

# Rolex Paris Masters

Sunday, 2 November 2025

Paris, France

## Cedric Pioline

### Press Conference



(In French.)

THE MODERATOR: We will have a statement by Cedric, and then we will have a Q&A, because there is some information he wants to share.

CEDRIC PIOLINE: Yes, indeed. I'm delighted to be here this morning with all of you for this traditional post-tournament conference, even if we do not know the winner yet for this 2025 edition.

What I can tell you right now is that we had talked about Rolex Paris Masters that enters a new era. We can say that the bet has been won. The challenge has been faced successfully throughout the whole week.

We have an attendance of 220,000 spectators for this edition. We don't have the precise figures yet. In 2024 the figures were 176,000 spectators, so that's a great leap forward, and we are very proud of this.

We can say that our best ambassadors were the players, because they were convinced by the project that we offered them with the dedicated facilities, the facilities dedicated to them. I'm not going to repeat everything that we've said, but the areas dedicated to them. The locker room, the players lounge, which is just next to the courts, and the setup, the game setup available to them, with dedicated areas with the central area.

I know that now you're acquainted with it. The practice court, this gym zone that was very much satisfactory to players, and there is a bit of the surface of the court that is on the floor, and that is very good for warm-up sessions.

We know that these players are Formula 1 players, and we need them to practice in the best possible conditions for competition purposes, and they liked it very much.

A greater capacity on the center court, because we have 17,500 spectators, the second-largest court capacity after Arthur Ashe in New York, but the first one also in Europe, the greatest, largest capacity of all tournaments combined together. Court 1 and 2, whose capacity and playing

conditions have improved greatly, as compared to what we had before.

The Court 1 worked very well. This is something that we thought was wonderful. This was exactly what the tournament's organization wanted, namely to have some kind of new equilibrium between the side court and the center court, and it seems that it was a bet that was won here. The fans really took ownership of this new court, this new area.

We have had wonderful moments together. Once this has been said, we are fully aware that not everything is perfect. There is room for improvement. We will take into account all the feedback from all the stakeholders of this event, including yourselves.

I did hear your message about the positioning of your media section, of course, in front of you, so I'm actually talking about this specifically. As you can imagine, we are going to have a lot of debriefing sessions in-house, first of all, with the whole Federation at large, but also with ATP.

We have reports that will be drawn up. We think that it will be positive, but we are definitely going to take into account all the feedback. But also with the venue's organization, we, just like a musical show, we are producers, but we just produce sports here.

So there are a lot of things that have been set up. We have to work with the venue's organizers. The collaboration was seamless, it was positive, but collectively, as a team, we can still improve for the tournament to be even better.

There is a lot of satisfaction, as well, on the opening show with this iconic tunnel we knew at the arena that was set aside, because it's a new venue, it's a new room, it's a new show, a new history, and it was therefore important for us to stand out and to have something that is suited to this venue. The tunnel wouldn't have worked here, and this was not what we wanted anyway.

Something else that is also important and worthwhile mentioning, many people, maybe you but also others and



also some of us, regarding the organization of this venue, on the curtains and on the noise, because of course the noise spreads around, rightfully we had concerns about these curtains. And I would say that what was a concern before has become, as far as I'm concerned, a hallmark identity item of this tournament, because it's very lively.

This is part and parcel of the tournament where we hear far away some fans applauding, for instance, and in this way, some fans would actually look up their telephone to check what's happening in the other courts. Fans have a ticket where they can actually go from one court to another throughout the whole venue. So it's something quite positive, I would say.

Something else, last but not least, the wheelchair tennis. It worked well. It's something that is new, and it's good to put the spotlight on wheelchair tennis, for the Federation to showcase this area of tennis.

After the doubles semifinals, the Herbert-Halys pair played, and of course the moderator encouraged everyone to watch it, but it was full. There were 4,000 spectators, so it's a good thing. It's good for the tournament.

So that's what I could tell you. And now a Q&A session, if you please.

**Q. Hello, Cedric. Two questions, rather. 225,000 spectators -- no, 220,000. Do you know which is the maximum capacity? And the question that follows up from this, is the tournament profitable with these important ticket sales? Because we have to take into account the costs relating to transferring to here.**

CEDRIC PIOLINE: The total capacity is unknown to me precisely. The ticket sales office knows it. It's a matter of multiples. There is 17,500 times the number of sessions, and then you have the quallies. So you reach 226,000, 227,000 tickets all in all, so we're nearly full.

It's quite satisfactory, I have to say, without getting into details of the figures, because this is something that is confidential. It costs us more right now than the income generated, but the objective of the French Tennis Federation was not a financial objective. The aim was not to earn more money but rather to secure this tournament, because part of the reasons why we relocated to here was to make this tournament a bigger venue, a bigger event, to tell another story, to open a new chapter in the life of the tournament.

For 40 years we have had, since 1986, a wonderful tournament at Bercy Arena, but we needed to gear up. The objective was not a financial objective. We'll generate

less margin, as we say, than in 2024.

