



☐☐ **Simona Halep** made the quarterfinals of the Dubai Duty Free Tennis Championships but a bunch of other favorites - including Ana Ivanovic and Venus Williams - weren't so lucky. [Simona Halep](#) restored some order in the night session at the [Dubai Duty Free Tennis Championships](#) on Wednesday, beating [Tsvetana Pironkova](#) to move through to the quarterfinals.

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Things didn't look so good early on - [Tsvetana Pironkova](#) stormed out to a 4-2 lead - but the No.1-seeded Halep reeled off 10 of the next 13 games to move smoothly past the Bulgarian, 6-4, 6-3.

Halep's win followed a riveting day session where underdogs went five for six, the biggest shock being No.13 seed [Carla Suárez Navarro](#) 's 6-3, 4-6, 6-3 triumph over the No.2 seed, [Petra Kvitova](#) .

"Carla plays different from the other girls - the backhand slice, she can play at the net, from the forehand she can put topspin," Kvitova said. "She has a lot of variety in her game. She's not the only one playing like this, but I lost twice already against her, so I hope next time will be better."

The other surprises saw No.17 seed [Karolina Pliskova](#) blast 13 aces to beat No.4 seed [Ana Ivanovic](#) , 6-2, 4-6, 6-4, WTA Rising Star [Garbiñe Muguruza](#) take out No.5 seed [Agnieszka Radwanska](#) , 6-4, 6-2, No.10 seed [Flavia Pennetta](#) take out No.7 seed [Angelique Kerber](#) , 6-2, 3-6, 6-1, and No.11 seed [Lucie Safarova](#) end No.8 seed [Venus Williams](#) ' 16-match winning streak in Dubai with a 6-4, 6-2 victory.

"I think nowadays there are so many girls that play so well that the difference between the top players and the other ones is really small," Muguruza said afterwards. "If you work hard and play your best and concentrate on just playing your game, I think you will always have the chance to beat them."

Muguruza's win over the No.8-ranked Radwanska was the eighth Top 10 win of her blossoming career.

Williams had won the title on her last three trips to Dubai, and had she won this year she would have broken back into the Top 10, but Safarova was just too good on the day for the former

No.1.

"I think I was playing well this week. I don't think I played so badly today," Williams said. "I missed some shots I would normally make, but it wasn't many. She just played really well. Every time she comes out against me she's just relaxed and just swings - it's kind of like that every time I play her."

There was one top seed that survived the uprising during the day session - No.6 seed [Ekaterina Makarova](#), whose back-to-back semifinal runs at the last two Grand Slams have propelled her into the Top 10, hung tough against another WTA Rising Star, [Zarina Diyas](#), winning in straights, 6-3, 6-4.

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