

Rolex Paris Masters

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Paris, France

Gilles Simon

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Questions in French.

Q. Hello, Gilles. So that's it. It's the last tournament. What's going on in your head? I guess a lot of things, right?

GILLES SIMON: Yes, indeed. It's not easy to put them in order. I don't try, either. I'm just trying to remain focused on what I have to do, as I always used to. That's the only thing I can do and on which I have control.

I'll try to focus on the first-round match. As for the rest, of course there will be a lot of feelings, contradictory feelings mixing up, and I don't have the energy right now to put them back, to put my ducks in a row.

Q. How about playing Andy Murray for the first round?

GILLES SIMON: Well, you have to have an opponent, don't you? With each opponent you have pros and cons. Andy Murray is a difficult opponent, especially for me. I never liked his play. It's always been difficult to play him.

But I won twice, so I think that I can still make it. Several times I was able to get the upper hand at one point. There were some tight matches at some point. Especially during the last matches. But we haven't played one another for quite some time now.

So we'll see. I'll try to stay focused, to move well, and we'll see.

Q. Apparently you had a difficult night from Thursday to Friday? It wasn't hard for you to have the farewell canceled?

GILLES SIMON: Well, I got sick after the first round. So Wednesday was hard. I played very well. But I was coughing for every point continuously. It was not pleasant. And I started to feel my back flaring up. I thought, oh, my God, if I continue in the same condition, then things will get worse.

And then every time, every match, every tournament I'm

always afraid that I can't play because of a physical glitch. It won't change for this tournament. It's going to be no exception.

Q. At Roland Garros, you actually said that it will be the last one. You talked about Bercy. Now here we are. Roland Garros was a beautiful adventure. There was your family. How are you actually expecting these weeks to unroll?

GILLES SIMON: I don't think about it. I try to think one match at a time, not to have control. Usually I like to have control, but not this time. I'd rather be disconnected with all the rest. I'll just try to focus on the next match and to be in the best physical condition, to do my gym sessions, to hit, to run around, also to get treatment, because as you can see, I'm not in the best health condition.

Andy Murray is a tough opponent. I'll have to play very well. My logic won't change. I'll try to win. Then we'll see. Maybe there will be only one match. Maybe there will be several. Last time it went well. It was a great surprise.

I hope that I will be able to do the same once again, but we'll see on court.

Q. After Jo you are the second of the four to retire. How do you position yourself with regards to the others? Because you don't have the same tennis play when we compare with Richard, with Jo, Gael. Did they represent an obstacle for your career, or do you make any comparisons with the others? How do you judge yourself?

GILLES SIMON: I make no judgment. I leave it up to you guys to do it. That's your job. You are the ones judging us. It's your job.

The only thing I could answer is the following: I draw inspiration from them, because we grew up together. It's easier to look forward and to feel that one can beat the best players in the world when your bodies can do it. It's easier to go at yourself with them, because you can play with them.



You can see the discrepancy of level of play between you and the other French players, because you're used to playing with them. So when you are having a training session and you see that the level is more or less the same and you see that the other French guy can actually make great achievements, then you think you can do it as well.

If you see Carlos Alcaraz do it, then it doesn't say anything to yourself, because you never played him. But if you see Jo, I was with him, I played with him for a long time. I saw what he could do, and I saw what he could do in Australia. But six months before his Australian achievement, he was ranked 450. And it helped me every time.

Richard, it was tougher, because he played in my category because he went pro two years before me. He was a bit aside, because he was very strong very early onwards so it was more difficult.

As with Gael, it was very simple, because he caught up with me in the ranking. He started two years later. But we had a similar progression.

We were ranked among the top 300, top 200 with a difference of six months, one year. So it was nicer. It was really nice.

Q. It was a real synergy?

GILLES SIMON: Yes, but it's very thin. Well, when you talk about emulation and rivalry, they are two peas in the same pod, in a way. You can see it as you please. We can see it differently. It's a matter of personality.

As far as my personality was concerned, I was not comparing myself so much, because they were strong. Jo was strong very early onwards, even though he sustained an injury afterwards. But he was No. 1, No. 2, but he was far ahead of me.

As for Richard, it was the same. So I just felt that it was okay.

Q. I remember I spoke with Jo just before he retired, and he was all smiles. He was ready for his retirement. I wonder if it's the case for you as well, because we know how much you love tennis. I'm sure you're gonna play the Interclubs. Are you ready for this small death, in a way?

GILLES SIMON: Yes, I am ready. I'm confident. It's not because you're ready that it's very pleasant to do so either. But that's the way it is. I have no regrets.

I don't know how I should put it, but, hmm. Let's say I'm

quite impatient for it to stop, because I have played so much for so many years.

But, you know, I still have a match to play. Maybe I'll be smiling tomorrow. I don't know. But I still have a match to play.

And as any match, you want to do well. So there is a lot of stress, more stress than usual. Maybe for Roland Garros and Davis Cup or any kind of tournament there are matches where naturally you feel more stressed. You think about it, and you know it's going to be tough on court. You know that it's going to be tough to focus, to play. This is why I'm like this right now. Once the match is over, depending upon whether it's a win or loss, well, we'll see what happens.

Q. I was wondering about this group effect. We have been saying for many months that the French tennis is going to be in difficulty, but we see some new French kids coming up with Arthur Fils, with Luca Van Assche, and Arthur who qualified. They are all together. There are four as well. There is also Gabriel Debru that won the Junior Roland Garros. Do you think that the group effect could be actually an asset? How do you assess them? Do you know them well? Did you see them play? Can they take over?

GILLES SIMON: Yes, that's good news, because they all play well. There is also Giovanni who plays well. I know that their match in America, for instance, I could see that they play well. There is Sean, as well, who can play well.

But that's the way it goes. Luca has done a wonderful tournament and Arthur has qualified. Yeah, it looks like this. They know their worth when looking at one another. That's why I was talking about comparisons. We're not comparing them ourselves in terms of career achievements. Or maybe they have that. I don't know. I don't know how they want to leverage this.

Maybe for some it will be helpful; for some it won't. But we see it with the Italians, for instance, with the Spaniards. It's easier when you have several players and you're from the same country, because you can actually discuss this. There is a bond that is woven as well when you grow up together. And it's not impossible otherwise, like Dimitrov, for instance, has never had other Bulgarian players playing along.

But it's nicer, in my opinion, you're on the tour every week with guys you know. You can always train with them. It's always simpler if you take it from the right side.

If you don't fall into the trap, which would be actually a



media trap, wondering who is No. 1, who is the strongest, and then that would be actually the bad side of this.

But if you're just a group of kids playing well, and they have different styles, actually, they have different personalities. So honestly, I think they can do well, all of them. Already they play very well.

Q. I guess you have already thought about what you're doing afterwards. Would you like to coach? Would you like to take care of one of these young players at one point?

GILLES SIMON: Not really. Once again, I want to have some downtime. Next year, the year after maybe. It's not impossible. But once again, these young players, they have people working with them. They have fitness trainers. They have coaches. If they play well, it's also thanks to them.

You know when you ask this question, what do you want to do, well, I want to say I don't want to dismiss anyone. I don't want to take anyone's place. Maybe I will have opportunities in the future at one point, but I have no specific objectives. I don't want to train a specific player more than anyone else. I have time.

My first priority will be at home and to do something that I'm interested in and that I would like to do. As for them, well, they have a good team with staff playing at their sides. If they have great achievements, it's because it works well, and they should continue as much and as long as they can.

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