

Rolex Paris Masters

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Paris, France

Novak Djokovic

Press Conference



N. DJOKOVIC/K. Khachanov

6-4, 6-1

THE MODERATOR: Novak, well done. After the titles in Israel and Kazakhstan, do you think your level is getting better each match?

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: Well, I think I have been playing really good tennis. I can't compare the tournaments here and the ones that I played in Kazakhstan and Israel, but I'm on a good way, for sure.

It's always a challenge playing Khachanov. I lost to him, the only time we played here, I lost to him 2018 in the finals, so I know he likes these kind of conditions. A bit quicker this year, so the ball stays low and just goes through the court faster than it was the case last year.

So if you serve well and if you're aggressive from baseline, you can win quite a few points. I haven't served that well in the first set, to be honest, but I managed to keep the good tempo from baseline.

Second set was different from the first set. I just, I think, had a level up of my game and really pleased with the way I finished.

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

Q. As you said, two sets was very different. Did you need to find your rhythm in the court? You spoke about your physically.

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: No, I didn't need to find the rhythm. The rhythm was there. I was 3-Love up but I was not feeling my best physically in the first set for some reason. Kind of sweating a lot, and just, I don't know, just happens, you know, sometimes.

You have to go through it and find a way, which is what happened. You know, I managed to hold my service games and put pressure on his service games. I was more or less in every service game of his, Love-30, breakpoints,

played a very good, I think, couple of points at that 10th game of the first set. Broke his resistance.

Then the second set was different. Different feeling. I felt better. Served better. Then of course life is easy on the court when you're feeling better.

Q. A couple of questions. You have spoken about Stefan, your boy -- not Edberg -- your boy, a bit. Does your daughter have interest in playing at all? Who's the stricter parent, you or Jelena?

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: My daughter started playing a few times a week with her friends from the school and from ballet dancing. She's more into ballet, and she's a real girl and I love that about her.

She's kind of flashy with tennis. You know, sometimes she wants to play; sometimes she's really not interested. So of course both of them have full freedom to enjoy and to choose what they want to do.

So I think it's important for them to be active. I mean, from my point of view, mom is more responsible for the intellectual side and books and taking care of their brain. I'm more responsible for the movement and for their physical development that is affecting, of course, everything else. I'm just glad to see them being active and being outdoors. For me, that's a key.

Who is the stricter parent? I think, you know, I'm really pleased with the kind of communication that we have as parents between us, and also with our children and the relationship that we nurture with our children is, we treat them as adults. You know, we talk to them. We try to explain that every action has its positive or negative consequences.

So we try to be the best parent that we could possibly be. Of course, both of us are very young parents. We have to learn. As you go along, you understand what it takes to be parent more and more. Every phase is different. Of course we use the help of our parents and other people, and try to get some tips.

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But, you know, I think there is not that perfect formula that someone can serve you so you know what you need to do with your kids. It's just one of these things that of course you need to prepare yourself and try to educate yourself I think as a parent. It's important. But it's the practical, real-life experience that, you know, when you're becoming a parent, that's when you really know what it feels like.

So, you know, I think we are very tolerating and understanding, but at the same time we can be strict when it's the time to be strict.

Q. The other thing, the other day you posted on one of your social media platforms, running up the outside of the stadium on the grass. How did you actually rebound after that? How many times did you do it?

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: No, I mean, I have done it in the past several years ago, and sometimes I was training outdoors, doing some exercises in front of that practice bubble, and it was nice weather. We took out our shoes and we just did some barefoot grounding on the grass. We just felt like, okay, let's just hit this hill. Let's make a sprint and compete and have fun.

My physio lost, obviously (smiling). It was just one of these moments that some people captured around. There were some cameras. It was nice.

Q. The first time you played Lorenzo was actually in this city, a very tough match when he was first sort of coming up on tour. Curious what you think in the past year or so he's really improved, if there is anything specific that you have seen from your point of view.

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: Without a doubt, he has improved generally, but particularly on hard courts. I mean, we know that clay is his preferred surface, but I think, you know, maybe that has changed, because his first title came on hard court outdoors in Napoli a few weeks ago. This week he has beaten some really high quality, top-ranked players.

He's got a bright future ahead of him. Things are coming together. It takes a few years for a young player to be on the tour to understand, you know, how the tour functions and understand what it takes to find that balance where you are able to consistently play well.

Nowadays, you can't be a top player if you're playing only well on one surface. You have to be an all-around player, all-surface player. He's showing, you know, the signs of an improvement on all surfaces. He's got a complete game. One of the nicest one-handed backhands on the tour.

As I said, you know, he's on a confidence run. I mean,

here beating three good players, and I'm sure he's doesn't have much to lose. I look forward to it. I'm going to prepare myself, and hopefully win.

Q. My question is somehow linked to Musetti, of course. I was thinking, since, as you said, he's rising stars in the tour and he's definitely excited to play against you, what kind of challenge he thinks he's going to put on you to try to win tomorrow? How would you react or try to...

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: Well, I'm not going to go into details too much with you guys. I hope you understand that. Tactics I will save for myself.

I know his game well. I have watched him play, we practice a lot, a very nice guy, we have a good relationship. His coach knows my coach or -- I'm surrounded with Italians, mostly with my physio Italian, my agent is Italian, my fitness coach is Italian.

I'm looking for Italian passport if you can help me out (smiling).

But I think he's very exciting player not just for Italian tennis but just in general. I think, you know, he has got a really nice personality, and he's very good player when he's feeling comfortable on the court. Then he starts to play some incredible shots. He can play equally well offensively and defensively.

As I said, he has all the shots in his pocket. He can play from back of the court, inside of the court, slice, come to the net, good serve, kicks, he's got really full repertoire.

But as I said, I know his game well, and earlier this year we played in Dubai, and hopefully I can prepare as best as I can and execute the game plan well.

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