

from [Los Angeles Times](#)  
by **Elliott Almond**



PARIS — Between them, they have played in 30 Grand Slam event finals. They have been part of tennis' elite for so long, they have come to symbolize the game.

But on the red clay here at Roland Garros Stadium, playing against opponents who have never experienced the quarterfinals of a major tournament, Stefan Edberg and Ivan Lendl were defeated.

That they would lose in the French Open in Paris was expected, perhaps inevitable. But in Tuesday's first round?

Edberg, seeded third, was thought to have a chance to win the one Grand Slam tournament that has eluded him. But he had 18 double faults in losing to fellow Swede Henrik Holm, 7-5, 7-6 (7-1), 6-7 (7-2), 6-7 (10-8), 6-4, in a 4-hour 4-minute marathon.

Holm, 25, has yet to win a tournament, and had lost all three previous matches against Edberg.

Lendl, a four-time French Open champion who was unseeded and unprepared, lost in the first round for the second consecutive year, this time to Arnaud Boetsch of France, 6-4, 6-3, 6-4.

He then withdrew from next month's Wimbledon tournament, citing a recurring back problem.

"It is a very complicated thing and I am hoping to get better with it," said Lendl, 34. "It was very disappointing because I have been feeling good for a while with it and then all of a sudden just didn't."

Edberg, 28, thought he had overcome his struggles as he prepared for the French Open this month, but lost in the first round here for the second time.

"I don't know where I lost it," he said.

It was not so much Edberg's loss as Holm's victory.

Holm, who reached the third round of the last two Grand Slam events, savored his victory.

When a tournament official warned reporters, "Last question," during a news conference, Holm responded, "(But) I need the publicity!"

If he continues playing as he did Tuesday, publicity will be the least of his concerns.

When Edberg rallied to force a fifth set by winning a long, error-filled fourth-set tiebreaker, Holm did not fold, although it seemed he might.

During the set, Holm yelled at the chair umpire when a call went against him as he trailed 2-1. After interrupting play for nearly a minute, he finally bowed to the umpire and said, "Thank you," continuing to insist that the ball had been out.

But it was Edberg, calmly waiting for Holm to end his tirade, who cracked. He double-faulted on his next serve. Holm broke for 2-2, but Edberg was not going away quietly, and outlasted his opponent in the third tiebreaker.

Afterward, Holm said he was trying to remain calm before the start of the decisive set.

"Just concentrating," he said. "Finally, I made some unbelievable returns."

And that's what it took to overcome Edberg. Even at match point, he continued to battle.

On the first match point, Holm lofted a nice lob over Edberg's head in the center of the court. Edberg reached with his backhand and got the ball, which hit the tape and barely made it over the net.

"That was a good jump," said Holm, who promptly gained another match point with a forehand winner.

This time, Edberg was out of luck. After a long rally, Holm rifled a shot down the line and all Edberg could do was watch.

His next step was toward the sideline.