

Rolex Paris Masters

Tuesday, 1 November 2022

Paris, France

Gilles Simon

Press Conference



G. SIMON/A. Murray

4-6, 7-5, 6-3

THE MODERATOR: Questions in French.

Q. How do you feel right now? How did you feel on the court?

GILLES SIMON: Right now I'm feeling really tired. On the court I felt very tense. It's been a difficult day. Very long day.

I played well the last weeks, so I knew I could play well. But it was difficult to focus on the game, especially facing Andy, and I never have a good feeling when I have to face him.

So the beginning of the match was very tough. The match, as a whole, was very tough at different levels, at different moments.

So I'm so happy to have won it, because it started off very badly, and I felt that he decreased his level to finish the set. So I was able to push forward at that moment and I was able to win.

Usually it's the other way around when I play him. So I'm happy to be the winner for once.

Q. You said that you felt well, but when you came on the court you were missing not so much and you would lose toughly. Was it something that came to mind today?

GILLES SIMON: Yes, I only played players who are very high. I am at a ranking that reflects my level for a long time now. It's true that my level can change, because when I'm in a good day I play very well, but I'm often prevented, stopped also like in Brest last week, it's difficult to win three matches in a row.

It's also because of that that I'm stopping before and it's frustrating. Before I was able to have entire weeks with a

lot of weeks that were not so good but when I had a good week I was able to go till the end or to play a bit longer.

This year I have never been able to play three matches in a row. That's why I'm stopping, because when you put a lot of effort, you have a good match, two good matches, and the third you're not able to play it. You say, Well, it's pointless.

So that's it. I know that there are moments I played matches that were very, very complicated during the year. It was in challengers with not many people watching, so it's okay.

But I know that if it's here, it's going to be a bit more of a problem, and it can happen. So I always have this in the back of my mind.

Q. How was your day? Because it was late to play this particular match. Were you able to eat, manage your day as you wanted? When you came on the court with all the people watching you, that many people, known people, were you able to put that aside for these people who had come for your maybe last match?

GILLES SIMON: Well, when I came on the court, it was very tough. Luckily I met Jo and Gael just before entering on the court. I said, Oh, well, you're here. Well, I preferred seeing them in the lockers than on the court.

But it was very difficult at the beginning of the match. You want to watch them but there are a lot of things coming to mind and it's difficult to focus on the game.

And you know that you must play well because you have an opponent who makes no mistakes, who gives no free points, and it's 1-Love, 2-Love, 3-Love at the beginning. You say, yes, he's not going to give anything, and I recognize Andy who has been bothering me for so long. So it's not simple. You do your best.

Winning the first game was liberating.

Q. You talked about this huge stress, but as you did on Roland Garros first round against Carreno Busta it

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served you?

GILLES SIMON: Honestly, no, I wouldn't pretend that each time I'm in the state of stress I'm going to perform well. Far from that.

So I manage it better than before. But again, against very tough players, next round is going to be even tougher with Taylor, who will start serving at 240 and 220 in second serve, so you need to be ready immediately. You have no observation round.

With Andy it's different, because I can reassure myself by playing long rallies, but I also shoot a bullet in my foot. But it enables me to put more balls in the court, to be reassured physically to make him come to the net.

So I try to elevate my game level gradually, knowing that I start from medium level, because I'm tensed, because everything is tough, because I have the impression that I have lost 0.4 in each eye and I see nothing.

And so I try to reassure myself, to elevate my game level. First of all, to elevate my game, and then to try and cope with, well, to elaborate, a strategy, a tactic to win. But it takes some time.

Q. Can you detail the tactics of this match. Benoit Paire tweeted Gilles Simon played Gilles Simon. I imagine he meant at some point you were able to enter in his head to make him make mistakes that he didn't do at the beginning. Do you agree with his analysis? If so, how did you do?

GILLES SIMON: If one is in the head of someone else, it's maybe the contrary. Usually he wins these matches against me. And it's been very difficult to win against him. And each time I was in a position to conclude I lost.

So I'm happy that this time it went the other way around. But there is something indeed. He decreased physically. He really decreased physically at a point in the match.

He was in a position of winning. He didn't do a very good game in the first set at 5-3, and unfortunately I gave him back, because I was winning Love-30 and I played poor points and he won 6-4. Second set it was same dynamics and he didn't play a good game at 5-3 to conclude, and this time I was able to make two or three good games.

Afterward there were a lot of rallies. Physically he was declining. I had a bit more space, and when my strokes were precise, it was difficult for him to defend.

Finally, I had three first serves, and that helped having a

free point here and there. He really decreased physically, because at the end he wasn't able to make first serve, second serves. And before, he could play eight hours without any problem in the past.

So I did what I had to do, but I think that decrease, physical decrease on his side explains. He decreased. I was able to elevate my game level at that point, and that made a difference, but I don't think that it was a tactical decision. I think it was just difficult for him physically to keep the same level and tactic.

Q. It's a very particular tournament. Are you clear you want it to conclude tomorrow with a nice match, or do you want it to continue?

GILLES SIMON: Well, I would have been fine to finish tonight, because I have the fear of not being at the right level for the next match, so it's in two days. I'm tired. I had a very long day. I'll try to recover well tomorrow to manage my day and to manage the time I have until the next match to play the best match possible.

As I said before, I have a lot of mixed feelings that are contradictory. Of course I want to win, but part of me is impatient to stop, because it's very hard. So I try and not to think too much about it. I just say I'm going to play like I have always done. I have a match in two days. I'm in this state of mind. I have 48 hours to recover, to do my best. When I'm focused on that, it enables me to forget all the rest.

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