

# Nitto ATP Finals

Sunday, 13 November 2022

Turin, Italy

Pala Alpitour, Torino

## Casper Ruud

### Press Conference



C. RUUD/F. Auger-Aliassime

7-6, 6-4

THE MODERATOR: Casper, congratulations. Great start into the Nitto ATP Finals. You beat Felix, who is the player with the most wins indoors this season. How much confidence do you get from that victory?

CASPER RUUD: Yeah, that's a great victory for me. Before arriving to this tournament, you know that you'll need to bring your A game to every match you play because otherwise you'll probably have struggles of winning matches. I was able to do that today.

I knew that against Felix, who has been on an unbelievable run in recent weeks, if I didn't bring my best game, I probably would be swept off the court.

I'm happy that I was able to do that and beat the player who is in form and very hot at the moment. I'm very pleased with it. Gives me confidence knowing that I can beat aggressive players on this surface.

Yeah, it was a great start for me. To sit here and be 1-0 in the group is a perfect start and just what I had hoped for.

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

**Q. I heard about your invitations of your grandmothers for the match. Are they there already? Have they arrived?**

CASPER RUUD: They're coming tomorrow, yeah (smiling).

**Q. I was curious about their first reaction, but...**

CASPER RUUD: I don't know. I hope they enjoy. They will probably watch on the TV at home. They are both very into tennis. They followed my father for his career, and now they're following me.

It was nice to be able to invite them to Turin, the last tournament of the year. Yeah, I think they're on the way tomorrow (smiling).

**Q. Last year you were a newcomer at the ATP Finals. This year, final in Roland Garros, final at the US Open. How important is it to be here again, to confirm yourself? Any result which wouldn't be another final would be a disappointment or not?**

CASPER RUUD: No, not really. I mean, to be able to make the Finals two years in a row means a lot because I think it proves to yourself that you have the level to do it more than just one time.

Hopefully, if we are here again next year, I can be here as well. That's going to be the goal for every player when they start the year. It's a very long year, like everyone knows.

When the first point of the first tournament is played, this is the start of a new year, and let's try to have a good one so we can end the year in the Nitto Finals in Turin. That was my goal and motivation throughout the whole year.

I had such a great time last year, making the semifinal in my debut. Of course, the goal is to try to move on from the group. I know it will be tough. I will have two more tough matches. Let's see how it goes from there.

If I don't make it through the group, if I lose semifinal, if I lose final, I'm not going to be very disappointed because in the end of the day I'm happy to reach this tournament and know that in a year you'll face good moments hopefully, and some difficult moments. I have had more good moments than difficult moments this year, so in the end of the day I have to be happy about that.

**Q. At the US Open Felix told me that he liked to train with you because you're talented and also because you two get along well. What kind of person is Felix on the tour?**

CASPER RUUD: He's very nice, very humble, very well-spoken, I would say.



It was funny. We were here on the Media Day on Saturday, I think. Andrey give him a new nickname, which is 'Oxford', because it seems like he is so well-educated. I think if you go to Oxford College, it seems like you have a good education, are well-spoken. I think it's a little bit funny name. It suits him well.

Like I said, he's nice, humble, very well-spoken. He's a nice guy. I get along with him well. He's not my best friend. I have my best friends in Norway. It's never any problem with Felix. He's all about the business. When we practice, we practice well. He's a funny guy.

He's a couple years younger than me, but we had a very similar career, reaching a little bit more, a little bit more all the time. Yeah, it's fun to see his progress.

I'm happy that he has been able to do so well this fall because I know that I think before he won his first tournament this year he lost many finals. I'm very happy that he has sort of overcome the final aspect and being able to win many tournaments in a row. He won three tournaments in a row this fall, which is not very easy at all and very impressive.

Yeah, he's a very nice guy. I hope he will be around for many years, that we can have many good matches.

**Q. Can you talk about your improvements. For sure technical improvements, little things, big things you had to do on court compared to the clay, where you won three titles this year. First of all, you won on clay, go to the final in Roland Garros. Mentally, is there something you say to yourself when this match arrives? Do you say to you, I have to go one step further on the court, have to return... What is the main things you to say to yourself?**

CASPER RUUD: I don't really have, like, words or something I say to myself out loud. It's more thinking that, Here we are, the last tournament of the year, let's try to give it the last push, give everything you have left in the tank.

It's been a long year, like everyone knows. Most of us have played close to 70, even 80 matches this year. It's going to be obvious that some of us are quite tired.

But you're trying to think it's the last push, it's the last sort of sprint. If you are running a marathon, you are on the last turn, I guess, before the finish line is there. We still have some to give.

But other than that, not really. When it comes to, yeah, the

improvements on hard court, I think I have done certain things in my game that has helped me the last months. Over several years I've been working on my hard court game. I feel like I'm improved a lot.

I'm able to hit a little bit flatter. I'm able to move better. I can defend better on the surface. I'm also serving and returning better. I'm happy to say things have improved, but there are still many more things I can improve compared to the best hard court players or hard court indoor players in the world.

Yeah, I don't know, I'm just not thinking too much about that I have to change many things from clay to hard court. For sure you need to be able to hit a little bit more flat and go some bigger shots, take a little bit more risk, and accept maybe there will be more mistakes, but in the end, you will maybe have more winners.

It's tough to say that I am improved more on this or this. In the end I think a lot of things on my game have improved a lot.

