

Rolex Paris Masters

Thursday, 4 November 2021

Paris, France

Gael Monfils

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Gael Monfils following his withdrawal will explain his reasons for withdrawing.

GAEL MONFILS: Good afternoon, everyone. Following the medical opinion of my team, we did an ultrasound a few hours ago and we identified the muscular lesion. And so following this, we decided with the medical team and my tennis team to withdraw from the tournament.

THE MODERATOR: Questions in French.

Q. Could you give more information, muscular lesion. Is it in the thigh? Adductor muscles?

GAEL MONFILS: It's in the ischiocrurale, more the adductor side, and I feel it more in my hamstring, but it's more in the adductor.

Q. So what are you going to do now?

GAEL MONFILS: That's what I said before. That's why I came here. I knew that there was the -- it's the end of the season, so it's time to just take stock about the season.

The season was very, very hard this year. Professionally, a lot of changes. I was not able to adapt well at the beginning of the season. That's why I didn't play after the Australian Open. I was not able to adapt to this pandemic, how the tour was evolving with the empty stadiums, so I took a long break. When I came back, I had a small injury in Monaco, so it didn't help me.

So it took some time for me to get back into the season and to understand, integrate the changes that I wanted to make to my game with my new team.

At the second part of the season, I think everything started going well. I started feeling better both physically in my game. Then the audience was back and more adrenaline, more nice moments, more joy and being happier on the court.

It was much better. It was even good with respect to what I want to do with the team. We played a lot, almost at the

maximum of what we wanted.

So when I say "almost at the maximum," I would have liked to finish the tournament at 100% here, but we played all the tournaments we wanted, we played a lot of weeks in a row. I'm feeling well. I feel that my game is evolving the right direction. I'm very happy about how I was able to bounce back in the second part of the season.

Now I have a lot of work to do both physically in terms of tennis and also mentally to be able to be ready for the next season from the start of the season with always top objectives in mind.

So can I do worse than last year at the beginning of the season? I don't think so. I think it's not possible. So, well, my objective is of course to do better but I'm very serene. I'm happy about how I was able to come back and bounce back over the last weeks and months with the level of play I wanted to develop for next year.

So I'm very serene, and I'm very confident we will do a big preseason and that I will be able to be in top shape and to have good results as of the start of the season.

Q. Is there some frustration to withdraw here in Paris? And where are you going to prepare the next season?

GAEL MONFILS: Well, horrible frustration, because all of my family, my relatives are here, my mother came from Martinique and my dad from Guadeloupe. I saw them briefly to tell them that I was going to come and see you and to withdraw. We waited until the last moment, and yesterday the ultrasound was not great. This morning we did another ultrasound, it was not fantastic either.

(Loss of audio.)

Q. You said that you had your parents?

GAEL MONFILS: Yes, indeed. I saw my parents briefly, and it was not easy. Of course they traveled, especially from the West Indies to come and see my match, and until a few minutes before coming here, I talk with the doctor, with the team, to perfectly understand what's happening.

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Of course when you're in Paris, you want to risk it all, but it was much wiser to withdraw and to rest.

I'm frustrated, because once again, I love playing against the top players, and it's always a good experience to play against Novak to see at what level you are. Honestly, I lost 17 times against him. I had nothing to lose against him, so I had everything to win.

Each time I say to myself -- well, it's a missed experience of playing him again in Paris, it would have been fantastic, but I hope I will have the possibility to play him again and to bother him or even beat him. That's my objective. Each time I say so, it's my objective. So it's one step back to jump farther. So at least I hope.

And for my preseason, I will be playing in Tenerife with Gunter end of November, normally that's what is foreseen, so to fly to Tenerife at the end of November. That's in the plans, and that's what foreseen.

Q. As you said with respect to this injury, how severe is it and how long will it take to heal?

GAEL MONFILS: How long it will take to heal? I don't know. I have the impression that to be optimistic, in about 10 days I will be at 100%, but because of muscular lesion, you just need rest.

Of course it's not irrelevant. I know that many of you thought I was joking when I said that I was tired and owing to the level of play that I had and trips I made at the end of the season, having lesions, that can happen.

Unfortunately, there are other places where I had muscular difficulties, and therefore, I had to compensate and I had a lesion, so it's not a tear. But I hope that within next ten days I will be at 100%. I hope at least. But if it lasts two or three weeks, well, we'll take the time. But I hope that ten days will be enough.

Thank you, everyone. See you next year.

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