

# Western & Southern Open

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Cincinnati, Ohio, USA

## Gael Monfils

Press Conference



G. MONFILS/C. Norrie

3-6, 6-4, 6-3

THE MODERATOR: Welcome to the press conference of Gael Monfils. Congratulations, Gael.

GAEL MONFILS: Thank you.

THE MODERATOR: Very inspirational moment to see you win the last point in very windy conditions today. One set down, how did you manage to come back?

GAEL MONFILS: Just believe. Believe in myself. Believe that I could win this match. The beginning was not easy with the condition, but need to adapt yourself and a little bit your range with the wind, just have this strong self-belief that you can make it.

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

**Q. How are you feeling physically with I think the knee? Also, how did you manage to get back into the match?**

GAEL MONFILS: Still looking for it a little bit, so I will be I think better tonight after all the treatment.

You know, the physio, when he step on the court, was a big help, to be honest. He told me the ligament was well, okay, seemed stable. He was more make me calm in the way. Was maybe not too bad. I thought it would be the side of the knee, maybe also with the calf. He take me quite strong. Then obviously you need to block this out from the mind and stay focus. I felt good this weeks. So was like not really worried about my tennis level, just the adaptation because tough condition.

I believed that I could win even with this pain, and I made it.

**Q. What is it about this part of the season, these tournaments, that seems to be working for you?**

GAEL MONFILS: I love the U.S. swing all the time. Stay

here, felt good energies. Is great. Really love the courts, the venues. It's always special for me to come back playing in the States at that moment.

So, you know, I'm quite happy.

**Q. Back in the top 200.**

GAEL MONFILS: Yeah, well... (smiling)

**Q. It seems like you're confident in your level. Do you feel you're close physically to have a long run to get back up in the rankings?**

GAEL MONFILS: The thing is, of course a lot of people mind the ranking in the absolute. I feel like it's different for me. It's getting the end of my career. Of course, 200, whatever I am. In the well-est year I was 15.

Doesn't really matter my ranking. It's more about if physically I'm able to play weeks after weeks. I know that when I'm 100% I have a decent level, maybe a bit more than my ranking.

But ranking is not for me, the end of the world. Is an obsession from people. Maybe when you're younger, you think about it. Maybe when you want to be seeded, you think about it.

Now me, it's more play back to back, week after week. If I keep playing that level, I guess my ranking will go back up, and then I will start check it maybe later on.

**Q. You obviously have had quite a few injuries over the last years, especially moments when you were playing well. Did you ever doubt that you could continue to sustain physically?**

GAEL MONFILS: Maybe not doubt, but be down a little bit in a way that you need to go back again and get all this discipline. Because people sometimes they think it's easy to come back. They see me move easy. They see my quite chill and laughing and doing that.

As I say, no one knows, like, all the pain that I need to

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impose my body to get back into shape. All the mental discipline. More is tough to get back.

Every time I see and people tell me that I make the show and this, I'm happy because it's mean that, wow, I'm back. It seems easy for people. It's mean I worked quite hard and is paying off.

But when you get older, now with the family, sometime you're like, Hmmm, maybe home is good, too. I mean, lucky or not to have my wife who is pushing me to stay on the tour.

But, no, it's not easy mentally. I think I never doubt physically because I feel like I been blessed. When I decide to work, I think I can be physically good and compete. But, as I told you, the toughest part is the discipline that you have to get back to this shape.

**Q. Venus Williams said after an injury this year she took a mental break from tennis for two months, just went away, somehow came back to tennis. For you, after an injury, have you ever had a moment where you weren't ready to face the rehab and all of that?**

GAEL MONFILS: I'm always away, to be honest, when I am back home. I'm not even thinking about tennis.

It's hard. It's harder than it is sometime. It's quite tough to talk about it in a way because it's tough to be in the shoes of an athlete.

People, they see always the good stuff, always smiling, always the show, always the charisma, the wins, the followers, the nice picture and this. They are never there when it's raining, your coach is there screaming at you, that you need to work, all this.

People, they think we are rabbits. Like, wow, we wake up and we super happy to go run for an hour and do the fitness. Some days is tougher, as for everybody. That's part where we better as athlete because we have this discipline.

Whatever people can think about whatever, it can be this. From the beginning of my career, and everyone in the top and high level, we had a different discipline. We are just different because we are very discipline on some stuff. Some you can show different. But we all discipline. If not, we won't be the best of what we do.

**Q. You said your goals have evolved as your career has gone on. What are the goals you're aiming for week in and week out?**

GAEL MONFILS: Win matches, to be honest. It was win matches.

Feel like I can play week with less travel. Just have to pick the good tournaments. Of course, is tougher because the ranking is down. Let's say the years before, I was 15, cruising a little bit because I was choosing my tournament. You don't have to play much in a way at one stage of your career, you just pick the big tournament.

Now if I want to get back up, I need to play a little more. Well, I did. Maybe also my body tell me, Gael, watch out, you're not 20.

It's been a while I haven't played that much and been away that long. Is even tougher. I'm quite happy with that. But in a way that's why I'm not rushing to go back in the ranking.

Now I know that the base is there. I going to pick my tournament, as I always did. Yeah, hopefully play good week here, good week there. Yeah, it will go back. I'm not in a rush, you know. I'm not in a rush. Just enjoy myself and see.

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