



French Open 2026 Roland Garros Preview: Alcaraz Out, Sinner The Favourite As Gauff Defends

Description

The **French Open 2026** at Roland Garros runs from Sunday 18 May 2026 to Sunday 7 June 2026 in Paris, and tennis fans in Singapore are looking at one of the most open men's draws in years. Two-time defending champion Carlos Alcaraz has withdrawn with a right wrist injury, leaving Jannik Sinner fresh from his fourth ATP title of 2026 in Madrid as the heavy favourite. The women's draw is led by defending champion Coco Gauff. With matches starting in Singapore time from late afternoon onwards, this is a fortnight tailor-made for late-night clay viewing.

Source: Roland-Garros official website (rolandgarros.com)

French Open 2026: Alcaraz out, Sinner the man to beat

The biggest pre-tournament news has come from the Alcaraz camp. The Spaniard, who lifted the trophy in both 2024 and 2025, will not defend his crown this year after pulling out of both Rome and Roland Garros with a right wrist injury that has not been fully described publicly. It is a hammer blow to the men's draw – Alcaraz had been a 4/1 co-favourite alongside Sinner before the announcement – and it removes the one player most observers expected to give the world No.1 a serious contest on Parisian clay.

That leaves Sinner. The Italian, now a four-time winner in the 2026 ATP season after thumping Alexander Zverev in the Madrid final, has the chance to do something only a handful of players in history have managed: complete a career Grand Slam. Roland Garros is the only major missing from his collection. Bookmakers have him at 2/5 (1.40), the shortest pre-tournament price for a French Open men's favourite since Rafael Nadal's prime. Sinner himself has been measured. "Clay is not my most natural surface, but I have learned a lot in the last 12 months. I want to play my best tennis on it," he said this week in Rome.

Who else can win the men's title?

Behind Sinner, the field is genuinely open. Alexander Zverev, the 2024 finalist, has the experience but his form has been spotty. Lorenzo Musetti has been the player of the European clay swing so far, and his single-handed backhand is built for Court Philippe-Chatrier. Arthur Fils has emerged as France's brightest hope and would carry the home crowd. Novak Djokovic, the three-time champion, remains an awkward unseeded threat for any seed who draws him — though the 38-year-old has played just nine matches in 2026 and goes into Paris with limited match sharpness. Casper Ruud and Stefanos Tsitsipas, both former finalists, sit just behind that group.

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Source: Roland-Garros official website (rolandgarros.com)

The dark horse is the player most Singapore tennis fans have only just discovered. Brazil's Joao Fonseca, 19, played the first major of his career as a teenager last year and has spent the spring quietly hoovering up Challenger and 250-level titles. He has clay-court instincts and a forehand that

looks made for the heavy red dirt. Should the draw fall kindly, a deep run is on.

French Open 2026: Coco Gauff defends a wide-open women's title

The women's draw might be even more compelling. Coco Gauff arrives in Paris as the defending champion, having lifted her maiden Roland Garros trophy in 2025. The American world No.2 has a settled team, a powerful first serve and the kind of athletic baseline game that thrives on slow clay. She is the bookmakers' co-favourite at around 4/1.

Aryna Sabalenka, world No.1, is the one player who has been more dominant overall in 2026 but Sabalenka has not yet won a French Open and her flat ball-striking has historically struggled to penetrate the surface. Iga Swiatek, the four-time champion in 2020, 2022, 2023 and 2024, has had a rocky 12 months but remains the player with the deepest tactical book on this clay. Mirra Andreieva and Madison Keys have both shown the form to threaten the top three. The women's title race is essentially five names deep, and any of them could lift the trophy on 7 June.

How to follow the French Open 2026 from Singapore

For fans in Singapore, the time difference works in our favour for once. Day-session matches at Roland Garros start at 11.00am Paris time, which is 5.00pm Singapore time - perfect for an after-work watch. Night-session matches under the Court Philippe-Chatrier roof typically start at 8.15pm Paris (2.15am Singapore), which is the only awkward window. The two-week schedule fits the WTA and ATP separation pattern, with men's and women's quarter-finals on 2-3 June, semi-finals on 4-5 June, the women's final on Saturday 6 June and the men's final on Sunday 7 June. All times convert to roughly 9pm-10pm SGT for the weekend finals - civilised viewing for once.

French Open 2026: history and the road ahead



Source: Roland-Garros official website (rolandgarros.com)

The numbers behind Roland Garros never get less impressive. The tournament has been won by 14 different men since 2000, with Nadal's 14 titles still defining what is possible on this surface. The women's roll of honour is even more open – eight different champions in the last decade,

including the unexpected runs of Jelena Ostapenko (2017) and Iga Swiatek as a teenager. There is something about the slow bounce, the long rallies and the constant tactical adjustments that surfaces players we have not seen in the closing stages elsewhere. That is part of the appeal for those of us watching from half a world away.

The Singapore tennis community has its own following at Roland Garros. Local players will not feature in the main singles draws, but Singapore's national-level juniors continue to use the French Open broadcast as the season's best classroom - slow clay, long points, problem-solving, the discipline of running balls down five times before earning a winner. Those are the lessons the Court Philippe-Chatrier broadcast teaches better than any other Slam.

For more on this season's tennis run-up, see our [Italian Open Rome 2026 preview](#), our broader [European sport coverage](#), and the rest of our [Sports section](#). Order of play, draw updates and weather conditions will be added throughout the fortnight.

Date Created

06/05/2026

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