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Novak Djokovic officially out of US Open due to vaccination status

By [Marc Berman](#)

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Novak Djokovic officially withdrew from the U.S. Open on Thursday after deciding not to get vaccinated against COVID-19.

Since Djokovic won Wimbledon last month, it has been known his appearance at the U.S. Open, which will begin Monday, was in serious doubt. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has not wavered from its policy that unvaccinated non-American citizens are banned from coming to the United States. Djokovic had given no indication he'd get a shot.

“Sadly, I will not be able to travel to NY this time for US Open,” Djokovic [wrote in a statement on Twitter](#). “Thank you #NoleFam for your messages of love and support. Good luck to my fellow players! I’ll keep in good shape and positive spirit and wait for an opportunity to compete again. See you soon tennis world!”

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Novak Djokovic during the 2021 US Open final.

Getty Images

The USTA did not lobby the CDC to change the ruling, even if it hurts the tournament.

“Novak is a great champion and it is very unfortunate that he will be unable to compete at the 2022 U.S. Open, as he is unable to enter the country due to the federal government’s vaccination policy for non-U.S. citizens,” U.S. Open tournament director Stacey Allaster said in a statement. “We look forward to welcoming Novak back at the 2023 U.S. Open.”

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Djokovic, whose bid for a historic Grand Slam ended at the U.S. Open last September, has won 21 majors, trailing Rafael Nadal by one. The vaccinated Spaniard is now a top favorite in Flushing despite being rusty after abdominal surgery.

Nadal got a sweet draw with a nice pathway to the semifinals. There could be a marquee match at Arthur Ashe Stadium if Nadal meets 23rd-seeded American Francis Tiafoe in the fourth round. Andrey Rublev is Nadal's biggest quarterfinal roadblock.

"Rafa should get the semis," VSI tennis analyst Gill Alexander said. "It's set up nicely."

With no male player on a hot run, Nadal could be the one, thanks to Djokovic's decision. With a championship, Nadal would tie Serena Williams at 23 majors.

Novak Djokovic @DjokerNole · [Follow](#)

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"The biggest thing for [Novak] is his personal risk-taking," McEnroe said. "Rafa, if he were to win this he would be two ahead of me in terms of the overall Grand Slam wins. And he's talked about wanting to be at the top of the heap and the greatest ever, which I respect he has the guts to say that."