

Citi Open

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Washington D.C.

Grigor Dimitrov

Press Conference



G. DIMITROV/A. Mannarino

6-1, 3-6, 7-5

THE MODERATOR: You have kept your winning record against Adrian. Apparently a tough match for you, but still you have kept the record. How do you feel about that?

GRIGOR DIMITROV: Good. I think obviously I haven't competed in quite some time, so it's very good to come out and win a match. A little bit difficult, but, you know, it is what it is. I'm moving on, and I have to stay on point and stay focused for what's coming.

Last, but not least, I hope my body keeps on staying, you know, good and healthy and being able to work every day, which I think will help me a lot for the future.

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

Q. What was the recovery like after Wimbledon? What was your mindset coming into the match today?

GRIGOR DIMITROV: Oh, I just wanted to take some time away. I think you don't get the chance to be away from tennis throughout the whole year, and Wimbledon, when I got a little injured, I just thought to myself, just take that time away, disconnect, now is the time. And I felt like that was my silver lining just right there.

I was just home, enjoying, resting, doing so many other things that had nothing to do with tennis. But of course kept on working on my body, on myself. I think overall, that's all I did. Nothing too crazy. Nothing extra.

I was just able to really, yeah, I was really able to just enjoy. I think that's something that I really appreciate throughout the year, when you have like a little time off, to really disconnect. All in all, I started practicing, and then I think I was ready to come out here.

Of course I think very difficult match today. I mean, I have played Adrian so many times, and I felt like it's just never easy, for some reason. He doesn't give me enough

rhythm, I think. Even though I played such a good first set, I wasn't able to finish in straight sets. Obviously that's going to cost a little bit more energy from me.

But I feel good. I'm going to really try to focus for tomorrow's match. I mean, I'm excited to play every day at the moment. I think good things ahead.

Q. Do you feel like you were really in need of that time off after Wimbledon, regardless of the injury?

GRIGOR DIMITROV: I think so. I think so. If you are 13 years on tour, it's kind of nice to have some weeks away. I appreciate them differently.

I think I'm at a point not only in my career but in my life where I need to get a little bit more selective. I need to -- I want to say a bit more proper, but that's not the right thing to say. I just felt like there's other things are going to help me a lot more in my career right now and in my game than being like overly focused on things.

I mean, I know how to play. I have won like tournaments, I have won big tournaments, I have beaten all the players. So I'd say I have to like be able to withdraw some of that experience that I have and use maybe some of that to get better, to find that extra edge.

I believe I can do it as long as the body again feels well. Age is just a number, and I keep on going as long as I'm happy to play tennis.

Q. So this topic is very interesting to me. I guess the question is I assume maybe seven, eight years ago you wouldn't have allowed yourself such a break after Wimbledon. This wisdom you now have, that at 31, experienced player, many accomplishments, you can take time away, is that something you arrived to on your own, or did you sort of take stock of the way Federer kind of downshifted and how much he works, you know, knowing he trusts himself to get the results maybe without the amount of pounding as a younger man?

GRIGOR DIMITROV: I think the beauty in not only in our



sport but in all of the tennis players that each one of us is such different individuals. I think I never wanted to compare myself to any of the top guys, and I always said it. Like these guys, Roger, Rafa, Novak, I mean, Andy, I think all these guys, they are on a league of their own.

You know, I had so many -- of course, they influence matters a lot. I think a lot of players are looking up to them and everybody is very excited to watch them, to see what they do, how they rest, what they do, but from my perspective, it's just very, very different on that.

I mean, I think I have got an excellent relationship with each one of them, and I think I have learned very different things from each one of them, of course. But for me personally, I have been very fortunate to have I think a lot of good people around me throughout my career to kind of navigate me through some sort of mentality, and no one has ever pushed me to something.

I think that's something that I'm very grateful and thankful at the same time. Of course, my parents, they never pushed me to play tennis, never pushed me to make anything in my life. So I can say that, I mean, it's safe to say that I absolutely took all these decisions and I made all those like commitments on my own.

It's just how I feel. It's just how my body and mind feels. If you think of it, tennis is just this much, and then life is that much. So again, 13 years, it's pretty significant in our sport. I have been lucky not to skip many weeks or many years on tour, so, I mean, I'm trying to cherish those moments a little bit more, to appreciate every single time I'm at an event.

I mean, I look back. I was here 10 years ago for the first time. It's crazy. Then when I go to some other tournaments and now for the 13th time, I'm like, Oh, my God. All those things, they make me smile.

Now it's no different. You know, I feel just like a kid coming to a tournament. That's a great feeling. I mean, if you don't have that, then don't play. Take a step back, because that's, I think, when you reach certain level and certain level of experience, then that will make you be better at every other event that you play.

So, for me, it's a very sensitive topic, in a nice way.

Q. Obviously as you have spoken about, you have had a great career so far, but how do you readjust your goals or look ahead about, you know, what your goals are now, because you are in the top 20, you have obviously won the ATP Tour finals, but what is it that you want to achieve still?

GRIGOR DIMITROV: Great question.

A lot. I think I'll definitely won't judge myself as having a great, great career. For me, I judge success from a very different perspective, I would say. For me, I have had, as you mentioned, I have won those big tournaments, had amazing results, beaten a lot of good players.

But I still believe I can come back to the top. I would say that's my primary goal right now. I have been able to be top 20 for quite some time. I was top 10 for quite some time. I was 3 in the world.

I have gone through that process, and I know what it takes. I know that it's possible to do it again. It's going to come with consistency, but of course it's all up to me. I always have to like kind of reevaluate every time I play an event, a tournament. I have to see, okay, is my body capable of keep on going for another two weeks or not, or how many tournaments I will play in order for me to be at my prime in six, seven weeks' time?

It's just, you know, it's a little bit more volatile than it used to be, clearly. That's why I think those breaks in between tournaments, especially after Wimbledon and any other event, you need to be smart about it and use those days very precise.

But of course the ultimate goal that stays there for me is to absolutely come back to top 10. I think it's super doable for me. Again, if I have the good consistency, why not go even bigger with the slams? I have been there, I have done that. I know how to play long matches.

As I said, I have so much sort of in the bank that why not get something out of that? I think, again, you stay healthy and you give yourself a chance every time you're out there.

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