

# Rolex Paris Masters

Sunday, 29 October 2023

Paris, France

## Gael Monfils

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Questions in French.

**Q. Just to take some news since your match against Tiafoe, you seemed worn out. How do you feel? What's your take on your match? How do you feel right now as you're about to start this tournament?**

GAEL MONFILS: I was tired. At the end of the match against Frances, I felt tired. I'm due to practice later today, and I managed also to get some rest until today to get better.

**Q. You have been playing an exceptional level of play so far. Can we say that the title of Rolex Paris Masters is within reach?**

GAEL MONFILS: Not this year, but maybe next year. As far as Paris is concerned, I'm at the end of a cycle. I feel quite tired. We'll see if Paris plays its magic, but will try to stay reasonable for next year. If everything goes on well, maybe I will have some opportunities again to shine in a Masters 1000.

**Q. In April this year you said to me in Ostrava that you were no longer thinking about the Olympic Games because you had sustained injuries and you didn't feel in shape. But the situation seems to have changed, so are you thinking or dreaming about the Olympic Games again?**

GAEL MONFILS: Not yet. It's too far away. Too many things can happen before that.

At the beginning of the year, depending on how it rolls out, I might think about it yes or no. It will depend on how it goes.

**Q. When you talk about the Paris magic, what do you expect?**

GAEL MONFILS: Well, playing well, feeling good. I'll try to show a good level of play. I'll try to win a few matches. That would be cool. I'd like to show a good level of play.

It's always hard to play when you're at the end of a cycle. It's always hard to maintain the right level of focus, of stress, the right level of physical shape, of mental composition.

In Paris there is always something else though. There is always a bit of magic, something that pumps me up that helps me to perform better than usual. I hope that it will happen again.

**Q. When you came back from Indian Wells you had a few glitches. The objective was to be in the Australian Open main draw. What is your objective now?**

GAEL MONFILS: I'll try to win a few matches here first of all, and then I don't know. I don't know anything for next year.

There has been so many things going on this year, ups and downs, things that have been said and unsaid. I'll try to digest everything that happened during this year. That was very difficult on all horizons.

I don't want to think forward yet for 2024, because, you know, it's a lot of sacrifices. It's tough. Whatever decision I make, I'll have to follow through, and my level of play needs to be up to the level I want. Thinking about it, it hurts already in my own body.

**Q. When you win, like when you won in Stockholm, the whole family was there, and you said that you made a lot of sacrifices because you had to leave your daughter behind. How are you going to do next year? Are you going to keep your daughter with you or not?**

GAEL MONFILS: That's one of the first questions I need to find an answer to, and I don't have the answer yet. With Elena, we don't have the answer yet.

We'll just try to enjoy this tournament and we'll think in one match at a time. I have no answer for the rest of the year, for next year. I don't know how things will turn out, what arrangements we will make.

What's funny about the situation, I'm sure you understand,

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but for the fans to understand, we are traveling, both of us, we are making sacrifices, her and I alike.

How shall I say? We don't want to be selfish. The two of us are selfish, and that's rule No. 1 when you're parents. So there is a lot of questions to answer. How can we, the three of us, find a way and find the right momentum without leaving out Skai on the line.

I don't have any answer, and I don't want to think about it now, because it's kind of a puzzle.

**Q. You seem to have a good feeling with Mikael. How come did you have so much trust? Did it help you to be back in shape? How important was he?**

GAEL MONFILS: He arrived at the right time. The work had been done before with Gunter. We did an amazing job together. We have to say it.

Then I needed someone who would be more by my side, someone who could understand me, someone who could understand all the changes that I am undergoing.

Mikael, first of all, has become a friend throughout the years. I have always been in contact with him. We always stayed close to one another, so when I described my situation and what I needed, he knew right away the direction that I should follow.

The first thing that he did was to help me boost my confidence in my game play as it is now. Gunter helped me become more aggressive, to follow more straightforward patterns that are more daring that work out better. And Mikael from the first practice session on, he said, Well, I never saw you be so close to the line when you're warming up. Go to the baseline, go back. You know, he said it as a joke. But he put me back in a comfort zone. Because a lot of people were saying you need to be more aggressive. But no, from a mental point of view, he put me back in a place where I feel so much better on the court.

And we worked on the fundamentals, and that helped me to boost my confidence in my physical shape, first of all. They have that method, because that's the Swedish method with some specific training exercises that always paid off, and they gave it Elena as well. These are exercises that are different, like Gunter has also different exercises.

But it helped me very, very quickly, because in terms of level of play, I played well. In Lyon I was very happy with my performance, and it showed well. It was a good demonstration against Baez. I performed well. So I was

reassured by the choice I made, and I decided to continue working to continue with the discipline.

Then when I played again, I thought that my level of play was higher in the U.S. than when I came back at the beginning of the year, after Indian Wells.

**Q. You could see Arthur Fils in Vancouver. What did you see in him? It seemed that you went on quite well, the two of you.**

GAEL MONFILS: What I like with him, first of all, he wants to do well, and that's important.

But, you know, he really wants to do well for himself, first of all, and that's important.

I like the way he thinks, how daring he can be in his own thoughts. He's also very respectful. I thought that he was very respectful towards all the surroundings, all the people around him. He's very respectful with people at large. You could think, okay, some are less respectful. Let's not lie about it. But I like that, that he was very respectful, very grateful, as well.

He's got such a wonderful team spirit. That's wonderful already. He's very rigorous. It's nice to watch that in him. I hope that he will carry on in this direction, because he's really on a roll. He's on a wonderful win streak, and I hope that he won't have any obstacles.

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