

Rolex Paris Masters

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Paris, France

Felix Auger-Aliassime

Press Conference



F. AUGER-ALIASSIME/A. Bublik

7-6, 6-4

THE MODERATOR: Questions in English.

Q. Felix, in case it's Jannik, you have a very balanced matchup, 2-2. Do you think that the slow conditions will actually favor you in case you play the finals with him tomorrow?

FELIX AUGER-ALIASSIME: Yeah, we're 2-2, but it's not like -- you know, obviously he's the favorite on paper, because we played a good match I think in New York. I think it was good tennis. But he still got the best of me.

Obviously the first times I won it was before he was Jannik, you know, (smiling). It was, like, young Jannik. He improved a lot since then.

But it's always good to play him. I feel like he pushes players to be very, very disciplined tactically and to execute their game, you know, almost perfectly in order to win.

You know, you have to be ready to play your best tennis and to not make cheap mistakes. So I'm going to try to do that and win tomorrow.

THE MODERATOR: Questions in French.

Q. Felix, congrats on your win. You said yesterday that you were a different man from the man you were in 2022. How different are you from the tennis point of view and as a man? And it will be your second Masters 1000 final after Madrid. Will you address that differently?

FELIX AUGER-ALIASSIME: Well, I try to improve myself as a player but also as a person. As a person I try to stay the same person. But as a player, I try to improve all my shots. My serve is more stable, my return game has improved. We saw it today. I actually returned well. My backhands and my return game were better. So I'm an all-arounder.

But then in 2022 there was this excitement and this lack of confidence, because when I played less well, then I would have less self-confidence. Now I consider myself as a good player on the tour. There are days where, you know, I'm a good player and days when I'm a less-good player.

I just have to accept it and find the keys to win. That allows me to end up in finals in tournaments like this one after difficult matches where you don't feel well all the time. And this is the most important point where I actually improved myself.

The second question was, as for Madrid, yes, I was a bit nervous, I have to say. I had cramps early on in the match during the second set, so it didn't help. But despite this, I held my own.

I think that I'm going to approach tomorrow's match better. I'll be more at peace, and I'll be able to last throughout the match and hold my own.

Q. I would like to go back to the US Open match with Jannik, because sometimes losses are actually a good way to learn lessons. I thought that at some points you were dictating the rallies, so didn't you feel after the match that maybe you were not far from being able to win against him or Alcaraz? Maybe this loss actually helped you in a way.

FELIX AUGER-ALIASSIME: Yes, in a way. Especially in Cincinnati the loss was very hard. I was far from winning against him. So this time it was much better. At one point I saw him doubt. And I actually at one point I nearly had a momentum shift where I could turn the match around in my favor.

After different reasons, maybe he had a letdown, and the match turns around again. But it was encouraging to see that. These players are not unplayable. They are very strong, yes. Sometimes they're really unplayable. But there's a way to upset them in a way.

Q. You have won a lot, 22 wins over 26 matches over the last three months. But since Wimbledon there is

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only Jannik and Carlos who took more points. I don't know if they won more matches, but only these two actually took more points than you. We say that there's not a third man on the tour; it's actually quite open. So do you feel that maybe you're actually riding the best momentum in your career? Have you had such a strong streak over two, three months? And we were talking yesterday about you getting into the top 10 for a longer period of time, and maybe you could go higher, because after Carlos and Jannik there is actually a spot to grab.

FELIX AUGER-ALIASSIME: I don't want to look ahead too much, but I'm watching tennis. I see everything that's happening, the players, the momentum of everyone. Jannik and Carlos are indeed at a very high level. There is also players who have shown a consistent level like Fritz, for instance. They've shown a lot of consistency.

I have a lot of work to do on that field, but for some months now I can see that I'm reaching the right level, that I'm actually controlling my game. You know, when I compare that period in 2022, when I won 16 matches in a row, that was actually a wonderful period, but that helped me to learn from that period, as well. These are the two important phases of my career, then and now.

Q. You said earlier that you were looking for improving your match all the time. You have improved on your backhand over the last months. How do you approach the fact that you work on your strong points but also to try to compensate your weaknesses? How do you manage to weigh in in this eternal dilemma?

FELIX AUGER-ALIASSIME: That's a very good question. There are times where I work too much on my weaknesses, and I forget my strong weapons. I forget to improve on my backhand, on my serve. But I can see I win a lot with my forehand and with my serve.

And I have to be clinical on these points. I have to be able to continue mastering what I do well. But throughout the matches, with practice sessions, I also try to work on periods for 20, 30 minutes where I would work on things to improve. But for an hour and a half I work on what works and what makes me win. This is how I manage to strike the right balance between the two.

When I arrive one day, I know that sometimes I'm going to work on things to improve and sometimes I work on how to clean up my game. This is how I manage to improve my preparation.

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