

## Australian Open 2012: How did Novak Djokovic become the ultimate athlete?

By the time Novak Djokovic collapsed victorious onto the court at Melbourne Park in the early hours of Monday morning, he had spent 11 of the previous 54 hours on court.



Endurance: Djokovic played for 11 hours in three days Photo: REUTERS

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The five-set marathon against Andy Murray was followed just 43 hours later by an even more taxing another six-hour epic against Rafael Nadal. His victory must count as one of the more remarkable feats of endurance in any sport. So how does Djokovic - once mocked as a hypochondriac by Andy Roddick - scale such heights?

### Gluten free diet

In July 2010, Djokovic hired nutritionist Igo Cetojevic, who quickly discovered that the Serb suffered from Coeliac Disease and thus could not eat gluten. With this substance banned from his diet, Djokovic turned into a more vibrant athlete almost immediately. He has won four grand slams since that change in his diet.

### **CVAC pod**

Djokovic has used a CVAC Pod - a pressurised chamber that simulates high altitude and compresses muscles at intervals - for the last year. The CVAC Systems company that makes the £50,000, egg-shaped pod insists that spending 20 minutes in the machine three times a week can improve athletic performance. "I think it really helps — not with muscle but more with recovery after an exhausting set," Djokovic told the Wall Street Journal.



"It's like a spaceship. It's very interesting technology."

### **Training regime**

Djokovic, like all top players, now takes time out of his calendar for punishing fitness work away from the court. Dr Karl Cook, performance manager at the Lawn Tennis Association explained: "Someone like Djokovic probably has 10 year of serious physical conditioning under his belt at this stage. That is certainly required these days to develop the physical endurance to win grand slams.

"They now dedicate periods of time in the year to work primarily on the physical aspects of the game. Djokovic will have come out of November having spent not only many hours on the court but also many hours off the work working on physical development.

Three intense interval sessions in a week, three heavy lifting sessions in a week and lots of heavy drilling on the court adds upto 20 hours or more of serious work. And someone like Djokovic is renowned for his diet and his recovery, and something like that, over 20 years, produces the spectacle you saw on Saturday."

Read the article at:

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/sport/tennis/9048965/Australian-Open-2012-How-did-Novak-Djokovic-become-the-ultimate-athlete.html>