024 Abu Dhabi (l. eventual champion Rybakina)
- Owns 2-6 career Tour-level record against players from Italy; her last Tour-level match vs. an Italian player was a loss to Bronzetti at 2024 Osaka
- Best career Tour-level result on hard court is R-Up finish at 2025 Hong Kong
- One of 2 players from Spain in this week's main draw (Bouzas Maneiro lost in 2r)
- Has become the first Spanish player to reach the Merida Open SF (previous best results by Spain at Merida were QFs by Paula Badosa in 2025 and Sara Sorribes Tormo in 2024)
- Is currently ranked No.63; this time last year was ranked No.99. Reached a career-high ranking of No.50 in January this year
- She is also in this week's Merida Open doubles final (w/Jiang Xinyu)



# MATCH NOTES

MÉRIDA OPEN - MÉRIDA, MEX  
2026-02-23 - 2026-03-01 | \$ 1,206,446

**JASMINE  
PAOLINI (WC)**

**CRISTINA  
BUCSA**

## RECENT TOURNAMENT HISTORY

- Making her tournament debut in Main Draw Singles

- Making her tournament debut in Main Draw Singles



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**CRISTINA  
BUCSA**

## SEASON 2026 HISTORY

- Played 2r at Dubai (l. Eala)
- Made 2r at Doha (l. Sakkari)
- Reached 3r at Australian Open (l. Jovic)
- Kicked off 2026 going 1-1 in singles for Team Italy at United Cup

- Played 1r at Dubai (l. Seidel)
- Fell in 1r at Doha (l. Yastremska)
- Played 1r at Abu Dhabi (l. Kartal)
- Fell in 1r at Australian Open (l. Svitolina)
- Made 2r at Brisbane (l. eventual champion Sabalenka)

VALUE	WTA RANK	MATCH STATS	VALUE	WTA RANK
10	98	<b>Aces</b>	8	102
65.2%	42	<b>First serve %</b>	66.0%	33
58.6%	107	<b>First Serve points won %</b>	59.6%	97
49.7%	24	<b>Second serve points won %</b>	38.2%	112
55.5%	79	<b>Overall service points won %</b>	52.3%	104
62.2%	80	<b>Service games won %</b>	54.8%	109
59.2%	34	<b>Break points saved %</b>	43.2%	122
40.9%	13	<b>First serve return points won %</b>	40.3%	18
55.4%	56	<b>Second serve return points won %</b>	52.4%	90
45.1%	73	<b>Break points converted %</b>	49.3%	40
45.7%	11	<b>Return games won %</b>	39.4%	30
46.4%	18	<b>Return points won %</b>	45.6%	27



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## TITLES & GRAND SLAMS

### SINGLES FINALS

Champion (3)  
2025 - ROME  
2024 - DUBAI  
2021 - PORTOROZ  
Runner-Up (6)  
2025 - CINCINNATI  
2024 - WIMBLEDON, ROLAND GARROS  
2023 - MONASTIR, PALERMO  
2022 - CLUJ-NAPOCA

### DOUBLES FINALS

Champion (10)  
2025 - BEIJING (w/Errani), ROLAND GARROS (w/Errani), ROME (w/Errani), DOHA (w/Errani)  
2024 - BEIJING (w/Errani), OLYMPICS (w/Errani), ROME (w/Errani), LINZ (w/Errani)  
2023 - MONASTIR (w/Errani)  
2021 - HAMBURG (w/Teichmann)  
Runner-Up (3)  
2025 - BERLIN (w/Errani)  
2024 - ROLAND GARROS (w/Errani)  
2022 - MELBOURNE 250 #1 (w/Errani)

### SINGLES FINALS

Runner-Up (1)  
2025 - HONG KONG

### DOUBLES FINALS

Champion (7)  
2025 - MONTERREY (w/Melichar-martinez), BOGOTA (w/Sorribes Tormo)  
2024 - CLEVELAND (w/Xu), STRASBOURG (w/Niculescu), MADRID (w/Sorribes Tormo), BOGOTA (w/Rakhimova)  
2023 - LYON (w/Schoofs)  
Runner-Up (4)  
2026 - BRISBANE (w/Perez)  
2025 - MIAMI (w/Kato)  
2024 - OSAKA (w/Niculescu)  
2022 - PORTOROZ (w/Mihalikova)

AUSTRALIAN OPEN	ROLAND GARROS	WIMBLEDON	US OPEN		AUSTRALIAN OPEN	ROLAND GARROS	WIMBLEDON	US OPEN
3r				<b>2026</b>	1r			
3r	4r	2r	3r	<b>2025</b>	2r	1r	3r	4r
4r	RUP	RUP	4r	<b>2024</b>	1r	2r	2r	1r
1r	2r	1r	1r	<b>2023</b>	3r	1r	2r	1r
1r	1r	1r	1r	<b>2022</b>	1r	1r		2r
1r	2r	1r	2r	<b>2021</b>				1r
1r	2r		1r	<b>2020</b>				
	1r			<b>2019</b>				



# MATCH NOTES

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## CAREER MILESTONES

- In 2025 earned second WTA 1000 title of her career on home soil at Rome, also winning the doubles title with Errani - became the first woman to sweep the Rome singles and doubles titles since Monica Seles in 1990
- Also in 2025 won her first Grand Slam title in any discipline, pairing with Errani to claim the Roland Garros women's doubles crown and qualified for the 2025 WTA Finals in both singles and doubles for the second time in her career after 2024
- Breakout 2024 season saw her win the biggest title of her career at WTA 1000 Dubai and also reach her first Grand Slam finals, finishing R-Up at Roland-Garros and Wimbledon. Qualified for her first WTA Finals in singles and doubles, broke into the Top 10 for the first time in her career and finished the season as the World No.4
- Finished 2023 by breaking into Top 30 for first time, achieving No. 29 on Oct 23, 2023 after becoming runner-up at Monastir (l. Mertens). Also achieved runner-up at Palermo and SF at Zhengzhou (l. Zheng both times) as well as QFs at Lyon (l. Garcia) and Cincinnati as a qualifier (l. eventual champion Gauff). Enjoyed two Top 10 wins (No.10 Garcia and No.4 Rybakina).
- In 2022, finished R-Up at Cluj-Napoca (l. Blinkova), while made back-to-back SF at Palermo (l. Bronzetti) and Warsaw (l. eventual champion Garcia); also reached QF at Lyon (l. Yastremska), Portoroz (l. eventual champion Siniakova) and Parma (l. Kovinic)
- Broke into Top 50 on January 31, 2021
- Posted near-Top 50 season finish in 2021 after capturing first WTA singles title of career at Portoroz (d. Riske in F)
- Strong season finish also brought SF run at Courmayeur (l. eventual champion Vekic) and QF effort at Linz (l. Halep); posted best win of season over No.18 Mertens en route to 3r at Indian Wells (l. Pegula)
- Also in 2021 won the WTA 125K event in Bol, Croatia (d. Rus in F) and was R-Up at the same level in Saint Malo (l. Golubic)
- Captured first WTA doubles title in 2021, at Hamburg (w/Teichmann)
- In 2021, for first time in career, contested the full suite of all four Grand Slam events; reached 2r at Roland Garros and US Open, equalling best previous Slam result
- In 2020, reached 2r four times at WTA tournaments, including Roland Garros (l. Kvitova)
- Posted singles breakthroughs in 2025, reaching first WTA Tour final at Hong Kong (l. Mboko in final), making first Grand Slam R16 at US Open (l. eventual champion Sabalenka) and ending season at new career-high ranking of No.54; also won two doubles titles at Bogota (w/Sorribes Tormo) and Monterrey (w/Melichar-Martinez)
- Began 2024 at a career-high ranking of No.56 in January and posted her best singles results of the year in the first half of the season with quarterfinals at Abu Dhabi and Bogota. Achieved longest winning streak of the year at Beijing with three wins to reach R16 (l. Muchova)
- Her 2024 doubles results included a bronze medal at Paris Olympics (w/Sorribes Tormo), as well as four WTA Tour titles at Bogota (w/Rakhimova), Madrid (w/Sorribes Tormo), Strasbourg (w/Niculescu) and Cleveland (w/Xu)
- In 2023, made first Grand Slam 3r at Australian Open as qualifier (l. Swiatek); also notched first Top 20 victory (d. Bencic at Cincinnati) and won first WTA 125 title at Limoges (d. Jacquemot in final)
- Appeared in main draw at a Grand Slam for the first time at 2021 US Open, falling 1r (as qualifier, l. Teichmann)
- Scored first Tour-level win in 2r showing at 2021 Belgrade (d. Kovinic, l. Sasnovich)
- Fell 1r on WTA main-draw debut at 2021 Bogota (l. Parrizas Diaz)
- Made Tour-level qualifying debut at 2019 Wimbledon
- Won first ITF Circuit title in 2017, at W15 event in Santarem, Portugal
- Owns four titles in singles and nine in doubles on ITF Circuit

- Highlights of 2019 included QF showings at Guangzhou and Palermo, a SF run at the WTA 125K Series event at Karlsruhe, lifting seventh, eighth and ninth ITF Circuit titles of her career, at \$60KBrescia-ITA, \$25K ITF/Curtiba-BRA and \$100K ITF/Tokyo-JPN, and qualifying for maiden Grand Slam main draw at Roland Garros (l. Kasatkina in 1r)
- Ended 2018 ranked No.180, with season highlight a maiden WTA singles QF at Prague (d. No.15 Kasatkina, l. Zhang)
- Made WTA main draw debut at 2017 Bastad (l. Suarez Navarro in 1r) and also fell 1r at Guangzhou and in qualifying a further three times
- Made WTA qualifying debut at 2015 Rome
- Made professional debut on ITF Circuit in Italy in 2011

## OTHER INFORMATION

- Coached by Danilo Pizzorno and Sara Errani
  - Resides in Bagni di Lucca and trains in Forte dei Marmi, Italy
  - Father is Ugo Paolini, mother is Jacqueline Gardiner and brother is William Paolini. Grandmother lives in Lodz, Poland. Mother is of Ghanaian/Polish descent
  - Idolizes Roger Federer
  - Favorite shot is her forehand and favorite surface is clay
  - Speaks Italian, English and Polish
- Currently coached by Ion Bucsa (father)
  - Trains and lives in Cantabria, Spain
  - Hobbies include reading books and enjoying walks through nature
  - Idolizes Serena Williams and Kim Clijsters
  - Favorite surface is grass