

Internazionali BNL d'Italia

Wednesday, 17 May 2023

Roma, Italia

Holger Rune

Press Conference

H. RUNE/N. Djokovic

6-2, 4-6, 6-2

THE MODERATOR: Holger, congratulations.

HOLGER RUNE: Thank you.

THE MODERATOR: You beat the six-time champion today. You must be extremely happy with your performance.

HOLGER RUNE: Yeah, yeah, I feel good. It was a great match. I think I started extremely strong, put him under some pressure. Second set I think he stepped up and put me under more pressure.

Obviously the rain delay came. It was a bit tricky. But I managed to come out and find the tennis that I played in the first set in the beginning of the third, just kept going.

That's what mattered today.

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. You beat Novak two times. Do you think your way of playing can be a problem for Novak for some aspects of your game?

HOLGER RUNE: I mean, I hope so. I'm trying to make it difficult for him (smiling). I think I've managed to do that now two times in a row, to make it difficult for him.

But for sure he makes it very difficult for me also. It's a good battle every time we play. I like to battle with him. He's a great player to play because he makes it so challenging for me, which I find that nice because I can really see where I have to improve, what is working.

If it's working against Novak, it works against almost anybody. So I'm super happy with the win.

Q. With what you've already achieved on clay this season, do you now see yourself as one of the key favorites for French Open?



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HOLGER RUNE: I still think, I mean, if Rafa is ready, Novak, I still see those two as the biggest favorites. Obviously there is Alcaraz also. There's Sinner. There's a couple of other guys that also did well in the clay season here this year.

I see it maybe more open this year than the other years. It's interesting. It makes it more fun. We'll see. I'm just going to fight for every match I play.

Q. You lost a set with Popyrin, which is a little bit strange from outside. Today you played this incredible match with Novak with a little bit of a lapse, maybe mental. Do you think it's mentally you have to work most or not?

HOLGER RUNE: I think it was two very different matches, Popyrin and Novak. Popyrin has a huge serve. He served really, really well in that second set, so was tough for me to break him. I had some break points at 4-All, 40-Love, and he put three big first serves with 225 kilometers per hour. Not much to do. He managed to break me. Too good. Luckily I was able to find a way through.

Today I was really well-prepared again, managed to play the tactic and the way of playing that we arrange with my coaches and my team. I was very happy that I was able to stay composed and play good when it matters.

Q. This one will be the first year you're going to Roland Garros as one of the favorite players. A few years ago you said one of the goals of your career was to win more Roland Garros than Nadal. Do you think you can still achieve it?

HOLGER RUNE: I actually got asked this question couple of days ago. I'm just going to say first I have to start with one and we see (smiling).

I want to win a Grand Slam this year. That's what I've said in the past, and I stick to that. Obviously I hope it can be achieved at the French Open. If not, I hope to make it in the other two Grand Slams.

First we start with one, then we see.

Q. Some people look at you as the bad boy of the



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circuit. How do you feel about it? Is it a boost for you or you don't like that definition?

HOLGER RUNE: I don't see myself as the bad boy at all. I mean, I play with a lot of passion and energy when I'm on the court. I think many players does that. I don't know why that should be a bad boy thing, to play with energy on the court. A bad boy thing is to break racquets and stuff like this. If I remember well, I don't break a racquet when I play. I don't see myself like that.

There's obviously a few things here and there. The umpire today. But again, I see the ball out, he saw it in. I saw on the Hawk-Eye after that the ball was out, so I don't know.

Q. On the ball mark, are you looking forward to the day when there's more electronic line calling, no line judges?

HOLGER RUNE: I don't mind that it's like this with line umpires judging. Most of the time - almost all the time - they're super accurate. I never stop a mark unless I'm 100% sure. I was 100% sure. Apparently I was right because I saw the Hawk-Eye after the match and it was out.

This is the umpire's decision. There was obviously many cases with Mohamed that make mistakes. Also I heard in the first match with Murray, I heard something mistakes. It's just about how you read the mark. Obviously he reads the mark wrong sometimes.

Q. You called the MTO at the end of the second set. Was there a real issue or was it also to focus again after what happened with the umpire?

HOLGER RUNE: No, I felt something in my right knee. I felt it when I was pushing off on the forehand side. I've been working with the physio every day on this. I try to show it as little as possible when I play because I don't want to show a weakness.

Yeah, I'm going to have treatment after I'm done with here. I got a painkiller, and I feel better. For now all is good.

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