

Sharapova Beats Ivanovic to Win Brisbane International

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Maria Sharapova beat Ana Ivanovic in the final of the Brisbane International on Saturday in a display that bodes well for her chances at the Australian Open.

It has been seven years since Sharapova won her only Australian Open title but if she can take her form from Brisbane to Melbourne, a second title does not seem out of the question.

Sharapova had to work hard to beat Ivanovic, coming from behind to beat her 6-7(4) 6-3 6-3, but the Serbian is a good measuring stick.

Sharapova not only beat Ivanovic in the 2008 Australian Open final but both women are in devastating form heading towards the first grand slam of the season, starting on Jan. 19.

The Russian dropped just nine games in getting to the final while Ivanovic showed nerves of steel to see off her opponents to join Sharapova, ranked No. 2 in the world.

It was a match that could have gone either way, but Sharapova proved too strong in the

deciding third set at the Pat Rafter Arena.

Winning the Brisbane International provided Sharapova with her 34th WTA career title and her fifth in the last nine months, a red-hot span in which she also captured a second French Open and a first China Open.

The 27-year-old has won at least one title every year since 2003, an unbroken streak of 15 years.

For Ivanovic, who has begun a resurgence up the world rankings in the past year, the pain of losing was compounded by an abdominal strain that forced her to seek medical attention but is unlikely to disrupt her Australian Open campaign.

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