**Q. How hard is it to start a tournament against a top eight player? Must be so different than all the other weeks of the year. How do you prepare for that?**

CASPER RUUD: It is, yes. I think one tournament - what should I say - not suited me but give me some experience on this is actually playing the ATP Cup because there you will also face many tough matches in a row, whoever you play.

The first year we played, we were in the group with I believe it was USA, Italy and Russia, who have Medvedev, Fognini and John that I played three matches in a row, which was a little unusual. All them were not top 10, but I think all of them were top 20. Daniil was No. 2 or No. 3. I think some events you get it.

But it's very special, yeah. I am happy in a way that I played Felix in the first match of the tournament because, as we have seen in last weeks, he can sort of go on these streaks and be really hot for a long period. I'm happy it was maybe the first match where we are both sort of not exactly used to the conditions yet. I think this could have been an advantage for me today.

Yeah, I don't know. It's a good question. It's very different. But you are preparing like it's one of the bigger matches of the year, any match you play here, because we all want to reach the later stage, we want to pass on from the group. We know in order to do that we will need to bring our A game.

That was my mentality before playing Felix, that he's on a hot streak, he's on a roll, and I'm going to try to stop him. If I want to, I need to bring some of my best level. That's luckily what I did today.

**Q. Zverev, Medvedev and Tsitsipas are the last players who won this tournament. Do you think in some way this specific tournament is more open than a Grand Slam? If yes, have you any explanation of this?**

CASPER RUUD: Yeah, it is a little bit open in that I think it's due to the fact that it's a very long year. I feel like I have watched obviously Novak winning this tournament many times, also Federer in the past when I was younger watching a lot on TV.

Sometimes they would maybe go on these little surprising losses. That's due to the fact that, like I said, they played close to 80 or even 90 matches in some cases. It's quite normal to feel a little bit empty in the tank, if I can put it this way.

We also play best-of-three sets, and it is indoor. It goes faster than maybe outdoors or when you play best-of-five sets in a Grand Slam. These things make it a little bit more open.

It's been fun to see that Sascha has won it two times now I believe. Tsitsipas won once. Medvedev has won it. It shows that in the last years it's been a good tournament for the younger players.

I think all the younger players here, we hope one young player will win again this year. We all hope it's us. Novak and Rafa will try to think it's time for the little bit older guys to win once again. Let's see who ends up winning.

I think we are all here because we deserve to be here and we all I think have a chance to beat each other. Let's see in the end.

But, yeah, I think it's more open due to the fact that it's late in the year, it's quite fast, and it's only best-of-three. That makes the margins a little bit slimmer than maybe a five-set match.

**Q. It's obviously very difficult to win or be in the business end of a tournament week after week after week. What do you think happened in October when you had a bit of that flat patch? Asia was not really good to you. Do you think you're over that flat patch?**

CASPER RUUD: I hope so. It's not easy to say. Just because I won today doesn't mean there won't be more struggles in the coming weeks.

But now we are at the end of the year, it's the last tournament of the year. Whatever happens here... I'm actually going to South America, maybe some of you know, so there won't be that much time. Whenever South America is done, I'll have about a month before we go back on the tour in Australia.

That's going to be nice to have a time to sort of breathe out, look back at the year that has passed by, think about the things that I have been able to do well, but also things that need to be worked on.

In Asia, yeah, I think I hit a wall a little bit. There was no energy in my body. I felt little bit struggles with jet lag. It was tough to have good nights of sleep. Yeah, it was a little bit too hectic, my schedule. I think hopefully we have learned a little bit from that.

In the last weeks, as well in Basel and Paris, it didn't go as well as I'd hoped. I didn't feel too bad honestly physically. In Asia I felt quite heavy physically. Every day felt a little more heavy than the day before to get going, to get my body and get the pulse up and everything.

I think I just accepted quite fast that these periods will come. No matter who you are in a sports career, difficult moments will come. Hopefully, with a win like today, I can sort of regain a little confidence and energy, motivation. It's only one tournament of the year, but finish in a good way.

It's obviously going to taste better if I am able to come through the group and finish the year this way than if I won't make it through the group. Hopefully that can be the end of my year on the ATP Tour.

**Q. You've got Rafa coming in two days' our four days' time. Can you talk about the process of how to beat an idol?**

CASPER RUUD: I haven't been able to do it yet, so I'm not sure if I have the answer.

Like I said on Media Day on Saturday, I'm happy that the match will not be played in Philippe Chatrier in the final of the Roland Garros because he's unbeatable. Here at least people have beaten him before. I'm not saying this will change everything due to the fact that I consider maybe clay my favorite surface.

Like I said, margins are a little bit smaller here, slimmer on the indoor fast court like this. You get more free points than maybe on clay.

Let's see. He hasn't played that many matches lately. I have not either, but I played more than him at least. It's going to be interesting.

It's always fun to go up against these Titans like him, Novak and Roger of course. I'm very happy that I was able to play Roger at least once. Novak I've played more times.

Yeah, it's going to be a fun new match against Rafa. Let's see how it goes. I know that he will be very motivated because he has a lot to play for this week. I'm sure he knows that in the back of his mind. I will try to use the fact that maybe I'm the underdog.

Let's see if I can put on a good match. I feel very happy and good with the level that I produced today. I hope I can keep it going in the rest of the matches that I play here.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports