

# Citi Open

Friday, August 6, 2021

Washington D.C.

## Kei Nishikori

### Press Conference



K. NISHIKORI/L. Harris

6-3, 7-5

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

**Q. I have been to this tournament for many years, and you have bloodlines and DNA in it, having been a former champion. But this year, it felt like you flew under the radar a little bit, thanks to Rafael Nadal coming to town. You have been winning and winning and winning. Do you think that has helped you make your way to one match within another Citi Open final?**

KEI NISHIKORI: I don't know. I have been playing well since last week, and I think I have been carrying that this week, as well. Every match I have been playing well. Especially today I think played very, very good, especially beginning.

I started almost too good in the beginning until 4-Love and he start playing well, and things got a little bit tight after that.

Second set, it was many up-and-downs. I had many chances, but I couldn't convert. He almost had almost like set points and I saved well with good serve. It could go both ways, second set, but I took some chances. Very happy the last game how I played today the last game.

**Q. You are now 20-6 in your career in Washington, D.C. It's your third semifinal, as was alluded to. You have won a title here as well. What about these courts and conditions bring out the best in your game?**

KEI NISHIKORI: Yeah, I think I like a bit kind of slow, and it's little ball bouncing high. That's something I don't like, but, I mean, I like the slow courts. It was tough because center and the other court is a little bit different condition, so wasn't easy.

Yeah, somehow I have been liking these courts and the balls, and the fans are great. I really enjoy this moment.

**Q. This is your first semifinal since Barcelona in 2019. You have made the quarterfinals of the Olympics. Curious how you're feeling about your level, how healthy you're feeling at this stage of the season?**

KEI NISHIKORI: No, now pretty good. Since last week I think it's been almost two years I been feeling like this on the courts, like very focus and very steady. Not making too much mistakes, unforced errors.

Yeah, this feeling I want to really, I hope I can carry couple more weeks until US Open. I think this is, you know, makes me great confidence. Yeah, I hope I can keep going two more matches.

**Q. In terms of your health, obviously we're all so excited to just see you back on the court playing week in, week out. We've got some big events on the horizon. How healthy are you feeling entering this summer hard court stretch?**

KEI NISHIKORI: I mean, should be okay. I was a little bit tired after coming to Japan, but I had couple days' rest. It wasn't easy, obviously. I had only maybe three days or four days to play first match, but I able to manage, you know, fight through first couple rounds. Now I'm feeling good again.

We'll see. I will do my best this week, and, yeah, we'll see for next week.

**Q. You are averaging a career-high first-serve percentage this season. Is that a tactical adjustment, maybe taking a little bit off the first serve just to put it in play more, or what the reasoning might be for that fact?**

KEI NISHIKORI: Yeah, obviously it's going to help a lot. The last match I played against Novak in Japan, I didn't make first serve, and that was the biggest mistake I did.

I think I have been serving well this week. I needed like 60, 70%, at least 60%, and I can make good rhythm with my serve. That makes huge difference. Yeah, that's something I have been trying to work on.



**Q. The USTA has announced that no one is allowed to come to qualifying at the US Open, but if you can afford a ticket, you can go to the main draw with 100% capacity. As you probably know, qualifying is free. Lots of families, kids, sports teams come. They are saying they are doing this to protect you, the player. Do you think it makes a difference whether it's qualifying or main draw to come to the US Open?**

KEI NISHIKORI: I don't know. That's tough question. Obviously you don't want to put too many people during the match. I'm sure some way it will protect players and fans.

I mean, luckily I'm not playing qualifying, so... (smiling).

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