**Q. Two questions. One for the tournament director and one for the previous player. For the tournament director, you mentioned earlier that, as of now, there wasn't a separate ticketing system. Given the success and the great atmosphere we've seen on Court 1, would you consider it relevant to introduce a distinct ticketing policy for that court starting next year? And to the former player, many Masters 1000 titles this season have been won by first-time champions, players winning their maiden Masters 1000 title, such as Draper, Mensik, and possibly Felix later today. How do you explain that the Masters 1000 events seem to be more open than the Grand Slams, where Alcaraz and Sinner have largely dominated the titles?**

CEDRIC PIOLINE: You have spoken so much and so fast. Well, as for dedicated ticket sales, we wondered about that before we want to follow up on the model that we had before, because our fans are accustomed to it.

Of course, against the backdrop of this success, we will talk about this during the debriefing session. We will have the answer to that question very quickly, because traditionally, we would launch the sales in two months at Christmastime. So we don't have a lot of time ahead.

But without getting too much into the nitty-gritty of everything, if we were to decide to go in that direction, this would have an impact on the flows of spectators. Some ticket holders are used to having tickets for the center court, and the quotas would be less. What about the prices also? The prices would change as opposed to what we offer for the center court.

So there are so many things to think about. We shouldn't make a decision too quickly. We have to weigh everything that is related to that subject before making a decision.

Then to answer your second question, the ATP calendar is fast-paced, undoubtedly. We have forgotten that during the spring, Sinner hasn't played a lot of Masters 1000s. At one point, we had a Big 4, and then we had a Big 3, and now we have a Big 2. Will we have a Big 3 again? We hope so, because the more, the merrier, as we say.

So it will give more space to other players of high level to make big achievements. We need time to see if a victory is a flash in the pan or a long-lasting success.

We have Alcaraz and Sinner who are above the crowd. We see it for Grand Slam tournaments. But for Masters 1000s, there is more space. Of course they cannot take all the victories at all tournaments at once.

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They're not concerned by next week's tournament because it's an ATP 250, but we're waiting for Sinner's win. But we don't know who's going to end up being No. 1. There is 4,000 points between the first and the second, and so this shows how much these two players stand out from the crowd as opposed to the other players.

**Q. I would like to go back to the ticket sales. If I understand well, the tournament will have less margin, but they will still be profitable. Could I have an idea of the organization cost? How much did it increase? Could you give us the total revenue?**

CEDRIC PIOLINE: In terms of ticket sales, we're quite stable as opposed to 2024. In terms of ticket sales price, this was what we wanted. We wanted to keep the prices as they were or not too much.

Some are more qualified and smarter than me to talk about this than I would be, but what we wanted to do is to make a comparison with the Bercy's room, and we have made a zoning on the categories of seats. Our capacity is larger, but a larger capacity doesn't imply necessarily to have more revenues.

The margin will decrease, yes, because we have additional costs, and the contract is not the same as the one we had with Bercy Arena. I will not give you figures, but I'll give you some hints.

We have 9,000 square meters of curtains. It's not the shower curtain that you could have at home. The square meter price is not the same, but you can make multiples to calculate how much it could represent. The budget is very costly, but it was necessary for the comfort of both players and fans.

We also have provisional stands and sections that have been set up. It's an investment for us. We bought them, and they were tailor made. And also, here I'm going to make a comparison with real estate. When we have a 100-square-meter apartment and we relocate to a 200-square-meter apartment, of course it costs more.

You also have to furnish everything. We have a wonderful media center. We are delighted about this media center. But there are costs everywhere to pay, and there are also hidden costs. There is a lot of things that you don't see, but they cost money. So when we add it all up, it costs more. But we're still delighted about this, because we have seen that it paid off.

**Q. (Off mic.)**

CEDRIC PIOLINE: There are always last-minute surprises, but we are rent tenants. There were things we didn't think about earlier. As a reminder, between January 2024 where the French Tennis Federation voted for the relocation, it was taken, it was resolved, adopted, and today, 18 months, 20 months have elapsed. It's quite a short time frame.

When they think that we delivered the 2024 edition, we have also a contract where some time was missing somehow. We couldn't think about everything, which is quite natural. So in terms of operation, we have had costs that we hadn't taken into account in the budget. That's the salt and pepper. The devil is always in the detail.

**Q. I wanted to make a joke, but I'm not going to make a joke.**

CEDRIC PIOLINE: Your jokes are actually very bad, so I don't want to listen to them. (Laughter.)

**Q. So what about the slow-paced courts? You had talked about it. You said that it would be slower than the past years, but when you discovered the pace index, the court pace index that dropped so much, do you have a real control over that? Because when you have the people coming to measure, would you know that the CPI would be 35?**

CEDRIC PIOLINE: We do not have the possibility to ask for something specific by saying as for the CPI, what was measured at 35, we can't say we want 35.5, 36, or 37. We give a range. We want medium, fast, or something. We wanted to have a slower court as opposed to last year. This was crystal clear.

