

- [Simona Halep](#) brushed off a first set blowout to beat [Caroline Wozniacki](#) and reach the final of the [Dubai Duty Free Tennis Championships](#). WTA Rising Star [Karolina Pliskova](#) awaits.

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A day after surviving a marathon against her [Australian Open](#) conqueror, [Ekaterina Makarova](#), Halep was outplayed early on by Wozniacki, who lost just five points in four service games en route to taking the first set in just 30 minutes. But the No.1-seeded Halep went right to work, storming out to a 4-0 lead in the second set and, once she tucked that one away, she jumped out to a 2-0 lead in the third.

In the end Halep ended up running away with it against the No.3-seeded Wozniacki, 2-6, 6-1, 6-1.

"When I started the match I started with bad tactics - I was just hitting every ball and I made too many mistakes. I couldn't find my rhythm," Halep said. "In the second set I knew I had to change it and just play with good length and open the court more. I knew I couldn't force it too much like I did in the first set. That worked very well for me, and I just kept doing it until the end."

Wozniacki, a former champion in Dubai, had been struggling with a cold throughout the week.

"I definitely think it's taken a toll on me, but I'm still pretty pleased with my week considering everything that has been going on. Unfortunately it wasn't enough today," Wozniacki said.

"It was like the air of the balloon just kind of went out."

Halep is now a win away from the equal-biggest title of her career - she won another Premier 5-level title a year ago in Doha. She would also return to No.3 on the WTA Rankings by winning the title.

Awaiting Halep in the final is the No.17-seeded Pliskova, who blasted 13 aces and saved 13 of 14 break points to win a marathon against fellow WTA Rising Star [Garbiñe Muguruza](#) , 6-4, 5-7, 7-5.

Coming into Dubai, Pliskova had never even been to the quarterfinals of a tournament this big.

"I was already tired in Antwerp because I went from Fed Cup in Canada to Antwerp, and I wasn't sure what was going to happen here because I came during the night," Pliskova said. "But sometimes it's better than to be here practicing all week, because I wasn't even thinking this could happen, and I didn't expect at all that this could happen before the tournament, so I'm just really happy now."

Halep and Pliskova will be playing against each other for the first time.

"To be honest, I don't like to play girls who are serving so strong, but I have a good return, I think," Halep said. "But tomorrow won't just be about the serve. It's everything. She hits the ball very strong. I have to be focused, stay close to the line, and play smart but also aggressive.

"If I fight I can win. I believe in my chances and we'll see what happens tomorrow."

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