

Nitto ATP Finals

Saturday, 20 November 2021

Turin, Italy

Pala Alpitour, Torino

Casper Ruud

Press Conference



D. MEDVEDEV/C. Ruud

6-4, 6-2

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. A great season overall. How do you reflect on the year?

CASPER RUUD: It's been a great year for me and my development as a tennis player, getting to know my opponents more, where the level on top of the world is by playing this tournament. It's been a great experience.

To finish a very good year off with a tournament here in Turin has been a great experience for me and something I will be eager to try to repeat and be back next year.

When next year starts, I will obviously have it in the back of my mind that every week matters, every match matters. When you saw this year, it was only couple of matches here and there that made a difference on making the tournament or qualifying for the tournament or not.

I'm, of course, proud of the year, what I accomplished this year. But also looking forward to next year, knowing if I keep playing well, keep doing the right things, I can have another good year hopefully like this next year.

Q. We heard from Craig Tiley at the Australian Open today. They made an official announcement that only vaccinated players can play in Melbourne. In your opinion, do you think it's fair that only vaccinated players can play?

CASPER RUUD: I don't know. I don't think it's the tournament that decides, it's the government in the end. I think you will have to ask the mayor or the governor or whatever they call it down there of Victoria. He's the one that decides. The tournament is played in Melbourne. That's how it is everywhere we go. We have to listen to the government, and they will decide.

I'm sure Craig Tiley and the rest of the team are doing everything as they can to be able to put on the event. That's the rule for next year. Yeah, we will have to deal with it.

Q. I wanted to know your thoughts, it's all over the news, about fellow tennis player Peng Shuai. Did you follow what happened to her? Do you have any thoughts or have you spoken with the tennis players at the Finals?

CASPER RUUD: Yeah, no, it's been a crazy week when it comes to this. I think we're all worried and our thoughts are with her, of course, that she's doing fine. We all hope that we get some contact with her soon.

I haven't followed the case that much into detail that I know every single thing or what has happened overnight. There can be many things. I haven't followed because I've been focused on this tournament.

I think it's one of the most serious matters in the sports world right now. I know that all the players here are concerned and worried. We all hope that we will hear back from her soon, that everything is fine for her. That's the most important.

We are all humans. Even though we're competitors, it's great to see how everyone supports each other when something like this happens. Again, I hope everything is fine with her and we will get some indication or confirmation that she's doing fine.

Q. You're absolutely right in what you just said about the government issue in Australia. It's got nothing to do with Tennis Australia. They don't make the decision. It comes from the premier of Victoria. To look ahead, now that you've finished for the year, what will you be doing in this off-season? What's the target for 2022 for you?

CASPER RUUD: Yeah, no, I think you have to ask me next Saturday because then my year will be completely done because I have to play Davis Cup next week (smiling).



I will go to a beach somewhere after the season for a week and just relax, enjoy, recharge all the batteries that I have, get the body ready and the mind also ready for a new year.

I think this year has been the longest ever on tour. We finished so late this year. It's important to get some rest before you kind of start doing the pre-season again. This year the pre-season will be shorter than normal. In a way that will be nice. You don't have the tough practices for like two months. It's going to be only three weeks, then we arrive to Australia.

I think all the players, they love coming to Australia. It's a highlight of the season. It means that the season has begun again. I'm looking forward to it already. Even though I still have one week left of competition this week, I'm already quite focused on next year. When I played here this event, I know I get the perfect feedback on what I have to work with in my game to be able to maybe compete better with the top guys in the world for next year.

I played the No. 1 and 2 guys in the world this week. They've beaten me fairly comfortably. That makes me want to seek revenge and become a better player for the next year, all the years coming.

I will of course enjoy, like I think all players, after Davis Cup a beach or wherever they go, relax for a week. Then all the show starts again. It's been a long year, but we're all ready to go again.

Excited to go to Australia again. Last time it was quite a hassle, but this year it looks like it's in a way easier for us to move around. The rules aren't that strict besides with the mandatory vaccination.

Q. Your hard court record this year, I think you were 25-10 tour level. I think you were 16-27 prior to this season. What have you done to change this record?

CASPER RUUD: Well, it's tough to say exactly. I think even though I won probably more matches on clay this year, somewhat you can take your clay game and bring it onto the hard courts. Even though it's a different surface, I think many weeks on the tour the hard court plays quite slow, so it's not that different to clay. Obviously you don't maybe slide as much or it feels clearly different to be on clay. The hard courts usually play fairly slow. This week has been a bit different. It's been one of the fastest ones on tour in my career.

I brought a lot of confidence, match confidence, playing on big points, winning the right points in many matches. Many matches I've played this year have been decided by only

two, three, four points. I would say majority of my wins has been decided by a couple of points. I've been fortunate that those points have gone in my favor.

That's also something you build up when you play a lot of matches. That builds like a self-belief and confidence that whenever the tightest moments are in the match, you know that maybe the day before or the week before you did something good in those moments. It's easy to doubt yourself in the toughest moments. This year has been great for me when it comes down to this. I've been playing aggressively and well on the biggest points in the matches.

Q. I don't know if you feel the love that the city of Turin has for you. You came No. 8 and made the semis. Do you love something particular about the food here in Italy? Did you try any particular dishes? Maybe you permit like a glass of wine to celebrate your tournament this night, white or red, before coming to Davis Cup.

CASPER RUUD: No, it's a bit sad because I know that Piemonte is known for having great wine, but I don't drink wine so I won't get to taste it.

I've had the truffle here. It's really good, together with pasta, pizza. You can have truffle pretty much everywhere. Risotto and all these things. One day I went to a restaurant where they make fresh pasta, homemade pasta, which was great.

I think the Italian kitchen is phenomenal. Whenever I travel around, I always try to find the best Italian restaurant in the town because it's one of my favorite foods.

To come to Italy, of course you have the pasta, pizza, risotto everywhere. I think I found one of the best ones I ever tried here in Torino. I had a great experience with this.

Yeah, it's been great to play in front of these fans. The passion has been unbelievable. I think also the fact it's been the first year they have this event, the fans have been extra, extra excited. You can really feel the support. I felt the support all week. Today also, even though it didn't go my way, they were cheering and applauding. It's been a very fun week. I can leave Torino grateful, but also hopeful that I will return.

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