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Ones to Watch in 2020

Young & improving players to follow in the 2020 season – and beyond...

An exclusive *Ones to Watch* report

By

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The early bird catches the worm...

Since our first annual Ones to Watch report was published ahead of the 2017 season, our lists of players to follow have flagged up several youngsters that have gone on to win big tournaments – at big prices...

Including:

- Jelena Ostapenko (French Open champion, **100/1**)
- Naomi Osaka (US Open champion, **50/1**. WTA Indian Wells champion, **125/1**)
- Alexander Zverev (ATP Rome Masters champion, **25/1**)
- Karen Khachanov (ATP Paris Masters champion, **40/1**)
- Ashleigh Barty (French Open champion, **22/1**)

As well as breakthrough players making finals and finishing runner-up, at huge Each Way prices:

- Borna Coric (ATP Shanghai Masters runner-up, **100/1**)
- Stefanos Tsitsipas (ATP Madrid Masters runner-up, **25/1**)
- Daria Kasatkina (WTA Indian Wells runner-up, **80/1**)
- Daniil Medvedev (US Open runner-up, **100/1**)
- Marketa Vondrousova (French Open runner-up, **40/1**)

Time for change...

In 2019, six of the eight men's Grand Slam finalists were the long-established big boys. And between them, Novak Djokovic, Roger Federer & Rafael Nadal ultimately took home the four biggest trophies.

Djokovic, Federer & Nadal have now scooped up the last 12 Grand Slams.

But by the end of summer 2020, Djokovic will have turned 33, Federer will be 39 and Nadal will be 34...

The new kids are arriving on the block...

The 2019 season ended with **Stefanos Tsitsipas** winning the ATP Finals. He was an **underdog** in the Outright Winner market, at double-figure odds of **18/1**. And at just 21 years of age – he's **young**, too.

Going after underdogs and young up-and-coming players is what we'll all about at *Ones to Watch*...

Tsitsipas was on our *Ones to Watch in 2019* list.

Daniil Medvedev – another player from our 2019 report – made the US Open final, having been a 100/1 outsider at the start of the summer. Medvedev is still only 23 years old.

And that's just the men's game...

In the women's, 2019 saw three first-time Grand Slam finalists – with two first-time winners.

Legend of the game Serena Williams hasn't won a title for two years (Australian Open 2017). Like Federer, Serena will turn 39 years of age during the 2020 season.

At 18 years of age, **Bianca Andreescu** was a **100/1** winner at Indian Wells in March. Turning 19 over the summer, the Canadian went on to lift the US Open title – beating Serena in the final – from odds of **33/1** in the spring.

And three of our other *Ones to Watch* names delivered on the big stage, too:

Marketa Vondrousova was our early-bird, **40/1** underdog pick for the French Open 2019 (runner-up).

Ashleigh Barty (22/1) beat Vondrousova in the French Open final – with Barty going on to finish as the year-end World No.1. The Australian featured in our *Ones to Watch in 2018* report.

Naomi Osaka was named in our *Ones to Watch in 2017* file. Osaka has since won two Grand Slams, the US Open 2018 (at **50/1**) and the Australian Open 2019 (at **14/1**). The Japanese star also hit No.1 in the world.

As I write, Vondrousova is still just 20 years of age. Barty is 23. Osaka is 22.

The future is bright. And we're looking to shine in 2020 with our underdogs & youngsters approach once again. See below for 10 names to watch out for in particular.

Big prospects...

Another reason to go after the youngsters is the prices...

When it comes to betting on the big-name players, you certainly won't get any gifts from the bookies.

For example, Djokovic was just 6/5 (2.20) for the Australian Open 2019. And Nadal was odds-on for the French Open, at just 10/11 (1.91).

Serena was 8/1 (9.00) at best for Wimbledon 2019 and 5/1 (6.00) for the US Open – and lost both in the final.

Compare those prices to some of the 'Ones to Watch' figures mentioned above: 25/1, 50/1, even 100/1 shots getting to finals – and winning.

To make money from tennis, you need to know about the stars of the future...

As I said this time last year (and the year before, and the year before that), I'm not writing the current star names off *just* yet. But it pays to be alert to the newcomers...

