

Internazionali BNL d'Italia

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Yoshihito Nishioka

Press Conference

Y. NISHIOKA/M. Kecmanovic

6-4, 6-1

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. I would like to know if, since someone compared your type of tennis game to Marcelo Rios, who was No. 1 in the world, Chilean left-hander, very quick, not too tall, I'd like to know if you ever seen him, if you know something about him, and if you think that this comparison is appropriate or not.

YOSHIHITO NISHIOKA: Yeah. So first, when I went to IMG Academy when I was around 15, 16 years old, Mr. Nick Bollettieri told me, You have to watch Marcelo Rios. You can learn many things from him. Almost same height, lefty, as well, and, you know, he's very talented but he's very talented for going to the net or how to making the points against the big players.

Yes, I was watching on YouTube and watching his matches, how he's gonna play, you know, how he gonna play against the big player or the powerful player, you know.

Yes, I learn many things, you know, how to get into the net, how making the forehands, making the open court, using short angles.

Yeah, I watch him many things and I learn many things from him, yeah. I very inspired him.

Q. I'd like to know how much were you inspired by Kei Nishikori and the other Japanese players? And how important is tennis in Japan now compared to maybe few years ago, if it was because of Kimiko Date first, or if you can tell us the most recent story of tennis in Japan.

YOSHIHITO NISHIOKA: Well, I'm still 24, almost 25, so I don't know exactly before the long time ago.

Yes, before Kei and Naomi's coming out, Kimiko Date, Shuzo Matsuoka, they making the history, Japanese



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tennis. And now Kei is coming up. Naomi is coming up. So they changing the history right now.

Kei show us he's not that tall, but he show us, you know, still we are short but we can make top player of tennis. Asian players can make top tennis, as well.

So we believe in that and he show us, so that's why Japanese tennis growing up right now. I'm not sure of before how was it, but right now is four or five players top 100, and many players playing Grand Slams. Almost four players win ATP Tour.

So we are right where is getting so much higher than before, and Davis Cup or ATP Cup, whatever, the team tennis also getting higher level.

So, yeah, Kei is really important for Japanese tennis. Also Naomi, as well. Both players, two those players very important for Japanese tennis.

We also are getting inspired from them. Also, we very motivation is getting higher from them.

Q. In Japan, tennis comes behind which sports? How big is the gap between the major Japanese sports and tennis, if you can tell me, if there is a ranking, No. 1, 2, 3, 4, I don't know, 5, something like that.

YOSHIHITO NISHIOKA: Well, I'm not sure, but for sure baseball is No. 1 and maybe soccer, and then couple minor sports is very famous in Japan. Some table tennis, badminton, and some other, swimming or whatever.

Tennis is not major sport in Japan. So I want to try to changing like that. I want to more make major sports the tennis.

Right now is many good players in Japan right now, but they know only Kei and Naomi. They don't know other players.

But I want to tell them how very tough to play the Grand Slams or how very tough to get into top 100. So I want to tell the old Japanese people and they need to know. I want to tell that.

Still, it's getting little by little better but still taking need time.

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But Kei doing so much very well, making the history right now. If I can, I want to try like almost same thing and then maybe can change the mind, Japanese mind.

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