

Rolex Paris Masters

Sunday, 5 November 2023

Paris, France

Novak Djokovic

Press Conference



N. DJOKOVIC/G. Dimitrov

6-4, 6-3

THE MODERATOR: Novak, well done. 40th career Masters 1000 title. What was the most difficult moment of the week for you?

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: There was a few (smiling). A very challenging week. I think also off the court, you know, dealing with the stomach virus that really took a lot of energy out of me, but somehow, yeah, I managed to, I guess, find this extra energy when it was most needed, particularly in the days of Thursday, Friday, and Saturday, where I was probably closer to losing these matches than winning.

So considering what happened in the last six, seven days, this win is definitely one of the most special wins in the Masters 1000 category.

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

Q. Where does this title fit in? Not just the 40th but the 7th over here, 97th career. The numbers just keep racking up.

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: Well, I try to be a good student of the game and keep track with the numbers, but at the same time, you know, I also want to be able to just direct my attention to the next challenge, you know. As long as I'm an active player, I guess that's going to be kind of the mentality I will nurture.

It's great, but it's already behind me. I'm very of course proud of the achievement but I'm already turning the next page. This is, fortunately or unfortunately, the way it works for me, and the way I think is the correct, so to say, mentality moving forward. Because while I'm still active, I still want to win more and I still want to play at the highest level. Obviously Grand Slams and Masters events are the most valuable tournaments in our sport.

So considering, as I said, the circumstances I had in the

last seven days, you know, this win has more weight and more value and it's extra sweeter, so to say, particularly at these stage of my career. I don't even know in which stages of my career I am anymore (smiling), but I think that every win on a big tournament maybe the value is double nowadays.

Q. You have touched on it again already, but yesterday you also said you hadn't been feeling great physically the last few days. Was there anything other than the stomach bug bothering you? Do you think your scheduling helps you overcome it given you haven't played for a few weeks?

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: Yeah, it could be the case. I really put a lot of effort into preparing myself for this last stretch of the season. Spent three, four weeks of really working on the tennis court and of course on my fitness.

You know, I'm feeling great in terms of my body. Of course there is always something that, you know, tightens up here and there. But, you know, it was this virus that was really the biggest opposition, so to say, this week in terms of me feeling well on the court. That was something that is kind of outstanding, you know, that is not something that I'm normally encountering.

So I had to deal with that along with my team. There was obviously 24 hours really focused on trying to get me recovered and prepared for the next match.

Yeah, I mean, it's amazing that I was able to feel this way today, considering I had three days in a row, three matches of three hours, three-setters. I'm really happy for that.

Q. What do you think it means for the rest of the field that you can get out of a week like this, struggling physically, getting sick, and still winning? What does it say about the margin you have and how depressing you think it is for them?

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: You have to ask them. I don't know (smiling). I just, you know, try to do my best, as everybody else.



You know, on a given day you have to encounter different things. You know, people expect you to always be at your best, to be, you know, always reaching the finals, I mean in my case.

I'm glad that that's the case, you know, that people kind of see me as one of the main favorites in every single tournament. But at the same time, you know, we are also human beings that have to deal with different things off the court, whether it's health-wise, emotions, or whatever is happening in your private life.

So all of it has an effect on how you feel on the court and how you perform. Yeah, I tried to do my very best this week and I think I have done under the circumstances. Did I play my best tennis? I don't think I played my best tennis. In every match actually, my level was not to the level that I normally would play the biggest tournaments.

But, you know, it's one of those weeks where you just have to accept the circumstances and fight to survive another day.

Q. Congratulations. Trust me, it's very serious. My wife texts me and asks me, could you maybe give a hint of how you recover or what kind of medicine you took, because many people have stomach bugs. She sadly suffers a lot about it. She said maybe Novak could help. There's my question for you.

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: I cannot. I'm not a doctor so I'm unable to give medical advice (smiling).

I guess, you know, everyone is different, but, you know, for me hydration is the key, I think, for anything, really. I can't talk on behalf of your wife or anybody else, you know, what kind of diet helps or doesn't help.

You know, I couldn't eat much really these days, so I probably would eat only once in a day, and then I wouldn't eat anything. Just be on liquids, because anything that I, you know, would put in my mouth, it would go out very quickly (smiling).

So that's, yeah, and then of course you feel dizzy, you feel dehydrated all the time. You feel weak.

But I guess, you know, for a professional athlete, once you are out on the court, it's basically very clear. Either you let the circumstances and the feelings that you have at that moment master you or you try to master them in a way. So there's no in between. So you either fold, retire, or just, you know, kind of give away the match, or you try to draw the energy from the adrenaline that you're feeling from the crowd, from the momentum that you're feeling on the court.

So that's what kind of helped me to have extra, I think, extra push, extra energy this week.

But I experience the stomach bugs like anybody else. Maybe for me it lasted shorter than for your wife, I'm not sure, but it was three, four days of big struggle. So today is the first day that I have been actually feeling that it's behind me.

Sorry I couldn't give any medicine advice or, you know, the cures. There is no cure, I guess (smiling).

Q. Novak, one more event left on the regular tour. I know there is Davis Cup still to come. And there is also the extending or potential extending of your record at No. 1. If you had the choice, which would you go for, winning a record again with the ATP Finals, Nitto ATP Finals, or 400 weeks at No. 1?

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: Both. Why not, you know?

I'm going for whatever I can go for. I'm very close. I think I need one win to clinch the year No. 1, so that was the biggest goal other than, you know, Davis Cup for the end of the year.

Yeah, I mean, and now it's going to be recovery time definitely next three, four days, to really leave the racquet aside and just spend time with the family and recharge, and then go to Torino, where every match is going to be like finals of a big tournament, because you play a top-8 player. You know, every match carries a lot of points, carries a lot of importance.

It's a group stage format which we don't get to experience in any other tournament, so even if you lose a match or even two, in a round-robin system you can still go through semis. I had the perfect score in Torino last year, five out of five matches. I like playing there. I think I connect well with the Italian crowd.

I'm going there with good feelings, with a lot of confidence. You know, I haven't lost a match since Wimbledon final, so I'm really excited to hopefully finish off the season on a high.

But yeah, clinching the year No. 1 and Davis Cup are the two biggest goals.

THE MODERATOR: Questions in French.

Q. If we compare with Rafael Nadal, Nadal never won here. Federer won once. That's actually the title that you have won most. How come you're so strong here

at this period of the time? How can you explain that?

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: My goal is to end up the season on the high note, on the highest note possible. The players that are not fighting for the World Tour Finals like Grigor, they have more motivation to end up this last tournament of the season on a high note, but you also have players who are very tired, and there are also players who are fighting who have a ticket for Turin.

So I'm one of the players who are very motivated to end up the season on a high note. With all of the emotion and the energy from the public this week in Paris, every day I find the motivation to play my best tennis in Paris, in Roland Garros or here in Bercy.

I don't know if that is the most accurate explanation for you, but I'm very motivated, may it be the beginning of the year and we can see it with the outcome I had in Australia, but also I'm very motivated at the end of the year with Bercy here, and you can see the outcome here. So that's the reason.

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