

Citi Open

Sunday, August 1, 2021

Washington D.C.

Nick Kyrgios

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. I think the first time you started asking fans where you should serve was here in D.C. in 2019. What do you enjoy about interacting with the fans that way and the D.C. fans in particular?

NICK KYRGIOS: Yeah, well, definitely feels like home. The first time I came on-site today, everyone was kind of embracing me. Felt like I was playing almost in Australia. I feel completely comfortable here.

Yeah, I just love the fans. I'm extremely happy to see the city open. I'm pretty sure it's full capacity. It's amazing. You can feel the energy around the courts.

I think it's just great for all tennis fans to have a strong field. You got Rafa here, as well. So, yeah, it's amazing.

Q. You've been back on tour for a couple weeks now, probably a month since you left home. How do you feel about being back on tour? Are you getting your tour legs back under you?

NICK KYRGIOS: Geez, I'm not going to lie. I mean, I don't miss it that much any more.

No, it's good. It's good to be back obviously, especially at these tournaments where I'm extremely comfortable and there's a lot of crowd. I think they're definitely hoping I do well.

I definitely feel, I mean, it's pretty crazy. I don't know. I don't know. Like, when I come here and I play, I feel vibes. Like every time I'm at a tournament, I feel like it could be my last time I'm ever going to be here.

In Atlanta I felt the same way. Washington. I don't know. I don't know where I'm at. I feel weird. I feel strange about my career at the moment.

But, yeah, I obviously love being back. I love seeing all my mates on tour. I love getting in the gist. I just love interacting with fans these days. I know with COVID and

stuff it's risky. In Atlanta, I was interacting with my fans a lot just outside. I did about 45 minutes.

I think it's awesome. I think that's for sure my favorite part of being back on tour, just seeing the fans, seeing the support. Yeah, the travel I don't miss at all, but yeah.

Q. The way you're talking, do you still have things you want to do on tour or do you feel like you're good?

NICK KYRGIOS: Yeah, I mean, look, I feel as if I'm not playing for myself any more. I feel like I'm kind of playing for a lot of people who can relate to me. I feel like when I was young, I didn't really have goals to win slams or anything like that. I mean, I didn't love the sport.

Obviously became kind of good, I guess. Then I beat all the top players, won some titles. Feel like I've been pretty iconic in the sport in the sense of doing it my own way, bridging the gap between I think basketball and tennis is there now. I've accomplished a lot.

I enjoy now playing just for fun. I really do enjoy just being around fans, just talking with them, getting to know what they do. It was just, like, some touching moments that I remember, my favorite parts of my career, just being with fans, giving them some hope.

Q. This is the first time since June of 2019 you've played consecutive events outside of Australia. What are some of the challenges of going back and playing back-to-back weeks? What are some of the positives of being back in the locker room with your fellow players?

NICK KYRGIOS: Well, the positive is, I don't take any tournament for granted. I don't take any match for granted any more. Every time I'm at an event, at a special one like this, I don't take any day for granted. I love being around it. I try and soak in as much as I can. Just the practice, being around the courts, being at the highest level, I don't take that for granted.

Yeah, as I said, I don't really play -- I'm a part-time player I guess till at the moment. I played, like, five events in two



years. Yeah, I don't know. It feels still odd to be back. I just saw Dimitrov and stuff. They're just like, Dude, I can't believe it's you on tour type thing.

Atlanta and Washington are pretty easy weeks. They're great events. Tournaments treat me really, really well. I do what I can for them on socials, I do as much as I can with the fans, I tend to play well at these events. I know it's good for the sport. I know it's great for tennis.

I did see Ben's tweet with the three-minute highlight in Atlanta (smiling). Yeah, I feel good to be back.

Q. What is your relationship with this world at this point having been away from it, the tennis world? Maybe a visitor again here in some ways? Obviously you're keeping track of your boy Casper's results over in Europe. What are your feelings about this whole ecosystem?

NICK KYRGIOS: Yeah, I just feel like I'm just really at my own pace. I feel like I'm not really competing with anyone. I don't feel like I'm trying to climb up the rankings or win any tournaments. I'm kind of doing it my own way, taking it day by day.

I can put on a show on the practice courts on my day off, you know what I mean? I can come here and make all the fans' day by getting them involved.

I don't know. I don't know. I definitely feel like at the start of my career, I was not worrying, but obviously I had coaches, people telling me, We need to hit this kind of ranking point, try this, do this.

Now, I don't honestly give a single 'F'. I do whatever I want to do, float around, play some tournaments, just have some fun with it.

Q. Is floating around something that is doable on tour, chill?

NICK KYRGIOS: I mean, I've been doing that for the past seven years.

Q. Works for you?

NICK KYRGIOS: Exactly. I think whatever. Different players can do different things. You look at Casper. To win three back-to-back tournaments is not easy at all. He's got amazing discipline, obviously a great player. I never cut down his tennis. Great player. That works for him. If that's what's going to work best for his career, that's great.

Some players like to have fun, do it their way. I think it's

important to have both. I think it's important to have a balance of both. I do think the sport of tennis has really struggled in the past embracing personalities, embracing people that do it differently. I think they're starting to warm up to it.

These tournaments know how important it is to have players like myself here because they wouldn't be using me so much promoting tournaments and stuff if they didn't. They look after me well because they know I give back. I give back to every tournament I'm involved in. I do as much as I can for them.

