

# Nitto ATP Finals

Friday, 19 November 2021

Turin, Italy

Pala Alpitour, Torino

## Novak Djokovic

Press Conference



N. DJOKOVIC/C. Norrie

6-2, 6-1

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

**Q. I wanted to ask you something outside of this tournament. In the near future, do you plan to play a tournament in South America or an exhibition for your South American fans considering that you have only played in Brazil at the Olympics five years ago?**

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: Thank you for asking me that. I would love to play in South America, whether it's a tournament or exhibition. I had a phenomenal time there when I was in Brazil and also Argentina and Chile. I played some exhibition tournaments and also, of course, Olympic Games.

I did not play I think any official tournament there. Most of the tournaments I played on clay. Actually I did play, it's not South America, it's Mexico, but I would love to come because I know there is a lot of tennis fans in South America.

I love the energy there. I love the people, their passion for life. The energy that they give to tennis players, to athletes, is phenomenal.

If this question is also an invitation, then the answer is yes. But let's see where and when. Soon hopefully (smiling).

**Q. We've seen very strong statements from the WTA CEO Steve Simon, about the Peng Shuai situation, where he said the WTA is willing to pull out of China completely if the situation is not resolved. In your opinion do you think the ATP should operate in China next year if the situation is not resolved?**

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: Just before the match today I heard - I'm not sure if this was the statement from her PR team - but there was some kind of statement about her. I don't know whether she was found or not. Correct me if I'm

wrong. That's what I heard.

Someone told me there was some kind of statement that went out there that she was kept I don't know if it was a prison, she was contained. I don't know. She didn't really have communication with everybody.

I hope this is true, that she's found, that she's healthy, that everything is fine. If this is the case, okay, at least the worst is avoided.

I support the statement of WTA as an organization and also their president absolutely. This can obviously happen to anybody. I mean, this is not common thing, obviously. We don't hear about it. I don't know if it ever has happened. But life is like that. Anybody can get lost. I don't know, something can happen to you.

The whole community, tennis community, needs to back her up and her family, make sure that she's safe and sound because if you would have tournaments on the Chinese soil without resolving this situation, it would be a little bit strange.

I do understand why WTA has taken a stance like that.

**Q. Pete Sampras recently said you're the greatest of all time in his book, in an interview. Especially that it's Pete, what does it mean to hear that? You've said it's too early for you to talk about this, but what do Pete's statements mean to you?**

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: No, look, this means a world to me especially because it's coming from someone that was a role model. I said this many times before, but he was the one when he played his first Wimbledon final, '91 or '92, my first image of tennis. He was the one that motivated me to one day become a champion like him and hold the Wimbledon trophy and become No. 1.

He's one of the best players of all time in our sport. Something like that to come out of his mouth is obviously extremely satisfying for me to hear. I'm very grateful to him. So thank you, Pete.



**Q. The PTPA have put a Twitter statement out a day or so ago saying, We must unite and be willing to take any action unless un-collaborated evidence -- I am sorry, unless collaborated evidence is provided. What does 'action' represent in your opinion? What does that actually mean from the players?**

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: We don't know what it means fully because this is such a recent situation that occurred. We don't know enough.

The actual meaning behind that statement and the message from PTPA is that we must stand together. Whether it's a male or female player, whether it's one player or more players, it's necessary. It's kind of logical that we stand behind trying to give support in one way or another, whatever that means.

'To unite' means to come together and to figure out what kind of actions we can take, not just players, but players with ATP, WTA, kind of an initiated reaction from both ATP and WTA chairmans.

It's important because this is horrifying. I mean, a person is missing. I don't know what I said just previously if it's true or not, that she's found. I mean, I really hope so because, I mean, she was No. 1 in the world recently in doubles, one of the most well-known Chinese tennis players. China is a huge country. It's a very important part of the world especially for WTA. They have many tournaments there. I mean, this is necessary for us to take whatever actions.

I heard just now from Reem that WTA is willing to pull out from China with all the tournaments unless this is resolved. I support it 100%.

**Q. That was a Chinese state media tweet that was put out a couple hours ago claiming to be her, but we aren't able to verify that.**

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: Thank you. I did not know what the source was. I'm not really sure. I didn't validate the source, what was happening. I just heard.

I mean, I hope that for the sake of tennis, Chinese tennis, Peng Shuai, to find her very soon. It's terrible. I mean, this could happen to anybody in any part of the world. Imagine what people would feel if maybe there is someone else coming from, I don't know, someone maybe even more known in tennis or more popular athlete. It doesn't really matter who it is.

We just have to unite and stand together and show that there is no ignorance to this, that it's not like it's just I guess

something that concerns China. It concerns the tennis world because she has been an international tennis athlete for many years. She deserves at least our support in this whole case.

**Q. On a different matter, back to yourself on court. You're playing Sascha in the semifinals tomorrow. You've played him a lot this year. What are your thoughts on that? With that, if you can win the title here this weekend, you'll tie Roger's record with six titles. How much was that in your thinking or do you put it in the back of your mind?**

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: There is always motivation for history, no doubt about it. With my thoughts I'm just focusing on tomorrow's match because it's going to be big challenge. Sascha, one of the best servers in the game. He's been playing really good tennis. Had arguably maybe the best season of his career, winning gold medal in Olympic Games. Just played on a very high level throughout the entire year.

Indoors, definitely top two, three players that we have. With the big server, good movement, he's equally good at playing in defense and offense.

I know that it's going to be a battle both physical and mental. But I'm ready for it. I didn't spend too much time today on the court. We all want to finish the year in the best possible way. Let's see what happens.

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