But I also find it interesting to highlight something. As usual, as for every tournament, we had four semifinalists. Three of them expressed a comment either on the surface or on the balls. If they reached the semifinals in a Masters 1000, it's already a performance per se.

Felix, he said the balls are crap. This is what he said during his first round. What I said afterwards was what about the balls? Maybe they're not that bad, are they?

But then these are small discussions we have between the tournament director -- I'm an ex-player, as you know -- and with the players. I know how the players feel when they arrive in the new facility and venue and they discover the new playing circumstances, but then making a comment about another comment is not constructive.

But I know we have to sort out between the player discovering the conditions and making a comment without



thinking about it and something that is actually a well-founded comment. I think what we managed to establish is a good compromise for all playing styles.

**Q. I would like to talk about Felix. You followed him throughout the whole week. He seems to be reaching his highest level, because he actually went far in the US Open, and he is playing the final today. Could he be the third man? Could he play the same role of Djokovic when Nadal and Federer were the top guys? Could he be part of the top three?**

CEDRIC PIOLINE: I'm sure he would like it to be.

**Q. Do you think he can make it?**

CEDRIC PIOLINE: Well, for today for the match to come at 3:00, we'll see what happens, but then it's difficult to look ahead in time, because the consistency that it requires to be the potential third top guy and to be able to upset -- I was about to say Federer, but I'm saying Sinner and Alcaraz, it's a big challenge.

All players, but also us from the outside, as spectators, we would like to see a top third guy. It would be nice to have a tripod.

I am not convinced that this is the case, because he cannot mix all shots like Alcaraz, the creativity like Alcaraz, and the consistency as Sinner would have. But Sinner, two years, three years ago, didn't have the same consistency either, so it requires a lot of work.

He had a knee tendinitis that disabled him for nearly a full season when he qualified for the Masters, and he managed to get back on track. So why not? What about Fonseca? Because his potential is quite impressive. But there are a lot of question marks. Will he stay on track? Will he exploit his full potential? Will he reach maturity fast enough or not?

I don't have a crystal ball, but what I wish, we have a new chapter opening. And we had a lot of concerns with the retirement of Murray, Federer, Nadal, Djoko soon. Certainly we have two wonderful players coming up that are just as attractive as the ones that I just mentioned, so maybe not next week but in two, three weeks, there will be one standing out. I'm sure it will happen. But who? The question is open.

**Q. One of the assets of Bercy was the atmosphere. Sometimes it's electric. Do you think that this wonderful atmosphere managed to reach this venue in La Defense Arena? Do you think we should wait before making sure that the atmosphere will be there?**

CEDRIC PIOLINE: You are touching on a very important part, because this is part and parcel of the identity of the tournament. We found it on Court 1. Less on the center court.

I would like to remind you, because now this tournament has been going on for decades. What we often talk about when we talk about the tournament was the fact that it was a very electric atmosphere, but it was not the case all the time.

Over the last three years, we were sold out, so it was a reality. But now, as you have said rightfully, people need to take ownership of the venue. We need to have some landmark matches to create this, as was the case for Bercy, we need to have long-lasting -- we need to have matches that we'll keep in mind for a long time, and we need to feel the vibe.

My feeling, what I'm saying is not for communication purposes, but my feeling is that the court can be lit, can be on fire any time. We just need the right sparkle. That will be part of the surveys and the feedback that we'll have to try to see the percentage of fans from Bercy and the percentage of new fans that are coming here that wouldn't go to Bercy before.

And I think that the percentage is more in favor of repeaters rather than in favor of new coming fans, but we can feel the electricity. We just need the sparkle, the right sparkle. And hopefully it will come this afternoon.

THE MODERATOR: The last question, in English.

**Q. Thank you very much for the inaugural edition, Mr. Director. I wanted to see if perhaps there was any discussion about this 10th Masters, the news that came out in regards to Saudi Arabia, and will this disturb the value of the Masters tournaments that currently exist?**

CEDRIC PIOLINE: Well, that's a big subject. No, it's very interesting, definitely (smiling).

The 10th one is, as you know, nonmandatory, like Monte-Carlo, so in a way, we are, as Rolex Paris Masters, we are protected, because it's mandatory for the players to join us.

Definitely, in my opinion, the way the players are building their calendar all year long, they need to probably adapt, rethink a few things, because there is no space for them to -- I mean, when you do the simple thing like the four slams, I mean, at least eight mandatory Masters 1000 plus

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potentially two, plus few 500s, 250s, Davis Cup, maybe some exhibition, whatever, Laver Cup, it's a very heavy calendar.

So I guess we need to do, to make some choices and to be smart, and where are the priorities? And I think that's the direction. But definitely we have, there is like a turn or change who is there, because yeah, I think it's different now from maybe even like two to three years ago, and the future is going to be a bit different from what we know now.

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