

Western & Southern Open

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Cincinnati, Ohio, USA

Andy Murray

Press Conference



H. HURKACZ/A. Murray

7-6, 6-3

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. It's always a big happiness to see you on the court.

ANDY MURRAY: Thank you.

Q. Of course the injuries doesn't help. I was wondering whether losing kind of early in the tournaments give you a projection about your career maybe in the near future. These tournaments does affect your decision about your future?

ANDY MURRAY: I'm not sure really. I mean, I thought this week was fairly positive. I think I played much better than I did during Wimbledon, for example, and during the grass court season.

So, yeah, I guess the two issues for me is, one, if my body doesn't feel good, that is something that will influence my future, and if, after competing for a number of months, if my tennis is sort of going backwards, that would be another sign for me that things are not, you know, how I would like them to be.

But I don't see this week as going backwards. Like my body felt good. The American hard courts are not easy on the body. Physically, I was a little bit tired after some of the longer rallies, but in terms of like the pain and discomfort, my body was really good.

Yeah, my tennis was better than at Wimbledon. Still not how I would like it, you know, but it's difficult when you play against a lot of these guys now, you know, with big serves, and you don't get too many opportunities. Sometimes that's where the lack of matches can hurt you, because there is not loads of rhythm out there. You know you're not going to get that many chances.

Usually, a few years ago, I would be taking those chances at the end of the first set, for example, and today I didn't and it will cost you against the guys who are serving big

because you don't get too much opportunity.

Q. Sometime ago, Hubert coach, Craig Boynton, compared Hurkacz with your game, said that you were similar. Would you consider that it's okay, that you have a similar game?

ANDY MURRAY: Yeah, I mean, I sort of heard that before. I think there are some things, like the way that we return, for example, and like move to the return I think is quite similar, but then I don't know. Like after that, I'm not sure. Like we both hit our backhands quite flat.

He's a big guy. I think he moves well for his height. You know, that was something that was always a strength in my game.

But, yeah, I don't know. There are some things that are similar; some things that aren't. He's 6'6" and a huge server. I was more, in my career, was more sort of considered to be more of a returner, would have been a bit more my thing. There are some things that are similar, but I wouldn't say that we have the same game, I don't think.

Q. In terms of next week, do you weigh up now whether you might go to Winston-Salem for some more matches or straight to New York for practice?

ANDY MURRAY: Yeah, I mean, that's something I need to chat with my team about. Obviously I don't know what Winston-Salem's situation is with wildcards, et cetera.

So, yeah, I'll need to make a decision on that. I mean, it's a difficult one, because, you know, like my body feels good just now. And I spoke a little bit about this at Wimbledon. For example, play at Queen's, didn't feel great physically, was like, okay, would it be better to -- but I still need to play matches, so how best to sort of prepare.

Now going into New York, there were some positive signs obviously this week, I think, and it's like, yeah, I would like to play more matches. Matches is what makes me feel better and makes me trust my body more. I think it helps a lot, like I said, with the decision-making and stuff in important moments.

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You know, I can't remember what year, the end of 2019 when I played more matches, like each week I started to make better choices, better decisions, and, yeah, that would help me a lot.

So it's just weighing up what the best thing to do is, because physically I feel in a good place, but again, if I went to Winston-Salem and did really, really well, would that affect me or help me at the US Open? Kind of difficult to know.

I think, like, if I play like I did this week with a few little improvements, which I should make between now and a Winston-Salem, there is a chance I could have a strong week there. So difficult one.

Q. What kind of things were you encouraged with this week? What are the things you need to improve on?

ANDY MURRAY: I mean, probably, yeah, for me, the serve pace. You know, in the first match served, I don't know, 14 aces or something in the first match, which, you know, not that this is the most important thing in tennis, but in my career, that was like the fourth-highest number of aces I have served in two sets.

If I look back to Wimbledon, for example, I was getting absolutely no free points on my serve, and it's something that, you know, we identified as something I need to work on a lot.

So I was happy with that. I got a lot of free points on my first serve. Again, today, would have liked to serve better in the second set. Didn't serve well in the second set. I thought my movement after the beginning of the match with Gasquet I thought was encouraging. You know, moving forward a little bit could have been better, for sure, to the dropshots and stuff. But across the baseline I thought was good.

