

Rolex Paris Masters

Monday, 2 November 2020

Paris, France

Marin Cilic

Press Conference



M. CILIC/F. Auger-Aliassime

6-0, 3-6, 6-3

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. Obviously that was a big fight. Wondering for you how important was that win for your confidence at the moment?

MARIN CILIC: Well, I would say this level of tennis is definitely good for my confidence. I felt that the match has been really high level.

You know, if both of us don't play well, and I get the win, it's not the same. I felt that the level was great. I started the match amazing. It's not very often that you win an indoor tournament against a guy like Felix who's got a great serve, a great forehand, that you win a set like that. It was a great performance in that first one.

Obviously I was expecting that he might, you know, raise his game, find a little bit different patterns and he started to return better in that second set. It was a big battle. I didn't play too bad. I just felt that he was able to play better in that critical moments.

You know, I had to recalibrate for the third set, you know, just calm myself down. I was Love-30 in that first game of the third set, which was also quite big. Overall I felt it was a really, really good match.

Q. This has been a strange year for everybody. Where is your mindset at at the moment? How are you dealing with everything and what kind of, I guess, goals or expectations can you even have given everything that's going on?

MARIN CILIC: You know, I was not finding my best form in this season, last season, as well, comparing to last few years before that.

So this season has been really good for me in terms of just getting some matches, playing guys, going back home,

training, playing a tournament again. I felt that, you know, with these kind of conditions it's quite positive in a way that you're not dropping your rankings, you're getting a chance to play. So that's been good in my own personal opinion.

Obviously it's not easy for anyone to play without a crowd. It's just slightly different also. You have some incredible matches that go really long and some, you know, amazing battles and then have the crowd to support it. It's just a little bit of a pity for that.

But overall, it has given the guys to play, we could see this year a lot of guys that improved a lot from Shapovalov, Rublev, also Zverev has played amazing. Thiem winning his first Grand Slam.

It's just helping guys to raise their game and play the matches.

Q. At your age, do you feel that you're a wiser player now than you were, say, five, ten years ago?

MARIN CILIC: I would say so. You know, it's sometimes it's a blade with two sides. Depends how you look at it. For example, when you know more, then you are questioning yourself more. Is it right, is it not right? Should I go this or that? When you are young, you just go for it. You have so much time ahead of yourself. You are not questioning yourself.

And then you just have to be smart to know how to deal with those things and to be able to find what's best for you.

But, yeah, definitely I'm feeling wiser than I was when I started on the tour. And, you know, we would all say if I would have had this kind of mindset when I started the career, you know, who knows what would have been.

But it's the way it is. And you get experience, you get matches, you get through the years you are learning a little bit more about yourself and you're always trying to improve.

Q. Certainly you have achieved a lot as a professional. You have won a Grand Slam. I believe you have won

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

about 18 tour-level events. What would you like to accomplish still as a professional tennis player?

MARIN CILIC: I feel that I haven't reached still my peak. You know, peak meaning that I feel the best on the court physically, mentally, technically, that I play my best tennis.

I would like to reach that peak and feel that, okay, I have done that. This is what I was working for, and I can relax my mind now and go into retirement.

I will feel definitely -- I wouldn't say disappointed but just, you know, feeling that maybe I haven't reached my peak and accomplished what I could have accomplished.

So, yeah, hoping for to do that, whatever it is.

Q. How did you manage to control Felix' balls during the match?

MARIN CILIC: How did I manage to?

Q. During the match control Felix' balls during the match.

MARIN CILIC: I felt that I started amazing. You know, first set was one of the best that I played in a long time, and especially against Felix who is serving big, playing aggressive tennis.

So I was playing really well. Overall I felt that the level was quite high. You know, each guy that was winning games and points was winning with a scenario for hitting good winners, good serves. It was not too many unforced errors that were like easy ones.

I felt that the match level was really, really good. I had to play really well in order to beat him. So, you know, when playing against these kind of guys, it's also rising my own level. I know that I have to play better. You know, that was it.

Q. I don't want to sound impolite, but I was just wondering because Gael Monfils said in his press conference the coronavirus was very difficult for him to deal with. Was it the same for you and were there even moments where you thought about retiring or not at all, like you want to continue, and, as you say, reach your peak that you still have not yet reached yet in your opinion?

MARIN CILIC: Yeah, we are all different. It's obviously not easy situation for anyone.

But for me was great. I was at home. I got my first kid with

my wife, and it was amazing time for me to get this break. I'm on the road last 15 years, so it's nonstop traveling. Even if you have, when we do have some time off, always in the back of the mind you want to, you know, training is in one week or two weeks, so you can't ever relax.

So it was a good time for me and I'm usually kind of guy who enjoys practice, and for me I did some new things in the practice, tried some different things.

Physically I got a little bit fitter, stronger, and I hope this can help out as well.

You know, playing matches, tournaments, you know, obviously I would want to have better results but it's also a process. Sometimes you have to go through some ups and downs and difficult stages in order to find a good game.

Q. What will be a successful tournament for you?

MARIN CILIC: My focus is to play well. Whatever it is. I'm not looking too far into the tournament. I didn't have great success in this last period, so I'm not allowed to say that I want to go deep.

But I just want to enjoy myself on the court. I felt that I played really good tennis today, and I would be really happy if I can keep this level.

Q. I meant to ask you earlier, and you brought it up, you became a father earlier this year. How has becoming a father with a child, how has that changed your outlook on being a professional tennis player?

MARIN CILIC: Well, it has given me a new chapter in life. You know, just brought incredible amount of happiness in my personal life. And also, I'm feeling very happy on the court, off the court. We all know how important this surrounding around the tennis court is. When you feel good outside of the court, you're also going to feel good inside the court. And that's some balance that we all players, or at least most of us want to have and want to achieve.

This, you know, just gives me a little bit more stability in playing. And, you know, when I'm finishing tournaments, if I'm losing, I'm happy to go home (smiling). I'm going to see my family. If I'm staying at the tournament, it's also great. So both sides, it's great.

Q. I wanted to ask you about Moutet, your next opponent. I believe you played him at the Australian Open this year. What do you make of that matchup? Have you listened to any of his music? He just

released an album.

MARIN CILIC: No, I didn't see, but I heard that he was having some hobby of his. I will definitely have a listen to.

Yeah, Corentin, he's a great player, considering his own abilities with the height and he's one of the best fighters on the tour and plays difficult tennis.

Today he had a tough match. I watched a little bit, and he was fighting hard and managed to win this kind of a match. So this is definitely some quality that he has.

You know, for me, as I said few questions ago, it's important to just keep this kind of a level, which I would be definitely happy with.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports