

Nitto ATP Finals

Wednesday, 18 November 2020

London, England, UK

Novak Djokovic

Press Conference



D. MEDVEDEV/N. Djokovic

6-3, 6-3

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. Can you just explain why it was such an uncharacteristically flat display from you out there, including five double faults?

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: Yeah, just had pretty bad seven games in a row that I lost from 3-2 up. In no time it was 6-3, 3-Love for him.

Yeah, I cannot allow these things to happen when you're playing one of the top players of the world. He was just better, no question about it. I thought we started well, both of us. Up to 3-All it was quite an even match. But then after, you know, just a very long game at 3-All, couple of game points haven't capitalized on them, and after that break he was cruising.

And I made some unforced errors. I dropped the level of just I think the game and the fitness just in general. I just, yeah, struggled to kind of find the right rhythm for 15 minutes or so.

He used it, and then he held his serve all the way till the end. It was just difficult to break his serve. He's serving tremendously well, moving great. Hasn't given me too many unforced errors and free points.

Yeah, I mean, just not a great match from my side. I thought I could have and should have done better, but credit to him for playing on a high level.

Q. Just to clarify something that was said on TV, obviously I'm not there so I can't make a judgment, but they said you were breathing quite heavily between the points. That's their observation. Were you struggling physically today?

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: Well, I was, to be honest, a little bit, especially towards the end of the first set, beginning of the

second. I kind of regrouped and felt better. Felt better towards the end of the match.

But, yeah, just unfortunate 15, 20 minutes for me that resulted with seven games in a row lost. You know, against a player like Medvedev, the match is done.

Q. Considering what you have just said and some of the comments, on the other side of it, do you think that's some of the best tennis that Medvedev has played against you in the series that you'll have had so far?

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: Well, I think indoors suits him really, really nicely. I think he's gonna say probably better than I do about it. He's going to evaluate his game better than I do, so you can ask him.

But I think that he has played on a very high level. If he serves a high percentage of first serve in with angles that he hits, he's a tall guy and he moves well, he rarely misses backhands, and just he's smart player, very smart player. He knows how to make you run, make you play, and he always asks additional shot from back of the court, you know, from his opponent.

If you start making unforced errors and maybe if you're not playing at your best, he uses it. You know, he was a better player. Deserved to win, no doubt about it.

Q. Just away from the match, you have put yourself up for election to rejoin the player council. You obviously asked to kind of step away from that earlier this year and decided to step down. Can you just explain the motivation to try and get back on the council after setting up the PTPA?

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: Yeah, I see you guys are writing about me applying to be in the council, which is not true. I have been nominated by players, and that's how it works.

If you look it up, you can find out what the rule is. I have not proactively run for the council. Neither did Vasek. But both of us have been nominated by a large group of players.



For me, that's a great sign, and of course I feel responsible and honored to be able to represent players. I do not see any conflict of any kind in being part of the PTPA and the ATP Player Council. I have not seen it back in August when the PTPA was founded. I don't see it now.

So that is why I accepted the nomination as well as Vasek, because we just feel that there is a responsibility when you are nominated, and it means that you have trust and credibility from a lot of players.

So we of course made ourselves available, but then the rule by ATP board was voted on last night, which basically doesn't allow any player to, active player to be part of the council and any other organization in the tennis ecosystem, which is disappointing, to be honest, because I have not been approached by anybody from ATP on that matter.

As I was saying in States and Vienna and here to you guys every time you ask me about PTPA and every time you ask me about my role in the council, I have always been very transparent and honest to everybody, and I always emphasized the fact that legally there is absolutely no issues of us being, you know, involved in the council and both PTPA.

I see there is a lot of misconception of what PTPA stands for, why it was founded. I have said many times before and I have no issue to repeat it again. PTPA was founded because there is none of the organizations right now and in the history of the tennis actually that was, that is, representing 100% players' rights.

We are part of the ATP, which is obviously again 50% players, 50% tournaments. Majority of the times we have conflict of interest, and this is why the large amount of players that have signed a document to be part of the PTPA and support its founding back in August this year expressed, you know, the discontent with the way the system works nowadays, especially for the lower-ranked players.

This is the very reason why we founded the PTPA. And I was saying before and I'm going to say it again: We want to collaborate with ATP, and we want to be able to potentially have a place in the ecosystem, because this is what players deserve.

Now with this rule that has been voted on last night, that actually is a strong message from ATP that they don't want PTPA at all in the system, and they don't want any player, you know, involved in council and PTPA at the same time.

So it's very clear. It wasn't clear from ATP before. The

reason why you are not hearing much from PTPA in the last couple of months is because we have been trying to discuss with the ATP and we have actually had some conversations with them on trying to understand how we can work together, because PTPA's position was never to oppose ATP or ITF or WTA or anybody.

But we know what we deserve as players, and we are just trying to fight for a better position and better treatment out there in the ecosystem, and that's all there is.

It's unfortunate really to see that the ATP's position is such, as the rule that they have voted on, but okay, now we know where we stand. So then we obviously have to consider other strategic, I would say, positions and we have to consider our next move in a different way.

We'll see what happens.

Q. We all heard yesterday about the new restrictions issued about the Victorian government about players not being allowed to arrive in Australia until the beginning of January, so if you have to do two weeks' quarantine and go straight into the Australian Open, would you be prepared to do that? And would you like maybe the Australian Open to be pushed back a week or two? How do you think that the best solution would be?

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: Well, there is several options that I hear that are on the table, and I think Tennis Australia has been very communicative and very open with the whole process with us players. I'm very pleased with the way Craig Tiley and Andre Sa from Tennis Australia have been trying to obviously fight for as best of conditions for the players as it is possible, but it's also not in their hands. Obviously the government of Australia decides and Victoria on the conditions and restrictions and so forth.

As far as I know so far the Australian Open will happen, whether it's in the current week or the week later, as you said. If that's what's necessary, then, yes, I would understand the Australian Open being pushed a week later, even though, you know, obviously the tournaments post-Australian Open would get hurt.

So we have to, I think, as men's and women's tennis, ATP, WTA, everybody involved consider what are the ramifications of maybe potentially some decisions that are going to be made in terms of the calendar in Australia and how that's going to affect the tour after that.

So, you know, I'm planning to play Australian Open for sure. I mean, I would like to go there and I'm ready to quarantine for two weeks and whatever is necessary for

me to be able to play.

I hope that there is going to be support and understanding from the Victorian and Australian government for the players and for Tennis Australia and that they will allow players to compete in the second week of quarantine. I mean, hopefully that's going to help tremendously with the calendar and everything, and you won't be then losing a week. You will be able to have at least a tournament or two prior to the Australian Open, which for majority of the players is important. Obviously for a lot of the players, they are done with the season in Paris-Bercy and then potentially having no official match before Australian Open, before a Grand Slam, is a huge thing.

So hopefully we will be able to have at least a tournament before Aussie Open.

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