

Rolex Paris Masters

Friday, 6 November 2020

Paris, France

Milos Raonic

Press Conference



M. RAONIC/U. Humbert

6-3, 3-6, 7-6

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. He's obviously having a breakout season, so not everyone has seen him play too much. For you is there anything he did today that kind of surprised you? What did you make of his level?

MILOS RAONIC: I think I did my homework as much as you can prepare pretty well. I watched most of his match yesterday, and I watched him play I believe two of his matches in Antwerp as well, and I believe the one against Rublev in St. Petersburg. So without playing against somebody I prepared as well as possible.

He has a very good especially first serve, and I knew that was going to be tricky. You know, it's also harder just getting ready at the start of a match, because we don't have access to necessarily like hitting partners like we would. I knew at the beginning I was going to have to try to really step up quickly.

I haven't played a lefty in a while. And he just kept being aggressive. You know, takes the racquet out of your hand, stays low, hits hard through the court. So even when he's sort of letting up a bit, it's still a quick ball that's not necessarily always easy and a gimme to be aggressive with.

Q. It appears, watching on TV, that the serve goes really well through this court but the rest of it is kind of a tough slug. You're obviously not a 30-stroke rally specialist. How are you navigating these courts?

MILOS RAONIC: Yeah, I think the court is a medium, maybe fast court. I think center court is maybe a little bit slower and might feel that way because it's much bigger than the other two. I have sort of played across all three courts. Obviously those you have a very low roof on. The sponsor boards are much closer, so naturally they're going to feel faster, as well.

You know, it's indoor tennis at the end of the day. That's always going to help me. And I'm just happy with the level I'm playing and trying to really fight through and to, you know, have another opportunity tomorrow.

Q. What got you through the tiebreak? You fought off a couple of match points, and it took a couple for you to win. What's going through your thought process? What did you learn about yourself from a hard-fought win like today?

MILOS RAONIC: Yeah, you know, there is a lot to take with it. Obviously the turnaround is short but the importance of sticking around.

I wouldn't necessarily say that that match point is necessarily the way I want to be playing too many points that I saved in that long rally, but I just tried to stick with it as much as possible, tried to find a way through and got a bit fortunate, hit a few balls close to the line.

You know, today it turned my way, but I've just got to keep plugging away. Doesn't necessarily mean it always will but at least give it a chance for it to turn around.

Q. A titanic struggle there today. How much had you to dig deep into the well and go into those reserves to come out on top? Was there a few hairy moments in that final set?

MILOS RAONIC: No, I felt good. I played pretty good matches, my other matches. So, you know, I haven't burned through too much. And today it was more I'd say emotional stress of just trying to get through it and the relief at the end of finding a way through. That, you know, gets to you rather than the physical.

So I'm happy with the way I'm doing my things, and I just gotta turn things around and find the best in myself for tomorrow.

Q. I heard you say after the match that you were kind of trying to reset in the changeovers and make sure you stay positive because you were a bit mad at

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yourself. Do you mind expanding a bit on how you kind of, your positive mentality, how it evolved with time and how it is now compared to in the past.

MILOS RAONIC: Well, I think I have just gone through a lot of matches where if I didn't do that for myself the result was inevitably the other way. I had a bit of a negative spell in the last match. I came out, played a really good first set and then sort of slumped in the second and third against Coric in St. Petersburg.

I wanted to try to do at least something different than I did there and give it at least a chance. I just tried to sort of, you know, encouraging myself after every point regardless of what the point was like, and just trying to get some energy out to try to keep myself in it.

It was looking a little dark for me at the beginning, you know, triple breakpoint at the beginning, but then I created some opportunities. It kept me around. And it's something that, you know, it's happened maybe too many times before that things have slipped because I haven't taken that step forward mentally. And I just tried to do something better today.

Q. You had some great results at the Masters tournaments this year, but you didn't perform that well at the Grand Slams. What do you think you have to change for next year?

MILOS RAONIC: Well, I only played two Grand Slams. I think I did a quarter at the first one so it wasn't too bad. The second one, you know, I came into a guy that was playing really well and playing free.

I just got to keep myself ready, keep myself each week giving myself an opportunity. You don't know when the things are going to click for you, and hopefully they do and hopefully the things can come together at the right weeks.

Q. How do you rate the potential of Ugo Humbert as far as you're concerned?

MILOS RAONIC: Yeah, I think he can play extremely well. You know, he could sort of find himself -- I think he will move up next year. I don't know where he's going to finish now. I don't know where this result this week puts him. I don't know what his result was last year, so I'm not really privy to that.

I think he can make another step forward next year, and I think he just needs the consistency. I think he played really well in Auckland, if I remember correctly, and then he had a little bit of a surprise in the first round that you didn't expect from a guy that just won the tournament the week

before in Australia.

And I don't know exactly what he necessarily did after that, but the last few weeks he's played well. I think he just needs the consistency. He's not an easy guy to play, by any means. I think with maturity and, you know, I think he's playing the right way, I think he can continue to move up much more.

Q. I see that you're not playing Sofia. So really you have sort of come back to play this one event, give it your all. Did you have thoughts of just ending the season before coming to play here? What were you expecting physically from yourself coming into this tournament?

MILOS RAONIC: Yeah, you know, when I got hurt in my first match in Antwerp we were sort of like let's see where we are at. Obviously didn't go the right way in the second match.

So I was told about three weeks to recover. And I think we just went a little bit proactively, obviously very cautiously, but we tried, okay, let's see if we can make something happen in ten days in a very conservative way without putting anything at risk.

Yeah, I have played well this week. I know my plan was to play Sofia. I think that decision was made this morning. I'm happy that I can play. I'm happy that I have been healthy minus a minor slipup relative to the ones I have had before. And I'm just trying to make the most of each week, trying to find a way to win as much as possible.

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