

Rolex Paris Masters

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Richard Gasquet

Press Conference



Z. BERGS/R. Gasquet

6-3, 6-4

THE MODERATOR: Questions in French.

Q. Richard, it must be hard to approach such a match because it's a farewell match. You have to be serious. There is a lot of emotions.

RICHARD GASQUET: Yes, it's strange. You feel a lot of emotion. It's not the last tournament fortunately, but also the court surface was quite fast. Sometimes I felt overwhelmed, I have to admit.

I didn't always play well. I was a bit tense. He had two matches under his belt, so he managed to get the upper hand quickly. I didn't get the breakpoints, but I can't say what I feel. I have always played tennis all my life. So delivering such a speech at the end, you know, it's a bit strange.

But that's life. It has to happen one day. I tried to push it back as much as possible, but it had to happen one day.

Q. You need to live for such moments to understand what's going on, and we see some tears as well when you see video with all your career, don't you?

RICHARD GASQUET: As soon as I announced it, it hit me. It's the last tournament, so it's not obvious. I felt tense. You know it's the last time. So it was very specific. He played well. He was stronger than me. I didn't deliver, and the surface was fast.

I didn't manage to hit wonderful shots, but that's what tennis is all about. It's still a passion. It's the first round of Bercy. There is a lot of public. Delivering a speech after all this wasn't easy.

Q. What comes next in the next weeks? You said that you would still play? Will you prepare as much as you can to be at the top of your physical shape?

RICHARD GASQUET: No, I'm giving 100% of everything I have. I prepared so much for Bercy. I said to myself I would give 100% of what I have, but the level was less good on this tournament.

If I'm at this ranking now, it's not for any reason. I ended up 130 worldwide. That's why I'm stopping. Otherwise I wouldn't end my career now.

I'm lucky to be in good physical shape, to play well, to be able to pretend to expect winning some matches. I try not to be wounded and to enjoy as much as I can. I'll try to carry on until the French Open.

Q. You're part of the generation where we think you would continue until the age 50. Tiem is 31, and he said that tennis will break players sooner, and that maybe you're part of the last generation playing until you're 40.

RICHARD GASQUET: Well, you know, I couldn't say. I guess, yeah, I think -- well, there was Connors as well before, but there were not that many players who were 35 who could play so long. Rafa, who won at 36. Novak, Federer. It's unfathomable. Sometimes when we analyze all this, well, you know, they play fast.

So to have a long career, well, you know, tennis is very physical. So we will see until when they can hold their own.

There was a generation with Gael, as well, and they played for quite some time. Today it's quite strange for me to be on the court after Arthur and Giovanni. You can tell, right? I can admit they're 21; I'm 38. Whew. You know, sometimes I'm losing my groove.

I was used to having Gilles and Lucas, and with Cedric, as well, for Roland Garros. So sometimes it's hard for me to find my landmarks. When you're in the locker room and you see such young players, well, you know, it's hard.

Q. How will you set your schedule next year? Will it depend on wildcards, or will you try to get into the main tournaments?



RICHARD GASQUET: (Indiscernible.)

Q. Are there tournaments that are really dear to your heart?

RICHARD GASQUET: Montpellier, Marseilles, I would like to play last time, because they are dear to my heart. Monaco, as well. I'd like to play quallies in Monaco. A few challengers in France, as well. And Roland Garros. To try to have a nice season. There are beautiful tournaments to play ahead.

So I hope that I can continue until then. I was asked if I would stop in Bercy or in Roland Garros. I think it's a good choice to stop at Roland Garros. I wanted to play as many matches as possible, because ending your sports life is not easy.

Q. When you saw all the videos, what did you feel when you delivered this speech?

RICHARD GASQUET: Well, I didn't feel ready. You know, it was a first. You always have a first and a last. It was a first for me this time.

When you play your first time, you play for the first time Roland Garros and Bercy, this is incredible. And I found myself with a mic for the first time today, and it felt like a first time. It was the first time, actually.

Really, it moved me to end up this tournament this way, but I still have a few opportunities ahead. I'll be 39 next year in Paris. I can't wish any further.

Q. When we talk about the old players passing the torch, I would like to ask a question about Rafa who is going to pass the torch in three weeks. If there is a child asking you in three weeks that in some time, I haven't seen Rafa Nadal, why was he so special, why was he so strong, why has he become a GOAT?

RICHARD GASQUET: I would like children not to ask me, because already adults and since I'm 19 I have been asked the same question. You know, if the children could not look it up, could look it up on Google or something, it would be better, because yeah, I hope they will know Rafael Nadal.

I cannot tell how many times I was asked this specific question: Why is he so special? I mean, come on, just look at him, just watch him on TV, and that's it.

Why is he so special? I can't even answer that question. He's won 14 times Roland Garros. Just imagine that

figure. Not even in sci-fi, you couldn't win Roland Garros 14 times, and yet it was done by him.

Once you have said that, you have said everything, you have said it all. Winning one tournament is not easy. He's amazing. The intensity, his level of play, his physical fitness.

I couldn't tell you how he managed to make such achievements. Sometimes things are rational. Well, you see his level of play, but to that point, I couldn't tell. Even I couldn't tell you.

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