

# Rolex Paris Masters

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Paris, France

## Grigor Dimitrov

Press Conference



G. DIMITROV/H. Hurkacz

6-1, 4-6, 6-4

THE MODERATOR: Questions in English.

**Q. I would like you to talk a little bit about a specific shot of yours, the slice backhand. It's working very well on this surface. I wonder how you find the balance in your shot selections. You have been compared to Roger's all the time, and I think it's really working, those conditions.**

GRIGOR DIMITROV: Yeah, I think it works in a lot of different conditions, the slice. I think it's all how you're gonna use it.

I think that's why every time that I get out on any court that I play, you know, not just here, yeah, not just indoors, whatever the speed is, you know, if you're able to pick up the right shots, I think it helps a lot to use the slice in particular and set up a point.

But for me, I have always been a very, can I say, naturally like playing slice a lot. So it's probably one of the first shots I actually learned how to do, and that's why I think I feel so comfortable with it.

Yeah, it really also depends the player you're playing against, as well. Not all the time you get slice to be that effective. But I think always if you use it in a right way, it helps you to set up to hit the shot after or to do something with your forehand.

So, you know, all in all you can use slice in three very different variables throughout the point.

**Q. Against a big server like Hubert, the fact that you block the ball, it kind of helps you against his serve, no?**

GRIGOR DIMITROV: Yeah, against any player, one of the most important things is to get into a rally, and that's the most important thing. If I'm able to do that more regularly,

it creates a little bit of a doubt in any player's game.

So for me, in a way when I say it's a basic shot, it's a basic shot. If you don't have enough behind it, then you need to block the shot. It's the same thing on the forehand. If you don't have enough time, you need to block it.

But on the backhand side, especially that I'm one-hander, it's way more difficult to block all the time. What is the alternative to that? Hit a slice. In a way, on the return is very basic and it's quite simple.

**Q. It's great to see Grigor Dimitrov flying all over the court again like 2017 and 2018. Tomorrow we may have a Balkan semifinals and then Sunday maybe a Balkan finals. What do you have to say in regards to our part of the world? Is there a special aspect of motivation for sportsmen to come...**

GRIGOR DIMITROV: I wish I could say more to that (smiling). I would love to.

Of course, I think, you know, I don't know how much of life we had early on in our lives in those countries, but it's always, we represent our countries I think very proudly, and I think that's in a way the most important thing.

I've always carried my flag with such, you know, dignity, respect, honor, and all that sense. I've always played for my country.

It's always very humbling, to be honest, because it doesn't happen all the time. So, you know, you need to cherish it, appreciate it.

Yeah, whoever it is, I think we all are such big competitors, we all want to win. So in the end, I think it's going to come down really to the tennis, but I can speak for myself that it's going to be a great experience.

**Q. You brought Jamie Delgado in at the end of last year, and now you've had such a great season. Obviously he had success with Andy as well. What made you decide to bring him in and what's your relationship like?**

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GRIGOR DIMITROV: Yeah, end of last year, around that time, we all sat down and we spoke a lot about it with my team. Prior to him coming into the team, I spoke a lot with Daniel Vallverdu. He's the main character on our team.

We were thinking who we might feel good to have or someone that we all get along with, someone that he knows as well. You know, there were slim pickings, all in all, around.

So we wanted to make sure that we have somebody that has real expertise in the sport, loves the game, that understands the game, lives for the game in the same way, and I've known Jamie for quite some time.

Yeah, there are a bunch of other names came through, and then when Jamie came around, I was like, hmm, that's interesting. I've never really had that much time with him. We've always been very respectful of one another. I've practiced many times against the players he was coaching, so we all had a very good understanding of one another.

When we met up, it kind of just clicked, and then, yeah, the rest is history. Here we are one year later.

**Q. What is it about, for you, playing Hurkacz with the record you've got against him? Why does it work?**

GRIGOR DIMITROV: Hmm. I think in one of the matches, I think especially one in Monte-Carlo, I think I got a little lucky, if I have to be honest. I think it was a tiebreak in the third.

But he's such a complex player in the same time. I think people see him only as serving big and kind of very crafty and all that, but I think he's an extremely dangerous player, I think.

I think his game also, like, how can I say, that kind of keeps me alive throughout the whole time, because I like that type of a game when someone is attacking me, when they have big serve and stuff like that. Today was also very difficult. I mean, there were like five games I was just a stop sign. I just didn't know which way to go, what to do, how to return.

So that was something that I already, like, experienced in the past. But also in the same time, we've practiced so many times against each other, in a way we know what we're gonna do.

Yeah, I mean, I think he's also the type of player that just out of nowhere, especially what happened in the first set, he started playing a completely different tennis. I think that

type of game really keeps me engaged. I think that makes a big difference for me when I play against players like that.

**Q. Who do you think would win the match between you six years ago and you today, and why?**

GRIGOR DIMITROV: Six years ago (smiling)? Jesus. I don't know. Probably -- I never go back, so I would say probably me now (smiling).

I don't know. I think there are many reasons. It's very difficult for me to pinpoint one thing in particular, especially in our sport. But I think for me one of the things that I have always been very fond of is to improve on whatever level I can. For example, now I have improved quite a bit of my fitness level, my nutrition, like, there are so many things I feel I have improved.

I think overall the consistency that I'm showing on and off the court is something you learn and that you learn only with maturity, with time. That's why I'm saying the guy now would probably beat the other one in straight sets.

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