I think I've been kind of the example that tennis needs to embrace personalities and they need to make everyone feel welcome in the sport. They can get a lot of out of different personalities and different players.

Q. You're playing doubles with Frances. What do you enjoy about playing with him? How did you team up with him?

NICK KYRGIOS: Well, I definitely think -- I don't know how we're going to concentrate out there. That's one thing. I could be an absolute disaster or it could be a lot of fun.

Me and Frances, when we're together, we don't stop laughing and we don't have any sort of tennis talk really. We'll see how it's going to go. I think that one's obviously just for the crowd. He's in his hometown, D.C. It's going to be awesome to see him. I haven't seen much of him, but to play doubles with him is going to be exciting. We've always talked about it. Yeah, it's going to be a lot of fun.

I mean, I'm not sure what to expect honestly, to be brutally honest. You have Dodig who just won a medal at the Olympics, Bopanna is a solid doubles players. Just have a bit of fun.

Q. Have you and Frances practiced together before?

NICK KYRGIOS: Yeah, we've practiced together a lot. There's like an iconic video of me hitting him in the ass on the grass at Queen's that you should check out. I beat him in a best-of-three on grass.

He might still have a mark on that right glute from that day.

Q. On the doubles, the dynamics when you are two singles players having fun with a friend when you're up against established doubles players, is that weird? Have you ever talked to a doubles specialist about that?

NICK KYRGIOS: No, it's just tennis, man. I don't break it

down that crazy, like doubles specialists, singles specialists. You make a couple first serves. Doubles comes down to a couple points. I don't really care who you are.

Doubles can go either way. A couple points here and there. Me and Frances are more than capable of making a couple returns. It's going to be a tough match. I played a lot of doubles in my career. I've seen how much it can go from like a roller coaster out there.

I'm not going to start breaking down where Bopanna likes to play on second serve, what I-formation they're going to play. That's not me.

Q. You talk about tennis' need to embrace personalities. You brought up yourself. You've played five events in the past two years. Not a lot of tennis for us fans to embrace your personality. What should tournaments be doing, players be doing, to get Nick Kyrgios back on court more frequently?

NICK KYRGIOS: Well, I mean, I'm not sure if they can control a global pandemic from Australia. That's one thing. Obviously if COVID-19 wasn't a thing, I'd be playing more. I don't think it was the right time to play obviously when it was really, really bad, there was no vaccination, there were no protocols around tournaments, there was no crowd restrictions and stuff like that. That's one thing.

I mean, yeah, I've only played five tournaments in two years. You look at any sort of tennis social media, they're posting about me every couple weeks. I'm like, Well, you obviously don't mind me at events. If you think I'm bad for the sport, then why are you promoting me so much type thing?

Look, deep down I know that I'm great for the sport. Like, you need personalities like that. I feel like maybe at the start of someone's career, it comes down to -- like, I feel like I'm just resilient. If someone is not as resilient as me mentally, the amount of hate I got, the amount of racism I got, the amount of bullshit that I got from the tour, from fans, from everything, I could have been...

I did fall into places where people like Naomi Osaka are now speaking about mental illness where I was going through, in my personal opinion, 20 times as bad. All they receive is good press. They don't really receive hateful messages. They don't really receive ridiculously historic fines for hitting balls out of the stadium or getting a code violation. I was dealing with, like, not even close to the amount of stuff that was going on.

That's what I think. Instead of out-casting and almost

crucifying a personality, you say, Okay, this guy is different, let's act a certain way, let's not treat him like a Roger Federer or like a Marin Cilic. He's his own person.

I'm just saying this sport could have driven me into a place of dark, which it did for a bit, how mentally tough it was for 18, being one of the most well-known players in Australia, getting absolutely hammered with media. It's not so easy.

Now I'm 26, I'm old enough. I know it's all bullshit. I feel like tennis really struggled embracing personalities earlier on in my career.

Q. You talked about loving the matches against the big guys, beating all of them earlier. At this stage of your career, anyone you want a crack at? Would you like to be on court against Djokovic at the US Open? Anything else you're craving in terms of a matchup that gets you amped?

NICK KYRGIOS: Yeah, good question. I mean, look, I wouldn't say that I'm like sleeping and dreaming about I can't wait to play this guy, I can't wait to get better tomorrow, I can't wait to get more topspin on my forehand. No, I don't have any desire to have that, which is impossible for tennis fans to believe. It's like, How can this person not have any drive to verse someone or win Grand Slams?

That's not what I value. Like, I don't value that.

Yeah, I'm not saying it wouldn't be nice for it to happen. I'd love to versus Novak Djokovic at the US Open. He's arguably the greatest of all time. Of course, I want to go out there and have a chance, have a crack at him. It would be great to win the US Open. I'm not going to look back at my career and say, Oh, no, I didn't win one. I'm not going to be disappointed if I lose a match.

Like I said, I don't value wins on a tennis court as much as I value a healthy relationship with my girlfriend or my best friend, things that actually mean something to me.

So I don't know. I just take it day by day honestly. Like, I don't know, like I'm that unpredictable that I might not -- I don't know. I had a good practice today. I'm trying to manage my knee. Tomorrow I'll wake up, try to be positive and we'll see where it goes.

If I think too far ahead, it's too complicated.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports