

Nitto ATP Finals

Thursday, 18 November 2021

Turin, Italy

Pala Alpitour, Torino

Horia Tecau

Press Conference



KRAWIETZ-TECAU/Granollers-Zeballos

6-3, 6-7, 10-6

THE MODERATOR: Questions in English.

Q. I know you weren't too keen to discuss your retirement before this match, so now I'm wondering just how are you feeling? What kind of emotions do you have?

HORIA TECAU: I'm very happy, to be honest, in this moment. Couldn't have had a better script to, you know, to live this moment.

I'm very grateful to be here at the end of the year in a great team on the biggest stage and to play against friends that I have known for 15 years or more and come out with a win. Yeah, I will leave the sport with that feeling.

Yeah, I'm very happy to have this moment, which, you know, in the morning before the match, you know, all the emotions kick in and you're still trying to concentrate and put everything aside to focus on your execution in the match, but all we wanted and all we talked about was to leave the court the way we wanted, you know, with all the effort that we had and good attitude and good energy and to support each other and try to go for the win with our game.

Yeah, that's basically how I have lived my career. That's what I wanted to sum up in this last match. It's great to come out with the win. To be honest, the moment would have been nice, as well, but it's a good way to say, "Bye."

Q. We are used to seeing doubles players play well into their 40s and everything. Why is this the right moment for you?

HORIA TECAU: That moment comes for everyone. Everyone is different. Some of us doubles players have started very early with the doubles career, including myself. At 23 years old I went full on doubles tour. I was fortunate

to not be injured and play consistently throughout the years and play a lot of matches and have success.

My approach to the game was always to give it all. The training sessions were at 100%. Now I'm getting close to 37, and the body feels it. That's for sure. Every day inflammations are there, and the body feels it. But that's not the reason, because, you know, I can still play at a good level. I can still, you know, get a lot of treatment for my body and train and do it.

But I feel like it's time to enjoy life in a different way, you know. It's been a lot of traveling, a lot of being away from home, which is nice in a way but it's also you're probably missing on some things that you like to do. You know, I treated the sport very serious, and I enjoyed my time off, but I feel like now it's the time to do something else and to pour my energy and attention into something else. But before I do that or talk about my next thing, I need a break (smiling).

Q. What do you wish for your legacy to be in this sport? What do you want to be remembered for?

HORIA TECAU: You know, I was very fortunate to grow and experience different training camps when I was a junior and met great coaches along the way that always installed this feeling of give it 100% and be respectful, playing to win, have good attitude on the court, treat everyone with respect all around, the players, the staff, the fans, everyone.

Yeah, that's also something that I have seen with other players before me. I was a big fan of Stefan Edberg, I was a big fan of Rafter, big fan of Roger. You know, I got to see Roger and meet him and see how he handles himself. Not in the press conferences or on the court but also off the court.

Yeah, big role models in this sport. It's also something that I wanted to have and carry throughout my career. Yeah, I would say that's the legacy that I want to leave behind. And for the tennis fans and kids especially that like the game and have dreams to see that, you know, you can have a good career and be successful and fulfill your



dreams by having good values, good attitude and that. You don't necessarily need to be, you know, closed and very selfish and, you know, not pay attention to others.

Yeah, I feel I did that, and I lived my career like that. I'm very happy in this moment.

Q. If you pick two or three highlights for you from your career, I'm sure it's difficult because it was a long one, but what are the main things that come to mind when I say "highlights of your career"?

HORIA TECAU: There is a lot. I would say a big moment is the biggest dream fulfilled winning Wimbledon. That's always there. Not necessarily the match day, but like the whole process behind it, teaming up with Jean-Julien, having the same dream, same belief, same attitude every day, you know, losing many matches and fixing things and communicating towards that one goal and believing in ourselves.

Then achieving that, that's probably, that was a big lesson and also big fulfillment moment. That probably stands out.

There is a lot. I was very fortunate to have great partners around me. I have learned a lot from Robert, I learned a lot from Max Mirnyi, Jean-Julien has been around, and also very happy to team up with Kevin this year. Got to meet him. It was a very enjoyable journey, let's say, with great people around me.

Q. Congrats to your amazing career, Horia. Really outstanding. What I heard, there is no person on the whole circuit who is talking bad about you. Everybody says, Such a nice guy, decent guy. Very interesting questions and very interesting answers already. I was wondering, when you think about your career, which guys, which colleagues -- you mentioned Robert, Jean-Julien, Max Mirnyi already -- but which colleagues went on the journey with you who is also coming to your mind, was very important?

HORIA TECAU: There is a lot. A lot of guys, especially guys I remember playing in singles, playing in futures, guys like Kubot, like Soares, you know, these guys, we grew up together, you know, being away from our homes on the tour.

In the beginning it was not like this. We didn't have a team around. We had each other. We were competing sometimes against each other, and then we'd go for dinner because that's what we had. Mexico, a lot of places where, you know, make these friendships, and then you see each other and you root for each other because you know each other's story.

Those are special. Like these are guys that I would be friends forever, you know. We are very fortunate in the sport to have great role models, you know. That's something that tennis will give you, and it's very consistent. I look around, and these guys are, like I mentioned, you know, like Edberg and Rafter and Sampras and Roger, Rafa, you know, and Novak and what they are doing for the sport, and you see it. You're here with them, and you see how they are. Not only on the stage; you see them behind the stage.

You know, it's great examples. You are away from home, but you're in a big classroom with a lot of high-standard role models around. It's kind of forcing you to grow up and mature and be responsible for yourself and what you do on the tour, because there is a lot of fans, a lot of kids watching. I feel, yeah, tennis has always produced great role models.

I don't feel any different or special. I feel like that was my education from home. When you have that education, you always try to choose those kind of people around you. Talking about coaches, partners, and it kind of grows on you. You want to be better, you want to be a better player, a better person, better everything.

It's very motivating, and, yeah, I feel fortunate to have lived through this for quite a few years.

Q. When you look at the future of tennis, the next gen, the next role models, how do you see the development of the sport? Do you see other great upcoming role models? You mentioned Edberg, Federer, Rafa, Novak. Is there a bright future?

HORIA TECAU: I feel there is a bright future. I feel these guys are still very young and they are still coming into their shapes and maturing.

Yeah, now they get to be on this stage consistently. Yeah, you know, the torch is going to be passed in the next few years. They're going to be in that position to be role models. So I think it's a transition that comes naturally. All of a sudden you're there, you're the big man, and you have to have responsibility to live up to the standards that have been set. Not only because it's nice but also because that's part of growing.

You know, everyone here is working really hard becoming better tennis players, but with becoming better tennis players you need to be responsible, to communicate really well, to believe in yourself, to respect the game, the sport, the fans, the staff, everyone involved in this industry.

So I think, yeah, it's something that they will grow and fulfill that role. I look at all of them, and I see that they have it, it's in them. Maybe they can express it a little bit more, but they are doing great things on the court.

Also, we have to understand that we were spoiled with the great generation over the last decade or two (smiling). The standards were at the highest ever. Yeah, need to have maybe a little patience with the next guys that would step in their shoes.

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