

1. **burnish** (verb) – enhance, improve, boost/raise.
2. **stand for** (phrasal verb) – remain valid/effective, remain unaltered, exist.
3. **surpass** (verb) – be greater than, exceed, excel.
4. **rack up** (phrasal verb) – win, achieve, attain/accomplish.
5. **let alone** (phrase) – to say nothing of; not to mention.
6. **take turns** (phrase) – change, alternate, work in sequence.
7. **relentlessly** (adverb) – steadily, firmly/determinedly, continuously in an intense way.
8. **exalted** (adjective) – high, elevated, prominent/dignified.
9. **unparalleled** (adjective) – unprecedented, unequalled, exceptional.
10. **whopping** (adjective) – huge, massive, very large.
11. **bag** (verb) – win, get/secure.
12. **spirited** (adjective) – energetic, dashing, passionate/determined.
13. **tout** (verb) – praised, recommend, support/commend.
14. **heir apparent** (noun) – successor, next in line.
15. **dirt** (noun) – clay, soil, earth.
16. **beyond** (adjective) – in excess of, above.
17. **on the back of** (phrase) – as a result of, after/subsequent; in support of.
18. **under a cloud** (phrase) – under suspicion, discredited/disgraced, shamed.
19. **endure** (verb) – experience, suffer, tolerate.
20. **deflating** (adjective) – humiliating, dispiriting, discouraging/disheartening.
21. **lead-up** (noun) – circumstances, conditions, situation.
22. **on the cusp of** (noun) – a point where something will change from one state to another.
23. **beloved** (adjective) – loved, liked, dearest.
24. **put together** (phrasal verb) – set up, join up, patch up.
25. **streak** (noun) – period, spell, stretch/time.
26. **turn in** (phrasal verb) – achieve, attain/reach, register/record
27. **athleticism** (noun) – the state of being an agile, fit, strong athlete.
28. **belie** (verb) – contradict, be at odds with, call into question, show to be false.
29. **bear the brunt** (phrase) – to suffer or endure the worst part of something (force/burden/pressure) when a very bad or unpleasant thing happens.
30. **succumb** (verb) – yield, give in, submit/surrender.
31. **underrated** (adjective) – undervalued, underestimated, downgraded.
32. **lethal** (adjective) – very accurate, precise, on target.
33. **near** (adverb) – almost, practically, virtually.
34. **constant** (noun) – consistent, unchanging, steady thing.
35. **throw up** (phrasal verb) – produce something.
36. **old-school** (adjective) – traditional, old-fashioned, orthodox.
37. **murderous** (adjective) – hard, laborious, rigorous,.
38. **first-strike** (tennis) (noun) – (in tennis) It means statistically, a player hits a more aggressive shot within the first four shots of a rally, is more likely to win the point.
39. **ruthless** (adjective) – unforgiving, unrelenting, unfeeling/unsympathetic.
40. **unnerve** (verb) – discourage, dishearten/disperit, stun.

## A dozen in one: On Nadal's French Open win

## Nadal burnishes his greatness in an era of greats with a record at the French Open

Roy Emerson's record for most Grand Slam titles won by a male singles player stood for a good 33 years. It was in the summer of 1967 that he won the last of his 12 trophies and only in 2000 did Pete Sampras surpass it. But little did anybody expect a man to rack up an equivalent number at just one Major, let alone in a span of just 15 years. On the Parisian clay on Sunday, Rafael Nadal did just that, capturing his 12th **French Open** and 18th Major overall. This is an era in which along with Nadal, Roger Federer, the all-time leader in Majors (20), and Novak Djokovic (15), have taken turns to relentlessly redefine the limits of greatness. But even by those exalted standards, Nadal's achievement is unparalleled. His record at Roland-Garros is a whopping 93-2, and he has bagged more trophies there than any man or woman has at a single Grand Slam. The victory didn't come easy; he had to overcome a spirited Dominic Thiem, widely touted, and quite rightly, as the Spaniard's heir apparent on the surface. The 25-year-old Austrian had in fact beaten Nadal on dirt in each of the last four seasons and was a much improved player from the time he lost the 2018 final. But the challenge of mastering a physically fit and mentally sharp Nadal is beyond most.

The triumph also came on the back of a testing few months for Nadal. The 33-year-old ended 2018 under the cloud of injury and had to endure a deflating loss to Djokovic in the final of the **Australian Open** this January. In the lead-up to the French Open, he was on the cusp of not making a final on his beloved clay for the first time since 2004, until he put together a winning streak at the Italian Open. But once in Paris, he was a transformed man and turned in what could arguably be his most complete performance. From the backcourt he displayed the kind of athleticism and shot-making that belied his age. Federer bore the brunt of it as he succumbed in straight sets in the semifinals. His play in the forecourt, an underrated part of his game, was lethal, coming in only for the assured kill, as the 23 out of 27 points won at the net against Thiem indicates. Even as Nadal established himself as a near constant among men, the women's game threw up yet another surprise winner, this time in Australia's Ashleigh Barty. The 23-year-old's style is delightfully old-school, with a beautifully constructed point preferred to murderous first-strike tennis. Combined with a ruthless calm, she completely unnerved the 19-year-old Marketa Vondrousova on Saturday to end her nation's long wait for a new slam champion.