

# Rolex Paris Masters

Tuesday, 2 November 2021

Paris, France

## Benoit Paire

Press Conference



P. CARRENO BUSTA/B. Paire

6-3, 6-4

THE MODERATOR: Questions in French.

**Q. How do you feel? Are you happy to find the crowd again? Were you happy to play in front of a crowd that cheers you? How does it feel to have such a loss? What comes up to your mind?**

BENOIT PAIRE: Sadness. I was sad not to give it my all in front of this crowd. They support me a lot. It's heartwarming to see such a cheering crowd. This is why I play. They support me from the beginning to the end. I miss that a lot.

Why do I feel sad? Well, I do not have the right level to give them what they are expecting from me. The older I get and the more stressed I am. I'm very happy to see the public, and I'm really frustrated not to give it my all.

I was broken stupidly, but yet, having such atmospheres is just wonderful, and I hope to have a few years ahead of me to enjoy it. I would have liked to have another game today. The season was tough. All these months were tough.

But it will stay a wonderful memory, because the crowd was wonderful, but I was disappointed not to give them what they expected from me.

**Q. I'd like to follow up on a question. What you're saying is interesting. You say that the older you get, the more loose you should play. Is there a reason? It should be the opposite otherwise.**

BENOIT PAIRE: This year was very hard. I put a lot of onus on myself after the COVID. I didn't do any practice during the lockdown, so returning to the competition was hard.

Before the outbreak, I was on a hot streak. I had reached very high levels in Grand Slams, and I haven't reached the tennis level that I had before the outbreak. This is why I

have so much pressure on my shoulders.

As I said, what is important for me now is to prep well for the next season. I have a lot of expectations, a lot of objectives for next year.

Instead of enjoying these matches, I should play loose. I should be 100% on my wins. It's difficult to handle this. But it was incredible to play in front of such a crowd.

I'm sad. I feel frustrated. I think this is why I was so stressed, because I knew that my level of play was not up to scratch. It will be good to find it during practice sessions and to start from a clean slate with a new season and to try to change the momentum. I did a quarterfinals in Cincinnati. That shows me that I can find my game play, and I will do so next year. This is what I want to say.

Today I'm disappointed, because I would have liked to showcase my skills in a better way. And this is not what I did.

**Q. When you see what level you can reach, wouldn't you like to be selected for the Davis Cup?**

BENOIT PAIRE: Yes, I would like to. That's one of my objectives, but I'm not the only one to decide. I'm not the one in charge of the selection.

I think I have the right level. I have the skills to be part of the team. I think I could have an added value. But I'm not the one deciding. I want to play. I would like to play loose, to enjoy myself playing in a team. Not only individually for myself. I want to share this. I'm not the only one. There are other players who can be members of the team. I think I have some experience. I have qualities. But it's Sebastien who decides. Not me.

**Q. How will you anticipate the Australian Open? You were one of the first ones to get vaccinated. It seems that only 60% of players are vaccinated. What do you think about those that are hesitating? Do you think Jeremy Chardy's incident could actually affect other players? Are you going to go through a quarantine?**

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BENOIT PAIRE: There is no quarantine anymore in Melbourne if you're vaccinated. Those that are not vaccinated, I don't care about them. If they don't play, all the better for me.

I stayed 14 days for the Open, stayed 14 days in lockdown because I was positive. I don't care about the other players. I'm motivated to have a great season next year. If there are some people who are reluctant to get vaccinated, then they should stay in Europe. It's not my problem. You have to be vaccinated to go to Australia. I am vaccinated and I'm looking forward to playing there.

At the US Open, everybody was saying that they were going to go on a strike, that they said that they shouldn't get vaccinated to go to Australia, that they were not going to play. But when the season starts again, everybody wants to play.

I remember that I played Fognini just after I was positive at the US Open, because I was in lockdown for 14 days. As I told you, I don't care about the others. It's not my problem. But I am ready to have a wonderful 2022 season.

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