



MONTE-CARLO SQUASH CLASSIC LE MAG'

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FEATURE

MICHEL BALLERIO

TOP STORY

ALVES' EXPERIENCE PREVAILS

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SQUASH CLASSIC
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Classic 2025

The clash between the French number 1 and the young up-and-comer didn't quite live up to our expectations, mostly because Mélissa Alves did not give opponent the opportunity to express herself.

ALVES' EXPERIENCE PREVAILS

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Unbeaten against her fellow French players for almost 5 years, world No.19, Mélissa Alves extended the streak on Wednesday. From the get go, she imposed her presence on the court and her backhand drops were lethal for Lauren Baltayan who made quite a few errors – surely because she knew she had to take some risks to have a chance of winning. Alves reaches the semifinals as fresh as a daisy, having played less than an hour in her first two rounds.

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NUMBERS

The match lasted 34 minutes, and Lauren Baltayan was only ahead for two minutes (at 1-0 and 2-1 in game 1 then 1-0 and 3-2 in game 2). With such a scenario, it was difficult if not impossible to unsettle a player of Mélissa Alves' calibre.

MÉLISSA ALVES SPEAKING



I came super prepared for this match, focusing on myself and what I had to do. Playing against the young upcoming French girl was special, it would have been foolish to approach it like any other match. Having my best friend and my mum here is a bonus, it feels like being at home in French Guiana... I saw very early that Lauren was a little nervous and I tried to take advantage of that. I managed to impose my presence on court, and my backhand dropshots were efficient today. For me it was obvious to come here rather than playing the China Open. I wanted to get my revenge after losing in my first round last year, and the hosting conditions are always great.

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POST-MATCH DEBRIEF



"I don't need to analyze the match with them, they are already doing it," said national coach Yann Menegaux with a smile. We witnessed a very cool moment in the corridors of the Stade Louis II, with Lauren Baltayan asking her more experienced compatriot – author's note: unlike what I wrote yesterday, Alves is 31 and not 32 – for advice on the areas she needs to improve the most. "Team spirit has always been very important for me, and I want Lauren to become as strong as possible for the good of the French team," the French Guiana born told us.

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TOMLINSON BACK IN THE SEMIS

While Zeina Mickawy and Torrie Malik were in control of their match and will face each other in an explosive clash, Millie Tomlinson got the better of Alicia Mead in five games. She will meet Mélissa Alves in her third semi-final in Monaco.

[7] Millie TOMLINSON  bt [4] Alicia MEAD : 3-2
9-11, 11-7, 11-5, 2-11, 11-4

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“

I definitely thought the tactical side was important, but it was also a little bit mental, in the fifth certainly. The one who was implementing her game plan more effectively was dominating. Also, the rallies were longer at the start, and that normally is to my advantage. Even if I'm feeling pain, mentally, I can push through it. So I don't think being older makes a difference. I'm not sure who I am playing tomorrow... I think it's Melissa and the last time we played, she chopped me, so I have nothing to lose!

**Millie Tomlinson's quote
courtesy of Framboise
Gommendy**

[2] Zeina MICKAWY 🇸🇩 bt [9/16] Saskia BEINHARD 🇩🇪: 3-1
11-6, 7-11, 11-6, 11-2



Much better than yesterday, but still I felt the pressure in the second game, they were a couple of rallies in the middle which were a bit tough. And I opened up the court a bit too much. I didn't want to do the same than yesterday, it was in the back of my mind, and I didn't want the score to be too close. I tried to be a bit more

relaxed on court, I think I managed OK, except in the second game where I was a bit off. I managed the third and fourth really well, I kept my focus and my composure, I found my lines especially in the last game. I never played Torrie before, I know how hungry she is, and very energetic. I watched her play a couple of times before, but I'm going to watch her again and make a plan with my coach.

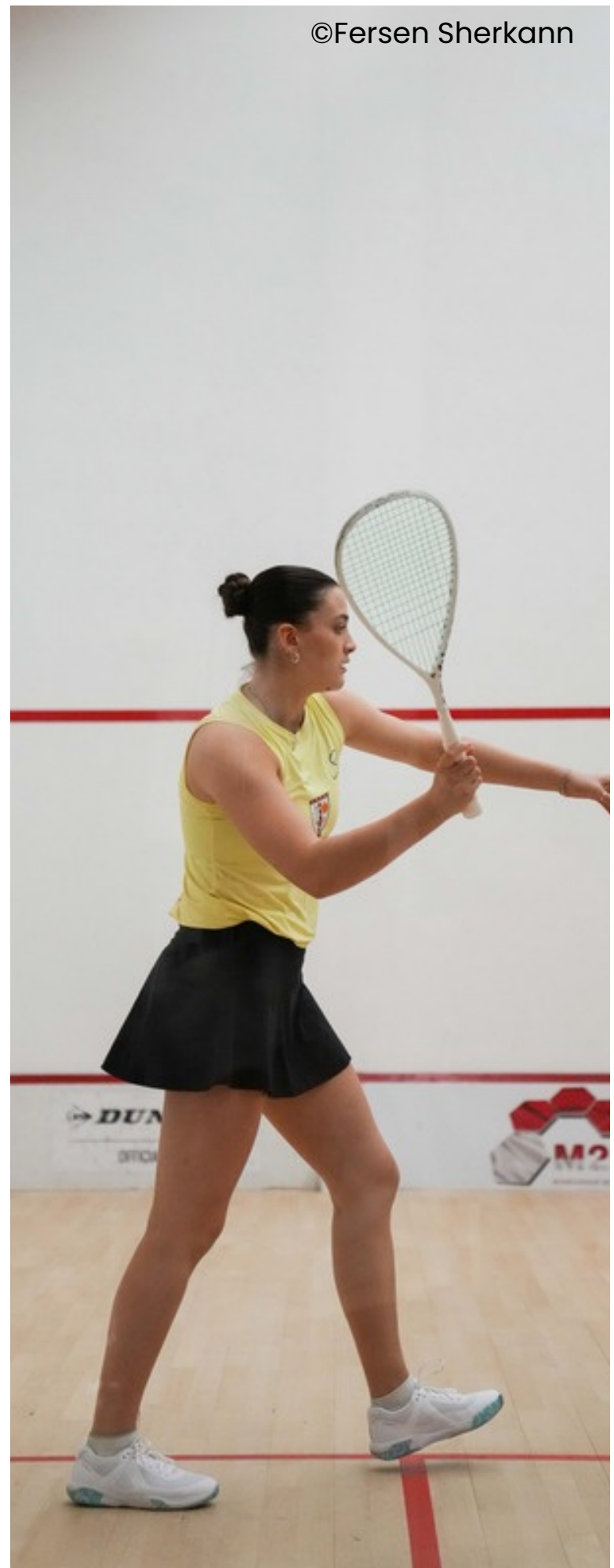
Zeina Mickawy's quote courtesy of Framboise Gommendy

[3] Torrie MALIK 🇬🇧 bt [9/16] Kaitlyn WATTS 🇦🇺 : 3-0
11-3, 11-6, 11-8



Yes, I think she was a bit shocked at the start but after that, she really gave it a big push, she had nothing to lose and started to understand my game a little bit more. She is a very good player, she is quick, but maybe she couldn't cope with the pace I was imposing. Also, my length was much better than yesterday and I was moving better. I'm looking forward to playing Zeina. Obviously she is an Egyptian, very aggressive. I need to watch her again tonight but I think I'll try and make her move around the court a lot, stretching her out as much as possible... And keeping the pace up... I've never played her before, and it's a good opportunity.

Torrie Malik's quote courtesy of Framboise Gommendy



SEMIS HERE WE COME

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[1] **Mélissa ALVES** 🇫🇷 **vs** [7] **Millie TOMLINSON** 🇬🇧
🕒 **THURSDAY, 6PM**



➡ Monte-Carlo is a go to event for both girls: 2022 winner Mélissa Alves is making her sixth appearance while it's the seventh for 2016 runner-up Millie Tomlinson.

➡ The Englishwoman's last title was back in 2018 (in France, at a 15k at the Club des Pyramides), while the French No.1 won three Copper titles in 2024/25.

✓ **FACT**

Their three previous meetings didn't go beyond two games: the first two were played with the BO3 format – one 2-love win each – and Alves retired in the second game in the French League playoffs this year.

SEMIS HERE WE COME

[3] Torrie MALIK  vs [2] Zeina MICKAWY 
🕒 THURSDAY, 7PM



- ➡ Mickawy won a Copper event in 2025, the Spanish Open, while Malik is yet to reach a final in this category.
- ➡ Torrie Malik is one of 9 girls within the current world top 50 that Zeina Mickawy has never faced.
- ➡ Zeina Mickawy was runner-up at the 2016 Classic at 19 y.o. – second youngest finalist ever behind Nouran Gohar.

✓ **FACT**

Torrie Malik has 4 brothers who also play in PSA (Curtis, Perry, Bailey and Heston)! Five siblings playing professionally, this is very likely to be unique all sports included.

PIC OF THE DAY

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It's a tradition at the Monte Carlo Classic, on Wednesday the pros are hitting with the local youngsters. This year we had Elise Romba, Breanne Flynn and Yasshmita Jadishkumar, for the delight of the kids.



MICHEL BALLERIO

Michel Ballerio is the new president of the local federation, but he's a familiar within the Monte-Carlo squash community. We caught up with a true squash lover, who's hardly missed a match this week.

©Fersen Sherkann



Mister President, can you tell us a little bit about your history with squash?

I started playing tennis at the prestigious Country Club, which is undoubtedly my favourite place in Monaco, then I switched to squash during my medical studies. My good friend Bruno Fissore, whom I took over as head of the Federation, and I were lucky enough to be trained by Scottish coach, who didn't have children and devoted a lot of time to helping us improve.

In the early 1980s, I won the French National championship “2è série” as well the French university championship, and I was ranked in the national top 15. In my generation, there were Denis Grozdanovitch and Michel Baulac. These were the early days of the French Federation, and we were kind of the pioneers (he laughs). Then I lived in the USA for several years, I was playing a bit of hardball overthere but squash never ceased to be my favourite sport.

Why do you love squash so much then?

Because it's very physically and mentally demanding, it's undoubtedly a very challenging sport. And I have to say that squash gave me some self-belief, I was more confident on court than I was during my medical exams! I was lucky enough to

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compete in several European Team Championships in the 1980s, at a time when Monaco sometimes finished ahead of major nations such as Italy. We even went to Sweden for three weeks for the World Team championships, which was quite an adventure for us where in our early twenties... I stopped playing for many years, mainly because I didn't have time with my job as a dentist. But I was never far from the club, and today my session with our coach Yves Tastet is one of the things I enjoyed the most in my week.

Michel Ballerio's presidency

I hadn't planned on taking over as head of the Federation, but I was asked and I said yes. My goal, and that of all the volunteers here, is to promote squash and increase the number of players. Yves is doing an amazing job, especially with the kids, with young people. He is an excellent coach and we can see how passionate he is.

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Among the other ways to develop the sport, there are the professional events, we have been hosting tournaments for a very long time. The Classic has become a very important date in the calendar for the association and the federation, and we would like to make it grow and upgrade it to a Bronze event. I have several locations in mind in Monaco that would be ideal for setting up glass court, but I don't want to say anything for now (he laughs). It's not rocket science, you need money and sponsors for such things. It's not easy, because I feel like there are more and more sports and we're facing tough competition, for example from padel, but we're determined to make it happen.

MONTE CARLO CLASSIC 2025 (COPPER, \$32,500)

Round of 32 November, 10		Quarterfinals November, 12	Semifinals November, 13	Final November, 14
Breanne FLYNN 	[1] Mélissa ALVES 	[1] Mélissa ALVES 	[1] Mélissa ALVES 	
11-9, 11-9, 12-10	11-5, 11-4, 11-3	11-7, 11-7, 11-6		
[9/16] Nadia PFISTER 	Breanne FLYNN 			
[9/16] Au Yeong WAI YHANN 	[WC] Kara LINCOU 	[8] Lauren BALTAYAN 		
11-9, 11-9, 13-11				
[WC] Kara LINCOU 	Round of 16			
	[8] Lauren BALTAYAN 			
			6pm	
Asia HARRIS 	[7] Millie TOMLINSON 	[7] Millie TOMLINSON 		
11-9, 11-9, 9-11, 14-16, 12-10	11-5, 9-11, 11-7, 11-6			
[9/16] Y. JADISHKUMAR 	Asia HARRIS 	9-11, 11-7, 11-5, 2-11, 11-4	[7] Millie TOMLINSON 	
[9/16] Enora VILLARD 	[9/16] Enora VILLARD 	[4] Alicia MEAD 		
11-9, 11-9, 11-6	11-7, 11-5, 7-11, 11-4			
Sofia MATEOS 	[4] Alicia MEAD 			
				
	[3] Torrie MALIK 	[3] Torrie MALIK 		7pm
Katerina TYCOVA 	11-9, 11-8, 11-9	11-3, 11-6, 11-8	[3] Torrie MALIK 	
11-3, 11-8, 12-10	Katerina TYCOVA 			
[9/16] Alison THOMSON 				
[9/16] Kaitlyn WATTS 	[9/16] Kaitlyn WATTS 	[9/16] Kaitlyn WATTS 		
11-5, 11-4, 11-5	8-11, 11-4, 11-1, 7-11, 11-9			
Sarah CARDWELL 	[5] Emilia SOINI 			
			7pm	
	[6] Jessica VAN DER WALT 	[9/16] Saskia BEINHARD 		
[WC] Elise ROMBA 	14-12, 11-1, 11-6	11-6, 7-11, 11-6, 11-2	[2] Zeina MICKAWY 	
8-11, 11-8, 11-5, 11-8	[9/16] Saskia BEINHARD 			
[9/16] Saskia BEINHARD 				
[9/16] Madison LYON 	[9/16] Madison LYON 	[2] Zeina MICKAWY 		
7-11, 13-11, 11-3, 8-11, 11-3				
Tessa TER SLUIS 	9-11, 5-11, 11-7, 12-10, 11-4			
	[2] Zeina MICKAWY 			

L'ÉLITE MONDIALE DU SQUASH FÉMININ

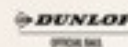
28^{ÈME} MONTE-CARLO
SQUASH CLASSIC



10-14 NOVEMBRE 2025 - STADE LOUIS II



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