

Nitto ATP Finals

Tuesday, 17 November 2020

London, England, UK

Dominic Thiem

Press Conference



D. THIEM/R. Nadal

7-6, 7-6

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. Would you say that's one of the greatest wins of your career, given the circumstances and your opponent?

DOMINIC THIEM: I would say so, yeah. I mean, definitely one of the better matches I have played so far in my career. I think it came close to the second-group match last year against Nole.

I think we both played great tennis, and if we do so, at the end, matches like that are the outcome, and very, very small things make the difference, then like turned around the first-set break where probably he was the little bit better player in that first set, in that first-set breaker, but I still won it.

Even though Rafa is like 100% from the first to the last point, it's very, very important to get that first set against him, because the winning percentage he has after winning the first set is incredible and almost impossible to beat him after losing the first set.

So I was lucky and happy to get that first one in the tiebreak. And then second set I think had everything. Got the first break and then played probably the best game of the match to make the rebreak, and then again another good tiebreak. Was a great match which I will remember for a long time.

Q. Do you feel like you're back to maybe the level from the US Open? Because you had that problem, I guess you had some weariness, so are you kind of back to your 100% level now?

DOMINIC THIEM: Honestly, I think that today I played a little bit higher level than at the US Open and was maybe the best match for me since the restart of the tour. That makes me super happy.

I mean, obviously it was not easy to come back after US Open and French Open. I was like on unbelievable emotional state and everything. Then also the home tournament in Vienna a little injury, so that was not easy.

But now I'm 100% recovered. I had a great preparation, as well, for London, so I'm super happy with the way I'm playing here.

Q. You mentioned your serve out on court as being maybe the key shot. I just wanted to ask you about the backhand down the line. How important is that shot against Rafa in particular? Because it seems like a shot that you play particularly well and maybe he struggles more against that than against other players.

DOMINIC THIEM: Yeah, I practiced that shot so much during the time off before the season was starting again. So I'm super happy with the way it worked out.

But I think that's the only thing which is a little bit easy against Rafa on hard court or on faster surfaces where the bounce is not that high, because on clay it's impossible against him to do that shot. I mean, his topspin is way too aggressive.

But here it's faster. It's not bouncing that high. So I knew that if I want to have a chance, this shot has to go in, the backhand down the line, if I take it early. Luckily it worked out well today.

Q. I want to ask you were you worried when you didn't win those three match points on Rafa's serve on the second set?

DOMINIC THIEM: I mean, that was honestly no problem at all. I mean, I was a little bit nervous of course because I kind of had the chance to win the match, but he played three outstanding points.

He had two very good first serves, and then one time he played serve and volley on the second serve, where he surprised me because he went wide with the second serve. He did great volley. So I couldn't do anything.



I mean, I didn't lose the match points but he saved them great. So just told myself that it's super important not lose any intensity now but to play the next game as good as possible to go up 6-5, and that's what I did.

Well, I couldn't do anything at the three match points.

Q. Before your time, this tournament, the finals were three-out-of-five sets as were Masters 1000s, as was Davis Cup. Now it's pretty much only the majors that play three-out-of-five sets. Do you think they should take that down to two out of three, or do you think that maybe these tournaments should be three out of five towards the finals and why?

DOMINIC THIEM: For me, honestly the way it is now, it's perfect. I think majors should stay best-of-five. It's tradition. It's the way it always was, and it makes it very special. I would love that it stays best-of-five.

Here and also at the Masters 1000 events I think it's great best-of-three, because for example today if we would have played best-of-five, probably the match would have lasted like four hours or something and a little bit tough to recover for the next match.

So I really like the way it is right now. Also with the endings of the fifth set in the slams, it's great that every slam has its own ending. Me personally, I would stay like that.

Q. Your form seems to have gone up a level this year, particularly on hard courts. Do you think that you have still a lot more to come and that your best years are still ahead of you?

DOMINIC THIEM: I hope so (smiling). I think that I raised my level especially on hard court towards the end of last season when I started the Asian swing, and then I won Vienna. I played a great Finals here, and also Australian at the beginning of the year.

So that's gives me feeling I raised my level. I was able to maintain it during the break of the tour, because obviously there was a lot of time for practice to work on things.

Of course I still want to improve. I still have a lot of stuff to improve, especially coming to the net and closing out the points better at the net, so that's my goal for the next preseason.

Q. On what you were just saying about the way you felt you played this match and how well you have played, is it as close as possible to a perfect match for

you, or do you think another match you have played has been a perfect match?

DOMINIC THIEM: Today, if I want to look for mistakes or for things I didn't do right, I think I wouldn't find too many. So I'm super happy with that performance.

As I said, indoors and hard courts, it was probably one of the better matches I have ever played. It came very close to last year's match against Novak here. Also second-group match, which is probably the best three-setter I have ever played.

And as I say, today came very close to that match, and, yeah, now the goal is to enjoy this victory and to maintain that level until Thursday.

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