

Nitto ATP Finals

Sunday, 22 November 2020

London, England, UK

Dominic Thiem

Press Conference



D. MEDVEDEV/D. Thiem

4-6, 7-6, 6-4

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. Sorry, bad luck. Well, you had great chances, especially the second set when you had some breakpoints. In one of them you missed an easy shot. I don't know if you remember, like a dropshot, you were running in front. Do you think this has been probably the biggest chance? I'd like to know if all your slice backhands which were working as a tactic in the second set, if you don't regret that maybe in the third set you should have maybe changed a little bit and played more topspin, let's say, backhand instead of slice.

DOMINIC THIEM: Yeah, I mean, of course maybe the match would have gone or would have had different outcome if I convert that breakpoint. But still, it was not an easy shot. I mean, he played serve and volley. Hit pretty good short volley.

I was in full sprint and had the ball under the net, so it was not that easy, that shot. Of course I should put it in the court, but still I have not so much to regret.

In general, I think, well, two guys faced off each other today in great form. It was great level all three sets long.

There is actually only one shot which I really regret is at 2-1 in the tiebreak where I hit a great return and then played a stupid forehand. But beside that, I cannot really regret something.

Yeah, I mean, in general, it's a good tactic, the slice, especially against Daniil also in the past, so I wanted to use it. I would do the same actually. I mean, the way he broke me in the third set was an unreal game. He put great returns in. I had few chances to convert that game. He played some great rallies there.

Honestly, I would do the same again, play a lot of slice. So

that's it. That's how it is. I mean, this tournament is so tough to win or to play well. Every match is on the edge.

Yesterday was on the edge. Today was on the edge. I can only say well done to him, and that's everything today.

Q. If you had the opportunity to rank the top five players in men's tennis for 2020, who would they be and what would their order be, forgetting about ATP points?

DOMINIC THIEM: (Laughing.) It's not an easy question, but I would say it's almost like the rankings. I mean, I have to put out Roger, of course (laughter). Sorry for that. But he's going to come back next year.

I would put Rublev in there. I think he was top five this year. He won the most titles. He had a hell of a year.

Beside that, I think the ranking is good how it is now. Besides Roger, of course, where he finished his season after Australia, but besides him, the ranking is fine like it is now, I guess.

Q. On that, throwing it forward a little bit, you have had a really impressive year and you're not far off Rafa now in No. 2 despite the defeat. Looking ahead, if you have a good run in Australia, do you see yourself challenging Novak for the No. 1 spot next year?

DOMINIC THIEM: Well, I mean, it was still a very intense year, intense last weeks or actually since the tour returned was super intense, so I haven't set myself any goals yet for next year.

But of course I want to climb up the rankings. I mean, this year and also year has been amazing. I was playing great and had deep runs in many, many big tournaments. That's what I want to do as well next year, and if I'm able to do that, I think I will also get chances to climb the rankings.

But, well, as I said, it's everything so close. Rafa and Nole are up there still. Roger is coming back next year. Guys like Dan and Sascha, Stefanos, and since this year also Rublev, there are I think six, seven guys who will fight for

ASAP sports . . . when all is said, we're done.®

the top spots the next years.

Q. Obviously it's been a strange year for everyone but a very memorable one for you. How do you reflect on 2020? What's maybe the biggest thing you learned about yourself this year?

DOMINIC THIEM: Very interesting year. I mean, it started off tennis-wise great and beside tennis in the normal way like every year else, and then COVID came and everything changed. The whole world stopped somehow.

When the tennis world, our job came back, I mean, luckily it came back, everything was different with life in the bubble, playing without crowd. So there were many, many new experiences.

I think it is still a very tough year for many, many people. We athletes, and I'm speaking of tennis players, we are very privileged to do our jobs. If I speak about the tennis, if I speak about my job, I mean, it has been an outstanding year. I have reached one of my big lifetime goals with winning that Grand Slam.

So even though it's a tough year, it will always have a special place in my heart this year, 100%. But beside that, I hope that this pandemic is gonna come to an end very soon, that people can start to work again, can have a normal life again, and I hope that it's coming, well, to an end as soon as possible.

Q. The way Daniil started coming to the net a lot more, both serve and volleying and behind his returns, I'm wondering whether that surprised you at all and maybe why that was effective for him? And then separately I wanted to ask you, it's very rare that a player beats the guys ranked 1, 2, and 3, and it had never happened at the ATP Finals. Wondering if you could just sort of frame that achievement that he accomplished this week and why that's impressive.

DOMINIC THIEM: Yeah, that's super impressive. Probably if you look at the whole tournament, he was the best player. He didn't lose a set in the group stage. Beat No. 2 and No. 3 players in the world in the semis and in the final, so he definitely deserved that title.

He was also in the previous matches playing some serve and volleys already, so I was kind of prepared to that. One time he did it great and in important point in a breakpoint and in the second set where maybe I could put the match in my direction.

I think it was 2-3 in the tiebreaker where he, all of a sudden, came in on the return, and of course that was

surprising and was well played by him. I mean, very gutsy also at that score. So hats off. It was great from him.

Q. Seeing you and Sascha in New York and then today and you can add Stefanos into the mix, as well, do you think the future of tennis has arrived?

DOMINIC THIEM: Yeah, I mean, definitely, because we still have many years ahead of us. We proved that we can play with the legends, that we can also beat them, that we can also win the biggest tournaments.

I think next few years the Big 3 still will play for every big title, but I guess there's still gonna be a time when those guys retire, I don't know, in three, four, five years. And then I guess we will be the favorites for all the big titles. I think for tennis it's some exciting times are coming ahead.

Q. A similar sort of question to that last one, the importance of this changing of the guard, possible changing of the guard for the sport itself, not necessarily just for the individuals, but how important is it for tennis as a whole to see yourself, Medvedev, Tsitsipas, Rublev and all that making these breakthroughs as a baton change?

DOMINIC THIEM: I think it's super important for the sport, because like Roger, Rafa, Nole and also Andy, they did so much for the sport. I think they brought so many people to tennis, so many new fans to tennis. And as I said, there is going to be a time when they are not around anymore, and then it's going to be so important to keep all the tennis fans, to keep them with this great sport.

I think that's our challenge, that we perform well, that we play great in big tournaments, that we become huge stars ourself. It's super important for tennis in general, because, I mean, they gave so much to the sport.

Yeah, as I said, that's our challenge to keep all those people with tennis and to maybe continue their story.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports