



2009 Comerica Bank Challenger Top Seeds

2009 marks the 23rd year of USTA Pro Circuit Tennis in Seascap, a tall-feat made possible only with the support of sponsors, ball persons, umpires, and a gracious community of tournament volunteers. Thank you for all your help.

Every year, the Comerica Bank Challenger draws an awe-inspiring level of tennis. In 2008 we saw the oldest man yet capture the championship with 30 year old California native Kevin Kim defeating Andrea Stoppini of Italy 7-5, 6-1. In 2007, we saw the youngest man ever win the championship with then 17 year old Atlanta, Georgia native Donald Young winning the title by defeating Go Soeda of Japan.

This year, both Kevin Kim and Donald Young will return to this year's main draw. 2008 finalist Andrea Stoppini of Italy, and 2007 finalist Go Soeda of Japan will also return. We would like to think they all came back for the nice Seascap scenery, but they came for business. The winner of the 2009 Comerica Bank Challenger will win \$9200. They also will earn 60 ATP which will raise their world ranking.

If the Seascap Challenger history has shown us anything, it is that any USTA Pro Circuit player, on any given day, can pop up and steal the lime-light, below we highlight the top 8 seeds for 2009.

Arnaud Clement
Seed #1
Age: 31
Country: France
Residence: Geneva, Switzerland
Height/Weight: 5'7/160
Plays: Right-Handed
Turned Pro: 1996
Current World Ranking: 53
Ranking Year End 2008:
Career High Ranking: 10 (4/01)

In the storied 22 year history of the Seascap Challenger, no #1 seed has ever managed to win the tournament. This year's #1 however may finally be the one to thwart the "Seascap Curse". Frenchman Arnaud Clement has the highest active world ranking of any player to ever take part in this tournament. Ranked #53, the 31 year old veteran

has enjoyed a career resurgence after a bright start in his early professional years. His most memorable performance was making it to the final at the 2001 Australian Open, where he was defeated by Andre Agassi. While he was beaten by one legend that year in Melbourne, Clement also scored a notable quarter-final victory against a future legend, then unseeded Roger Federer. A 4th Round appearance at the 2003 French Open had been Clement's most recent grand slam singles showing of any significance. That was until last summer, when he made an impressive run to the quarter-finals at Wimbledon, where he lost a highly contested match to Rainer Schuttler of Germany. Due to rain-delays and darkness, the match lasted more than five hours and was split between two days. The last set was won 8-6 by Schuttler. Clement's other claim to fame is his part in the longest ever singles match in the history of male professional tennis. His first round defeat at the 2004 French Open to fellow Frenchman Fabrice Santoro was scored 6-4, 6-3, 6-7, 3-6, 16-14, and lasted an astonishing 6 hours and 33 minutes! With a 2007 Wimbledon Doubles Championship also under his belt, Arnaud Clement is one of the most decorated men's players to ever grace the courts of the Seascope Sports Club. And with some luck, he just might be able to break that #1 seed, "Seascope Curse."

Kevin Kim

Seed #2

Age: 30

Country: U.S.A.

Residence: Newport Beach, California

Height/Weight: 5'11/165

Plays: Right-Handed

Turned Pro: 1997

Current World Ranking: 86

Ranking Year End 2008: 101

Career High Ranking: 63 (3/05)

Kevin Kim is the reigning champion of the Comerica Bank Challenger. His dominating performance (he was taken to 3 sets just once) was a bit surprising, as he came into last year's tournament ranked at #186 in the world. One year later, Kim has taken a 100 spot leap, and will come into this year's event at #86 in the world. 2009 highlights for Kim include two semi-final appearances at tournaments in Carson, California, and Savannah, Georgia, as well as a heartbreaking first round loss at the French Open. Kim took both of his first two sets on the clay of Roland Garros to tie-breaks, and lost each one, and world #25 Robert Soderling handily took the third set. At Seascope this year, Kim will look to become the first ever back to back champion of the Comerica Bank Challenger.

Gilles Muller
Seed #3
Age: 26
Country: Luxembourg
Residence: Leudelange, Luxembourg
Height/Weight: 6'4/183
Plays: Left-Handed
Turned Pro: 2001
Current World Ranking: 89
Ranking Year End 2008: 100
Career High Ranking: 59 (8/05)

Being that the man is fluent in four different languages, (French, English, German, and Luxembourgish) you might not expect that Gilles Muller left school at age 17 to become a professional tennis player. Really, he had little choice. "Mulles" as he is affectionately called by his friends and family, ended 2001 as the world's #1 ranked junior player. That same year, he turned professional and made his Davis Cup debut for the Luxembourg National Team. In his career, Muller has posted an impressive 19-10 record in Davis Cup singles action. While he has taken part in every grand-slam, his most notable grand-slam performance came in last year's U.S. Open. After playing his way into the tournament through three qualifying rounds, Muller pulled off impressive upsets against American Tommy Haas as well as 5th seeded Nikolay Davydenko in the Round of 16. Unsure of his ability to originally qualify, Muller did not even have a hotel room booked for the main rounds of the tournament. He then drew tennis legend, and eventual champion Roger Federer in the Quarter-Finals, losing in straight sets, but taking two of them to tie-breaks. Muller also claimed an interesting piece of history this past January. His 5 set victory over Spaniard Feliciano Lopez in this year's Australian Open was the longest match ever played in the 104 year history of the tournament, a remarkable 5 hours and 34 minutes. Muller has brought in an impressive \$1.2 million in prize money for his career, and boasts a solid career record of 241-186 in singles play.

Flavio Cipolla
Seed #4
Age: 25
Country: Italy
Residence: Rome, Italy
Height/Weight: 5'8/163
Plays: Right-Handed
Turned Pro: 2003
Current World Ranking: 105

Ranking Year End 2008: 153
Career High Ranking: 105 (6/09)

Flavio Cipolla has 3 Challenger tournament victories to his name, and is currently playing some of the best tennis of his career. Since last summer, Cipolla has played in two grand slams, making the 3rd round at the 2008 U.S. Open, and the 2nd Round at this year's Australian Open. His performance at Flushing Meadows in 2008 brought him some international attention, after he took a two set advantage against then world #10 Stanislas Wawrinka of Switzerland. Sadly, Cipolla could not hold on, losing the next three sets 6-4, 6-0, 6-4. He is also a prominent doubles player, climbing as high as #75 in the world in July of 2008.

Wayne Odesnik
Seed #5
Age: 23
Country: U.S.A.
(Born in Johannesburg, South Africa)
Residence: Weston, Florida
Height/Weight: 5'11/170
Plays: Left-Handed
Turned Pro: 2004
Current World Ranking: 109
Ranking Year End 2008: 132
Career High Ranking: 77 (4/09)

Wayne Odesnik's originally turned professional in 2001, but after just one match, realized he still had some work to do, and went back to the amateur level. After winning numerous junior tournaments in 2002 and 2003, most notably two events in Jamaica, he decided to give the professional ranks another go. He received a wild card entry into the 2004 U.S. Open, and has since taken part in every grand-slam event, a 3rd round French Open appearance in 2008 being his best showing. His first career win came in 2007 at a Challenger event in Sacramento. In April of 2009, Odesnik reached his first final on the ATP World Tour, losing to Australian Leyton Hewit at the U.S. Men's Clay Court Championships in Houston Texas. At this year's French Open, Odesnik was eliminated by world #7 Gilles Simon in a 5-set, 3 hour and 43 minute 1st round marathon on center-court in Paris. He has three Challenger wins in his career, and he will look to make Seascap his fourth.

Dania Udomchoke
Seed #6
Age: 27
Country: Thailand
Residence: Bangkok, Thailand
Height/Weight: 5'8/141
Plays: Right-Handed
Turned Pro: 1997
Current World Ranking: 120
Ranking Year End 2008: 216
Career High Ranking: 77 (1/07)

A winner of 7 different Challenger events around the world, Dania Udomchoke is a Thai player, with a decorated past. He has played in the main draw of every grand-slam tournament at least once, with a 3rd Round performance at the 2007 Australian Open being his best showing, losing to Serbian sensation Novak Djokovic. Later that year, Udomchoke was matched up against another high-profile star in a major tournament. This time the setting was the grass of Wimbledon, and the opponent was Andy Roddick. While a straight set defeat was his eventual fait in that second round matchup, Udomchoke still put up an impressive fight, taking the third set to a tie-break with the top-ranked American player. A quarter-final appearance at the Melbourne Challenger in March was Udomchoke's best performance of 2009.

Somedev Devvarman
Seed #7
Age: 24
Country: India
Residence: Charlottesville, Virginia
Height/Weight: 5'11/160
Plays: Right-Handed
Turned Pro: 2008
Current World Ranking: 129
Career High Ranking: 129 (6/09)

Somedev Devvarman began competing in futures tournaments in India at age 17, and scored an impressive tournament win in 2004 at the F2 Championships in Kolkata. Rather than turning pro immediately, Devvarman accepted a tennis scholarship to the University of Virginia. It proved to be an excellent decision, as he would become one of the most successful players in college tennis history. After making a national final appearance in 2006, Devvarman won the 2007 NCAA Singles Championship by defeating Georgia Senior, and #1 ranked college player John Isner, who has gone on to

enjoy a solid professional career as well. Devvarman not only defended his championship in 2008, but also posted an unprecedented NCCA match record of 44-1. After losing in his first Wimbledon singles qualifier in early June of this year, Devvarman partnered with Russian Kevin Anderson, and was able to qualify for the main doubles draw at the All England Club.

Benedikt Dorsch
Seed #8
Age: 28
Country: Germany
Residence: Seehausen, Germany
Height/Weight: 5'10/185
Plays: Right Handed
Turned Pro: 2005
Current World Ranking: 136
Ranking Year End 2008: 207
Career High Ranking: 127

A tournament win is something that has eluded Benedikt Dorsch throughout his professional career, and 2009 has been a year of some of his closest chances of breaking that streak. "Well traveled" is an understatement of Dorsch's 2009 campaign. Since missing out on the Australian Open by one qualifying round in January, the German has reached a semi-final in Belgrade, a final in Bergamo Italy, and three quarter-final rounds, one on American soil in Louisiana, and the others in Israel, and Greece. A notable win for Seascaple Challenger fans was Dorsch's triumph in the Round of 16 over Kevin Kim in Rhodes, Greece. Kim, this year's returning champion, was defeated in straight sets 6-3, 6-2 by Dorsch. Expect a fiercely contested rematch if these two are to draw each other at any point in this year's event.