Then, yeah, the big thing for me is decision-making, you know, in important moments. You know, today there was just a few things like on one of the set points, you know, I really shouldn't have missed the shot I did on the set point of 5-4 in the first set, and then I came into the net on a few balls that, you know, I sort of regret doing a little bit in the second set, as well, and in the tiebreak.

Yeah, just again, that would be the decision-making as something I would like to improve upon, but there was some good stuff in there, I think.

Q. You have been talking about decision-making. Could you just go deeper into that? Do the top players

make better decisions? Is that a key factor? Do having a series of matches, is that really important in your decision-making? And how does your decision-making evolve? Just talk about that, please.

ANDY MURRAY: I think the matches, so like in practice obviously you can play lots of practice sets and stuff, but there is no consequences to, like, the outcome of shots in practice. You just don't feel that.

So obviously then when you're under pressure in matches, and you haven't been in those situations much, you know, you can, yeah, you've got split seconds to make choices and decisions.

Yeah, I think the more matches that you play, it just becomes sort of second nature. You know what to do in those moments. I think it's something that in the last few years Novak, for example, has just been, you know, incredible at. He just makes great decisions under pressure.

I feel like it's something that, yeah, the top players tend to do in important moments, but I think that comes through confidence of winning matches consistently and getting to compete.

You know, you just, like, for example from this week, I know that next week I'm not going to make sort of the wrong decisions or the same decisions that I made in important moments today. For example, I won't be making the same decisions next week, because, you know, your memory will, I don't know, it just kicks in, I guess, from playing the matches.

Yeah, you cannot replicate that in practice, yeah, no matter how much you try. Recently in the tournaments I have played I have been coming up against guys that, you know, like Berrettini, for example, or, you know, Hurkacz here, or Rublev in Rotterdam, and these guys are playing top-level, top-10, top-15 tennis. I'm just not making as many good decisions in the important moments as them.

Q. Is that on breakpoints? Is it on choice of serves? What's the key element, the most important decisions in a match?

ANDY MURRAY: Yeah, I think it can be. Like against the big servers, certainly there is the breakpoints, and like in the tiebreak, for example, today, it comes down, that set came down to one or two points. Yeah, there are just some things that usually or if I played lots of matches, I think I would have done things slightly differently or maybe not made the same choices as I did today.

But then, yeah, it comes down to like deciding where you're going to serve on the big points. Yeah, there is a number of factors that go into it. Especially when you're playing against big servers, you know you're not getting that many opportunities. So, yeah, the breakpoints and, you know, in tiebreaks and stuff are very important.

Q. Just related to that, wondering how much these decisions relate to your physical fitness, as well? Pretty hot out there. How did you feel out there? Are you playing pain-free?

ANDY MURRAY: Yeah, I mean, look, this week I felt good. During Wimbledon I felt good. You know, I didn't feel great at Queen's, but, yeah, at Wimbledon I felt good physically. I was tired after playing sort of the long matches and stuff, and, you know, today it was extremely hot, but I think I handled the conditions, you know, pretty well and, you know, considering.

But, yeah, from a pain perspective, like in the matches, like I said earlier, I feel really good, and it's easy for me to wake up in the morning and practice and be motivated and focused on tennis when that's the case. You know, like when you're going into tournaments and you've got niggles and you're not feeling physically good, you're always just holding back a little bit, holding back a bit in practice to protect your body. Mentally, going into the matches when you're a bit hurt, it's just distracting and it's frustrating.

You know, I know Roger has had lots of problems with his knees, but when physically maybe he was not feeling good, like in Halle, for example, or at Wimbledon, it's just hard to stay focused on the match when that's the case.

Yeah, if I feel like I did this week and can kind of build on it, you know, yeah, I can compete with those guys, no question. I mean, I don't think that I was not competitive today. You know, I had opportunities in the match. You know, he unfortunately served unbelievable. At times he served great.

Yeah, so long as my body feels good and physically I have little pain, it's very motivating for me, because I enjoy playing. I know what it's been like the last three, four years when I have been in lots of pain. And not being in pain like today, it's a lot more enjoyable. It's easier to just focus on the tennis and be, Okay, what could I have done differently there? Rather than, like, Oh, my hip hurt or my groin was sore and my back was painful.

It's not really a good way to go about a sporting career when you're sort of all the time it's just about your body really.