We will see a changing of the guard sooner or later. Some of the giants of the game are on their way out. New, young blood will take their place.

There will be gaps in the market. Presenting in-the-know and early-bird bettors with the chance to cash-in, often at big prices...

There are young, hungry, new & improving players about to burst through. The household names of the future. And the sooner you spot them – the more likely you are to win big:

- Take Djokovic, for example. He was a 33/1 underdog when winning his first Grand Slam title – the Australian Open in 2008 – when just 20 years old
- Naomi Osaka won the US Open aged 20 as a 50/1 outsider

Ones to Watch in 2020

With our *Ones to Watch in 2020* list, the intention is to look beyond the players at the top of the current rankings. To find players **who are not yet in the Top 10** – but could be heading there in the not-too-distant future.

Some of the names on the list below have already provided payouts on the Men's **ATP** and Women's **WTA** Tours. I expect these players to earn more success and provide more payouts in 2019 and beyond.

And one or two of these could even make the big breakthrough at **Grand Slam** level – a headline-grabbing run at the **Australian Open, French Open, Wimbledon** or **US Open** can catapult a player up the rankings and into the spotlight. Let's see if we can pick one or two out beforehand...

Here is my list of young & improving players to follow in the 2020 season...

Not every highly-rated teenager will go on to have a glittering Pro career. Not every Wimbledon Junior winner will go on to shine in the real thing...

But some will. And some can certainly win titles on the weekly ATP & WTA Tours – taking out a few well-known names on the way, too...

The players below are all showing promising signs of progression.

Some are already making a few waves on the Tour. And all could climb up the rankings and make a significant breakthrough in 2020.

We'll start with the **Men's** list:

Jannik Sinner

Age: 18

Country: Italy

End-of-2019 World Ranking: #78

Jannik Sinner is just 18 years old but is already approaching 100 career match wins. The 6'2" right-hander is shaping up to be a very promising all-court player: of his 98 wins, 39 have been on clay, 25 on hard courts, 32 indoors and 2 on grass.

The young Italian put himself on the radar on the main tour in the second half of 2018, reaching the semi finals at ATP Antwerp and then lifting the trophy at the end-of-season ATP 'Next Gen' Finals (for players aged 21 and under) indoors in Milan in November. Those results helped position Jannik as the youngest player currently in the Men's Top 100 rankings. He won the 2019 award for ATP Newcomer of the Year.

On the lower-tier ATP Challenger Tour, Sinner reached four finals in 2019 – and won three of them. A first full ATP Tour title beckons in 2020.

Felix Auger-Aliassime

Age: 19

Country: Canada

End-of-2019 World Ranking: #21

Standing tall at 6'4" and with a lean, athletic frame, **Felix Auger-Aliassime** looks every inch the modern young tennis player. Greg Rusedski said the Tennis Canada team had told him they'd never had a young player that was as good an athlete as Auger-Aliassime.

As well as exceptional speed and movement, Felix also has an array of shots at his disposal and a level of point construction and calmness that marks him out as having a smart head on his young shoulders.

With a breakthrough run to the Miami Masters semi final in March, the Canadian teenager announced himself on the big stage.

In the Juniors, Auger-Aliassime won the Boys' US Open 2016 and also came within a whisker of winning the French Open (runner-up 2016). In 2017, Felix won the ATP Lyon Challenger event as a 16-year-old, making him one of the youngest ever players to win a title on the lower-tier Challenger tour. Previous teenage Challenger winners include Rafael Nadal and Juan-Martin del Potro – both of whom went on to win Grand Slam trophies before they had turned 21...

In February 2019, Felix reached his first Senior-level ATP final, finishing a 50/1 runner-up in Rio de Janeiro on clay. He went on to reach two more finals in the season – runner-up at both ATP Lyon and Stuttgart. As with Sinner, a first main tour title is likely to come along sooner rather than later.

Fun fact: Auger-Aliassime has the same birthday as Roger Federer (8th August).

Hubert Hurkacz

Age: 22

Country: Poland

End-of-2019 World Ranking: #37

2019 proved to be a breakthrough year for this ball-slapping Pole. **Hubert Hurkacz** won a maiden ATP title, lifting the Winston-Salem trophy on hard courts in August, as a 16/1 shot. Standing 6'5", this is another tall young player with a big serve. Hurkacz averaged 7.3 aces per match in 2019, but that number could rise to double-figures as he continues to improve.

Having watched this guy play a few times he seems very competitive and determined – solid qualities for grinding out victories on the tour. Don't be surprised to see Hubert crack the Top 20 in 2020. And there's nothing to say that he won't be a Top 10 player at some point.

Reilly Opelka

Age: 22

Country: USA

End-of-2019 World Ranking: #36

Sitting one spot ahead of Hurkacz in the 2019 year-end rankings, **Reilly Opelka** is another tall young man with a big serve – and this guy has the biggest one of the lot...

At a massive 6'11" and with a ferocious serve to boot, Opelka is the natural successor to fellow American, John Isner. The 6'10" Isner is 34 years old now. Opelka ended 2019 in 1st place on the Most Aces table, ahead of Isner in 2nd. Both men averaged 21 aces per match, and won 91%+ of their service games. Like Isner, Opelka will be typecast as a big server – but can also play a bit and has more variety in his ground shots than you might at first glance imagine.

Opelka won a first ATP title in 2019, taking the trophy on the fast indoor courts at the New York Open (14/1). He also made semi finals on hard courts at Basel (indoors) and at Atlanta and Tokyo. He has the serve and the game to build on that success in 2020.

On to the **Women** now, where six players make the list...

Cori Gauff

Age: 15

Country: USA

End-of-2019 World Ranking: #68

At just 15 years of age and after a headline-making run to the 4th Round at Wimbledon, **Cori Gauff** has to be the first name on the list of women to watch in 2020. She's the youngest player in the Women's Top 100.

Until she turns 16 on 13th March 2020, 'Coco' is limited to how many tournaments she can play on the main tour. As it stands – at the end of 2019 – the American teenager has played 11 of her 14 maximum allowed tournament entries. She'll be at the Australian Open in January, and then at two more events where her ranking allows her to qualify – with the prestigious Indian Wells at the start of March likely to be one of them.

Gauff has remarkable poise and confidence for such a young age, and has the fitness and skills to go on and win some very big trophies in her career. It's dangerous to hype up a 15-year-old too much. But right now, Coco does look to have it all going for her in terms of chances of future success.

Sofia Kenin

Age: 21

Country: USA

End-of-2019 World Ranking: #14

Sofia Kenin is a player I was following keenly last season. She featured no fewer than seven times in my pre-tournament Outright Winner picks – twice as a 100/1 outsider.

This strong-willed, highly competitive American went on to reach four finals in 2019 and won three of them (at odds of 18/1, 20/1 and 7/1).

'Sonya' is on course to break into the Top 10 soon, and a big Grand Slam run could be in the pipeline in 2020.

Like our *Ones to Watch in 2019* player Dayana Yastremska, Kenin is a fierce competitor who plays to win, expects to win – and isn't afraid to show it. That kind of mental

strength and court presence can intimidate opponents and turning losing situations into winning ones. Kenin is a player to keep on your side. She's already beaten the likes of Serena Williams, Naomi Osaka and Ashleigh Barty – past, recent and current World No1's.

Karolina Muchova

Age: 23

Country: Czech Republic

End-of-2019 World Ranking: #21

At 23 years of age, **Karolina Muchova** is the 'oldest' player on our 2020 list. But you never know when the breakthrough is going to come in tennis, and 23 still leaves many years for this extremely talented player to succeed...

Muchova ended 2019 at a career-high ranking of No.21 in the world. In April, the smart right-hander reached the WTA Prague final on clay as a 50/1 shot, finishing runner-up. Then in September, Karolina claimed a maiden tour trophy with a 12/1 win on hard courts in Seoul.

As those results suggest, Muchova has the game to be a danger on all surfaces. As it stands, almost half of all her match wins have come on clay. With her range of shots and point-construction, that's no surprise. A great 'onboard computer' and the ability to think fast and be creative on court also mark Muchova out as one to watch on grass and at Wimbledon...

One of the highest compliments we can pay this rising Czech star is to compare her to the now-retired former Wimbledon finalist, Agnieszka Radwanska. The Polish player was famed for making up for her lack of power with a mesmerising array of drop-shots, lobs and slices – winning the WTA Shot of the Year award year after year. Muchova looks set to take up that mantle.

Amanda Anisimova

Age: 18

Country: USA

End-of-2019 World Ranking: #24

Back to the teenagers now and another USA representative with big prospects in the sport is **Amanda Anisimova**...

Back in September 2018 we originally flagged up Anisimova as a 150/1 outsider for the US Open 2019. But tragedy struck for the youngster, with the sudden death of her father and coach. Amanda pulled out of the tournament. She returned to tennis on the Asian Swing of the tour at the start of autumn, teaming up with Carlos Rodriguez – the former coach of multiple Grand Slam winner, Justine Henin.

Having won a couple of lower-tier titles in 2017, in March of 2018 a then 16-year-old Anisimova got her breakthrough match win, with a straight sets victory over two-time Wimbledon champion Petra Kvitova at Indian Wells. Turning 17, Anisimova then reached her first WTA final, finishing runner-up in Hiroshima. In 2019 she went one better, winning a first title at Bogota. More should follow from now on.

A Junior US Open champ, hard courts are Amanda's surface of choice. Born in the States to Russian parents, Anisimova has a determined look about her, and the signs are that she has the physical hitting power to stay with the more established names. A run to the French Open semi finals showed she can do damage on the clay, too.

Veronika Kudermetova

Age: 22

Country: Russia

End-of-2019 World Ranking: #41

No 'ones to watch' list is complete without a young Russian...

Veronika Kudermetova fits the bill as one to follow into the 2020 season. The 22-year-old finished 2019 in fine form, blazing her way into the Top 50 having finished ranked No.112 in 2018, No.174 in 2017 and No.202 in 2016. That arc of progression can continue in the new season.

Kudermetova ended the 2019 campaign with two semi finals and a quarter final from her last five tournaments of the year. She can carry that confidence and form through. As you'd expect from a Russian player, she excels on hard courts. Not the most fashionable of names, but Kudermetova could spring a surprise or two in 2020.

Iga Swiatek

Age: 18

Country: Poland

End-of-2019 World Ranking: #60

Iga Swiatek had a breakthrough year in 2019, rising from No.174 in the world to as high as No.49, before injury struck after the US Open. In pre-season training for 2020, the teenager has posted that she's pain-free and happy to be playing again.

Swiatek made a first WTA final in April, finishing a 20/1 runner-up on clay at Lugano. She also made a few waves at the French Open, reaching the 4th Round before being well-beaten by the reigning champion Simona Halep.

With a powerful game and some world-class shot-making in her locker, Swiatek can be expected to continue to improve and hold her own against higher-ranked players in the months to come. If she can stay fit, Iga can put together some big tournaments runs in 2020 and beyond.

Honourable mentions....

Two other young players get a nod for the 2020 season. These two have already made their name to varying extents – both Top 10 players as I write in December 2019 – but there should be more to come...

- **Matteo Berrettini** ended 2019 at a career-best No.8 in the rankings, winning two ATP titles. He ended 2018 at No.54. Standing 6'5", the 23-year-old Italian is yet another big-serving young man on the tour. A run to the US Open semi finals suggest he's one to look out for at the Grand Slams
- **Bianca Andreescu** took the women's tour by storm in 2019 – rising from No.152 in the world at the end of 2018 all the way into the Top 5, thanks to a remarkable 48-7 match win-loss record. That includes four titles for the 19-year-old Canadian – with a magnificent Grand Slam triumph at the US Open. The bar is now set high for more big trophies – as long as she can stay fit

More to come throughout the season...

Those 10 names make up my *Ones to Watch in 2020* list. They are 10 young & improving players that I'm earmarking to have a good season.

But the list is by no means the end of our work...

Throughout the season, I'll keep you up-to-date with the latest players in form on the weekly ATP and WTA tours – helping you hunt out big value Each Way opportunities in Outright Winner markets, and players to profit from in the individual match markets, too.

And of course, when the four big Grand Slam events come along – Australian Open, Wimbledon, French Open and US Open – I'll be helping you find ways to cash-in, too.

Enjoy the 2020 season. I'll be in touch again soon...

Tom Wilson

Ones to Watch

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