

Western & Southern Open

Wednesday, August 17, 2022

Cincinnati, Ohio, USA

Rafael Nadal

Press Conference



B. CORIC/R. Nadal

7-6, 4-6, 6-3

THE MODERATOR: Tough luck, Rafa. This was your first match since Wimbledon. How did you feel out there in general?

RAFAEL NADAL: Well, obviously I didn't play my best match, no? Something that can happen. Yeah, historically this tournament have been difficult for me. So coming back from, yeah, a tough period of time, something that easy to accept and easy to say congrats to Borna that he played better.

That's it. Just well done to him.

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

Q. What did you find encouraging and what did you find discouraging about your game?

RAFAEL NADAL: Well, I mean, difficult to take a lot of positive things, but, I mean, I need to improve. I need to practice. I need to return better.

I need days, and that's the true, no? Obviously I had my chances the beginning. In the tiebreak I had two important chances with two set points that I played terrible with two more-or-less easy shots.

And then, yeah, bad game in the third. That's it. Tennis, under these circumstances, against a player who served well, I had my chance at the beginning in the third with Love-30 and I played a couple of, yeah, terrible points.

So, yeah, of course it's better because when you are coming back from a period of time outside, if you are able to win the first match, then things gets better, no? But was not the case today. One day will happen.

Obviously a lot of times coming back from injuries I did positive things, but in this particular case, it's obvious that I was not ready enough to win the match today, and, as I said, credit to Borna that he played brave. He served, I

think, well.

I mean, easy to say that if you are not able to play a little bit more aggressive that the circumstances and to take a little bit advantage and opportunities, then these kind of things happens.

You lose. You move forward. I know the way. The main thing for me is stay healthy. Have been difficult injury to manage, to be honest. The last month and a half haven't been easy, because having a tear on the abdominal, you don't know when is 100% over the thing, so that affects a little bit in terms of not sure if you are able to try your best in every serve.

So I say before the tournament, no, I need to take step by step, and happened, and that's it. Well done for him.

Q. How do you feel physically? You obviously served a lot today. How did that feel?

RAFAEL NADAL: Well, in some ways difficult to analyze, no? Because when you have scar, then the line is very thin. You know, when is because the scar don't have enough flexibility, then you feel it. But you don't know if you feel it because of that or if because something are not going well.

So you need to take care in every single moment. So I probably gonna do some test after here to confirm that everything stays the way that we want. But that's it, no? I am positive. I was able to have a week of practice here, trying my best in every single day, practicing days better, practicing much better than the way that I played today, honestly.

So, yeah, nothing happens. Of course it's better to win, but at the same time, of course, remain one week and a half for me New York. I say before the tournament I am sad to not play well here, this tournament is enough important, but in that moment, I have to move forward mentally, no? In terms of practice, I need to start to be in a Grand Slam mode, practicing the way that I need to practice to be competitive since the beginning there, and I hope I will be able to make that happen.

ASAP . . . when all is said, we're done.®
sports

Q. This has been a tough tournament results-wise in the past. New York has been very good for you recently. What do you think it is about New York that brings out the best in you? Are you looking forward to this feeling?

RAFAEL NADAL: Well, difficult to talk, no? But it's true that this tournament haven't been the easiest for me during all my tennis career, even if I was able to win one year. But was the year that I was achieving almost everything.

I make a couple more semifinals, I think, or one. Is true, I don't know, for some weird reason this tournament, I never had the best feelings, but in the other hand, I felt very welcome here all the time.

I can't thank enough the organization for making me the things very easy. I try my best. They know and I'm sorry that I'm out in the first round, no, but that's tennis, that's the sport. The other opponent plays well, and he played better than me today.

In terms of New York, I don't know. It's a Grand Slam. It's a different kind of tournament. But at the same time it's tennis, no? If I am not playing well, probably I will follow the same route than here.

But I know the way that I have to do to gain a different condition. Is true I'm going to have already two weeks and a half on the tour practicing with the guys, something that I was not able to make happen before here first set. I was only able to play two sets before this match in the last 40 days.

So, yeah, that's the thing, no? And that's it. No, no, just I played against a tough opponent that he already beat me in the past, so he know how to do it. He's brave. He's a fighter. He went through some tough moments with injuries too, so happy to see him back.

I need to move forward and just start to think about the energy that the crowd give me in New York. I know it's a very special place for me, and I enjoy it, unforgettable moments there, and I gonna try my very best every single day to be ready for that.

Q. US Open is only Grand Slam that has different balls for men and women. Some women are not particularly happy with that. They wish they were playing with the men's ball. Just wondered if you ever actually practiced with the women's ball or...

RAFAEL NADAL: I don't know. I don't have any idea of that. I see that the women's ball have the number in red.

Our ones have the number in black.

But of course I didn't try, because I practice with the ball that I played. But I don't think is an important topic at all (smiling).

FastScripts by ASAP Sports