



It's the big one: Wimbledon ticket prices through the roof for Federer v Nadal clash

Will Humphries

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Roger Federer and Rafael Nadal meet on Centre Court at Wimbledon today
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Roger Federer and Rafael Nadal have not played each other at Wimbledon since their epic five-set final in 2008 went down as one of the greatest tennis matches.

Not surprisingly, their rematch in today's semi-final has caused the resale value of Centre Court tickets to rocket to between £7,000 and £13,000 per seat. The same tickets cost £185 in the public ballot.



The Crown actress Claire Foy was appropriately in the royal box at Wimbledon yesterday
KARWAI TANG/GETTY IMAGES

When Andy Murray beat Novak Djokovic in the 2013 final, a pair of debenture seats was listed before the final for £71,000 on a resale ticket site. However, when Murray failed to reach the final in 2015 the cheapest tickets for the final on the Stubhub website were being sold for £4,366 each. For the semi-final between Nadal, 33, and Federer, 37, the cheapest resale on the same website is £7,100 each.

The only tickets that Wimbledon allows to be transferred or resold on the open market are debenture tickets. A debenture is a £50,000 five-year season pass to Centre Court or No 1 Court during the championships, allowing the All England Club to make improvements such as the roof on No 1 court this year.

Debenture holders on Centre Court are guaranteed a prime seat for every day of the competition for five years and access to exclusive bars, restaurants and other facilities within the grounds.

Claire-Estelle Bertrand, from the Wimbledon Debenture Holders website, said the pairing of Federer and Nadal and the fact that the Cricket World Cup final clashes with the Wimbledon final, had driven up interest and prices for the semi-final.

She told *The Times*: “The surge for semi-final tickets came when we were in the last 16 and it looked more and more likely that Rafa and Roger would play each other. We have a relationship with our debenture holders and liaise with them to try to keep the prices as reasonable as possible, whereas on other sites the seller can be someone who has bought up a load of tickets and can push the prices much higher.”

There had been complaints from people who had bought tickets on resale websites only to find they were not debenture tickets and not valid.

“We only sell tickets that we actually have,” she said. “The other places take the money upfront, say you’ve got a seat in a good position and you might find that you’re right up in the gods. We tell the customer the block and location and only then is the transaction confirmed.”

The 2008 final was the longest Wimbledon final in history at four hours and 48 minutes but was plagued by rain, something that will not be repeated this year. Nadal eventually ended Federer’s five-year reign as champion and became the first man since Bjorn Borg in 1980 to win the French Open and Wimbledon titles back to back.

The All England Lawn Tennis Club said that it had no objection to debenture holders selling their seats for profit. It said that the sale of debentures helped to keep prices down for ordinary fans.

Federer reclaimed his crown a year later and has revealed that the net from that win was his most prized piece of memorabilia.

His five-set victory against Andy Roddick was his 15th major title, breaking the grand slam record held by Pete Sampras.

The Swiss champion told *The Times* that his souvenir of “a magical day” remained stored at his Swiss chalet. “It’s still rolled up. I’ve been waiting to put it up somewhere. You can’t just put it up in your living room, across the window or something. You need to have the right place for it. It’s pretty big you know,” he said. “I was wondering if I could put it in the garage but I did something else there. Anyway, it’s still there. It’s ready to be used.” The idea to take the net came after Nadal asked to be given the net after his 2008 win.

The 2009 final took four hours and 17 minutes and contained the most games of any grand slam final, with Federer defeating the American 16-14 in the final set.



Wimbledon Tennis