

Citi Open

Wednesday, August 4, 2021

Washington D.C.

Rafael Nadal

Press Conference



R. NADAL/J. Sock

6-2, 4-6, 7-6

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. What was your feeling out there tonight? How overall would you say you felt about your play in your first match in a while?

RAFAEL NADAL: Well, have been a beautiful night in terms of energy, in term of the crowd have been amazing. Yeah, the support of the city since I arrived here is one of the most that I ever had in my career, no? Yeah, super happy to visit Washington and to play here for the first time.

The match wasn't easy. I think I started more or less well the first set. Then I played a bad game in the second. It's true that when the match was coming, my foot was coming, too. I started to suffer a little bit too much.

Then Jack played some great points. I was not able to damage him with my shots and I was not able to come back on the points when he was having the initiative, no? Have been tough.

But I finished the match playing better. That's important. I hope to be ready for tomorrow.

Q. When you're playing someone as aggressive as Jack, he's taking big cuts on the return, what is going through your head? What are you trying to do to break his rhythm during the match?

RAFAEL NADAL: I think my serve could be better. For moments the percentage have been too low. Then you open the door to a player like him. Of course, as I said before, no, is not easy to play against Jack, but at the same time he create damage. But he has some mistakes, too, no?

Is important to stay solid. Is important to let him play from a difficult positions. I think is something that I didn't made

that happen for too much time during the match, no?

I was able to do it again at the end. I was able to do it at the last part of the first set. So something that I know will not be easy after a couple of months coming back from a tough situation with my foot, a couple of months without playing.

But here I am. I fought. I am able to play again tomorrow, so that's a great news.

Q. This match was over three hours. You were able to get through it. What does that tell you about where you are in your fitness?

RAFAEL NADAL: My fitness is fine. I just need to be a little bit -- I need to have a little bit of less pain in the foot, honestly. That's the true. But physically I feel more or less okay.

Of course, you need matches like this to be fitter after a month without competing. But that's part of the process, and I know the process. I went through all this stuff many times on my career. So it's something I am not worried about.

So is about winning these kind of matches. That helps you to be better. Then, if I'm able to improve with my foot, I think the rest of the things going to come step by step.

Q. You have a history playing Jack. He's been a top-10 player before. He's been struggling the past couple of seasons. From what you saw from his game tonight, do you think he's prepared to make the next steps, return to the top of the game?

RAFAEL NADAL: I don't know. Is true that he went through couple of important injuries. Something that is always difficult. And is true that today, a lot of young guys there. It's not easy to fight with all of them. They are younger. They are good. They are ready to play as many weeks as they need.

Well, I think I saw him playing better than what he did the last couple of years, without a doubt. I'm happy for him. I



wish him all the very best.

Q. Given the pain you are having, how do you in the next couple days balance how much you might want to practice and work on your serve, work on other things, with needing to rest the foot? Is it clear to you how much you can do?

RAFAEL NADAL: I don't know. I have been resting enough. Maybe is not about resting. But is the moment to just keep going, no? Is the moment to not practice much because I played a three hours' match, so I need to be ready for tomorrow. Have a short warmup tomorrow, try to be ready for the match. I going to have a tough opponent in front.

Let's see. Tomorrow another day, another opportunity to play in front of this amazing crowd. I want to enjoy the experience again.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports