

November 14 - 21, 2009
Atkins Tennis Center - University of Illinois



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Anderson, Ram Fall in Second Round at JSM Challenger Two Illini remain in doubles main draw

URBANA, Ill. – A pair of former Illini fell in the second round of the singles main draw earlier today at the JSM Challenger, as No. 2-seed Rajeew Ram and No. 7-seed Kevin Anderson both lost in straight sets. Ram, the defending doubles champion, still remains alive in the doubles main draw, however, as does fellow former Illini Ryan Rowe.

Ram, who was still recuperating from a long trip back from Germany yesterday, was defeated by qualifier Kaden Hensel, 7-6 (5), 6-3.

“I was asking a lot of myself to come out here and win a bunch of matches,” Ram said. “I was happy to get through one and played a good match today. It’s a loss, but it’s not really something I’m going to dwell on. I’m really happy with how the year’s turned out.”

Anderson, the defending singles champion, struggled to build momentum throughout the match, ultimately losing, 7-5, 6-4 to qualifier Ricardas Bernakis.

“I had quite a few chances in the first set, maybe six break points and couldn’t convert any of them,” Anderson said. “I was playing one loose service game a set and getting broken. I think I’m struggling a little bit on the return of serves right now, so that combination sometimes makes it tough when guys play solid throughout the match.”

One of the marquee quarterfinal matches tomorrow will feature fourth-seeded Taylor Dent against fifth-seeded Jesse Levine, as both were victorious in action earlier today. Levine topped Ramon Delgado in three sets, 6-4, 3-6, 6-4, while Dent won his second straight match this year against former Miami Hurricane Todd Widom, 6-2, 6-3 and top-seeded Kevin Kim cruised to a 6-4, 6-0 victory over Blake Strode.

In doubles action, the top-seeded duo of Ram and teammate David Martin, younger brother of former Illini Chris Martin, defeated Colt Gaston and Ryan Harrison, 6-3, 4-6, 12-10 and Rowe and teammate Ashwin Kumar topped Scoville Jenkins and Phillip Simmonds, 7-6 (5), 7-6 (5).

“It was a lot of fun,” Rowe said. “There are no real expectations with me and Ashwin and I haven’t actually been playing that much lately, but we’ve played together before and did well so we were pretty confident. Both of our opponents are great players and I actually grew up with them, so I’ve known them for a really long time. We got a little lucky with the double fault on set point in the first set and I think we came up with some big shots in the end and a little error here and there worked in our favor.”



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Beginning tomorrow, admission to the tournament is \$5 for adults and \$3 for students. Additional information can be found at <http://illinoischallenger.com>.

Wednesday's Results

Singles - Second Round

[1] K Kim (USA) d [WC] B Strobe (USA) 64 60
[Q] K Hensel (AUS) d [2] R Ram (USA) 76(5) 63
[3] M Russell (USA) d M Mcclune (USA) 67(4) 64 62
[4] T Dent (USA) d T Widom (USA) 62 63
[5] J Levine (USA) d R Delgado (PAR) 64 36 64
[Q] R Berankis (LTU) d [7] K Anderson (RSA) 75 64
R Sweeting (USA) d J Baker (GBR) 64 64
[Q] B Rehnquist (SWE) d [WC] N Monroe (USA) 76(3) 64

Doubles - First Round

[1] D Martin (USA) / R Ram (USA) d [WC] C Gaston (USA) / R Harrison (USA) 63 46 12-10
[2] T Huey (PHI) / H Mankad (IND) d N Monroe (USA) / I Van Der Merwe (RSA) 64 63
[4] M Emmrich (GER) / A Siljeström (SWE) d T Aaron (USA) / C Schwartz (USA) 75 62
[Q] A Kumar (USA) / R Rowe (USA) d S Jenkins (USA) / P Simmonds (USA) 76(5) 76(5)
D Inglot (GBR) / R Rizza (USA) d R Bloomfield (GBR) / P Raja (IND) 60 76(2)

Thursday's Highlighted Matches:

Starting at 12 PM (Court 1):

Bjorn Rehnquist vs. #3 Michael Russell; followed by
Jamie Delgado / John Paul Fruttero vs. Alex Kuznetsov / Jesse Witten; followed by
Ashwin Kumar / Ryan Rowe vs. #4 Martin Emmrich / Andreas Siljeström

Not Before 4:30 PM (Court 1)

#1 Kevin Kim vs. Ryan Sweeting

Not Before 6:00 PM (Court 2)

#4 Taylor Dent vs. #5 Jesse Levine

Not Before 6:30 PM (Court 1)

#1 David Martin / Rajeev Ram vs. Brian Battistone / Dann Battistone



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Additional Quotes

Kaden Hensel on pulling off the upset over Ram:

“It went pretty much all in my favor. I felt good right from the get go and got off to an early break, but then I played a bit of a loose game and gave him the break back. I was really happy with my tiebreaker though. I stayed solid. The second set I was seeing the ball like a watermelon. I had watched him play a little bit before this match, because I had never seen him play before and just tried to get a feel for how he played.”

Taylor Dent on the win:

“The first set I played solid. I think I had one close game on my serve that broke him twice. I played some good tennis and strung together a couple of solid games on his serve in the second set. He just started slapping every return as hard as he could and caught fire one game and got an early break. But I was just able to hang in there and keep plugging away and was able to come back and break him another couple of times and squeak out with that last game.”

Taylor Dent on playing a familiar opponent:

“This was our third time playing, so I knew he’s a good player and returns and passes really well. I knew it was going to be a tough match for me. These faster courts actually help the other guys more than me, because my serve is going to be big no matter where I go.”

