

Rolex Paris Masters

Sunday, 6 November 2022

Paris, France

Holger Rune

Press Conference



H. RUNE/N. Djokovic

3-6, 6-3, 7-5

THE MODERATOR: Well done, Holger. Can you express in words what you're feeling right now?

HOLGER RUNE: Yeah, it's quite incredible. To stay here with the trophy, it's an amazing feeling. Something that was tough to expect, you know, starting the week off having three match points down. Then now to be able to be here with this beautiful trophy is absolutely amazing feeling.

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. Congratulations. You have beaten five top 10 to win the tournament. What a journey. Do you realize it?

HOLGER RUNE: Now I do. After the match not quite. It was very emotional after the match. It's probably the best feeling of my life, of my whole career. It's kind of a small dream come true, even though I have bigger dreams.

It's a really good step on the way to be able to play these kind of matches against one of the greatest players like Novak. You know, to be able to win that last game was the biggest relief of my life.

My stress level was very high, so, you know, super happy to come through.

Q. Holger, as the match progressed, what were your feelings during play? He gets the first set, he's up 3-1 in the final set. Then all the breakpoints when you were serving for the match. What was going through you in those various stages? Were you starting to have any doubts? How did you feel?

HOLGER RUNE: I really tried to stay in the moment, because I feel like I couldn't, you know, just tell myself that it's not acceptable to lose games. You know, I just had to accept it, because Novak, he's obviously an amazing

player, amazing athlete. So I have to accept that he's going to break me and I just had to move on after that, try to see if I can get a chance in his serving game.

I really stayed in the moment. After I got broken in the third, I was there. I tried to make him play on every return, was good enough to get the break. After that, you know, at 3-All, 4-All, 5-All, and then everything is open. As you saw in the end it was, you know, very open.

Q. Congratulations, Holger. You have mentioned your mother when you receive the prize. How important is she for you in your career?

HOLGER RUNE: Yeah, for sure. She's so important. I mean, without her I would obviously not be here today. I mean, she's been supporting me since I was a little kid, and, you know, she's still here. It's amazing to have her by my side. Also my whole family, my dad was here today and my sister back home. It's amazing to have my family supporting me so well. So I appreciate that.

Q. You defeated Novak Djokovic who was a kind of idol for you, everybody saw the selfie you made with him when you were a teenager and a child. In tennis, you have to beat the opponent and there's only one winner. It's very hard maybe to think that you can beat the monument, someone that was your idol. Did you continuously think that you could beat Djokovic at this stage, or did you have to work on it to get this conviction, that it was your turn as soon as now?

HOLGER RUNE: Yeah, I would say always before matches I believe I can win, no matter who I'm going to play. Obviously I know it was going to take some extra today because it's in the final. He played, if I'm not wrong, over a hundred ATP Finals in his career. He's much more experienced than I am.

I just tried to use my young power, willpower, to do everything I can to put him under pressure. I played great in the important moments today, and that was what made the difference. He was really tough to play. It's probably one of the toughest matches I've ever played in my life.

Q. Congratulations from the Serbian media.

HOLGER RUNE: Thank you.

Q. Winning such a match is an incredible achievement. Would you attribute it to courage, skill, bravery, you know, willingness to fight? What is the most important emotional element that you would attribute this great victory to?

HOLGER RUNE: Yeah, I think to be brave, honestly, because especially in these kind of circumstances when you play in a final, for me the biggest final that I've ever played in my life, it's really about trying to be brave and be solid at the same time. Because, you know, obviously I was very nervous before, playing Novak on this occasion is a bit stressful. So I had to tell myself to calm down, but still, you know, believe in my serve and go for my shots. I'm not going to beat him just by pushing the ball back.

I really had to do something, be creative, and I was doing that. I made a few dropshots here and there, tried to change the rhythm. You know, it didn't always work, but a few times it did. It worked enough today, so I'm happy.

Q. You will be 10th in the world tomorrow. The first one in replacement for Torino. Will you go to Milano or Torino?

HOLGER RUNE: I don't know (smiling). Of course I'm going to go to Turin. I'm one out. I mean, I wish all the players that I'm not going to play, because I wish them to be healthy, but at the same time it would be awesome if I got to play.

I didn't expect that at all four or five weeks ago but now I'm here. I'm super happy how I officially ended my season, and if there possibly is more matches, I'm just super excited for it. Right now I just can't wait to get some sleep, get some food, just relax totally.

Q. You are the first Danish player to reach the top 10. How do you think it's going to change the perspective of tennis in your home country right now?

HOLGER RUNE: Yeah, I hope it's going to change. It already changed a little bit since I went into top 30. There is more focus on tennis in Denmark in general. We obviously had Wozniacki, but I'm kind of the first male player on the tour. It's great. You know, more focus in Danish tennis is great.

It's good to hear the young kids can start playing more, going to more tournaments, traveling more. Just I want to say to them: Just keep believing in yourself. They can

always ask me some advice if they want.

Q. With all you have achieved over the last few days, with beating five players, five top 10 in five days, cracking the latest member of the top 10, winning this trophy, et cetera, if you had to pick one thing on what you have done over the last week, what would it be and why?

HOLGER RUNE: To beat Novak today, I would say (smiling). To be able to beat him in such occasion, as I said, in the final is probably the most, you know, the best feeling of this whole week.

Of course I take it step by step. It was also very important for me to beat Felix and Alcaraz and these guys. But still, to be able to beat Novak on such an occasion, and he's probably one of the greatest we have ever had in this sport, it's a crazy feeling to be able to beat him in this final. I would say the final.

Q. There were a lot of physicality at the end, it was crazy. We saw you touch your leg. Did you have any problem, any pain? We were scared for you.

HOLGER RUNE: You mean at the last game, or...

Q. The last game.

HOLGER RUNE: Honestly, I think my heart rate was over 200, so that was why (smiling). That was why, I was just, you know, going down and trying to get some air in.

Nothing wrong with my legs. They were all good. It was just a super exhausting rally. I don't know how many shots but running to the dropshot, back, and he ended up winning the point, and, you know, it was a crazy rally.

So no, no, my legs are fine. Obviously tired now but no problems.

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