

Nitto ATP Finals

Tuesday, 15 November 2022

Turin, Italy

Pala Alpitour, Torino

Felix Auger-Aliassime

Press Conference



F. AUGER-ALIASIME/R. Nadal

6-3, 6-4

THE MODERATOR: Well done. First time you beat Rafa, on top of that here at the Finals. How do you feel?

FELIX AUGER-ALIASIME: For these two reasons, it's a special win. It's never easy to beat players of this caliber. So brings a lot of confidence to me.

It's nice to say that I was able to beat him finally, then also at this tournament, which is not like I beat him at a lower-level tournament. It was an important win for me in this tournament to stay alive and to keep going.

Yeah, for these two reasons, it's a really important win for me.

Q. I asked a version of this question to Taylor the other night. Given where Rafa has been and where you've been the last couple of months, the surface, your game, how confident were you coming into this match even though Rafa is Rafa, you hadn't beaten him before? Did you really like your chances?

FELIX AUGER-ALIASIME: Well, I prefer my chances here than, let's say, I don't know, in Rome or Paris, right?

Of course, yeah, knowing that I've been playing good, it was an unfortunate loss the other day, it was really close, but I felt like, yeah, I had good chances to win.

At the same time when you're about to step on the court against a guy like him, you never know. You think, What if he plays amazing today, just too good for me, or I'm not playing my best, things aren't working for me. There's always an uncertainty.

But when the match started going, we were on serve in the first set, I was like, Look, I have a real chance of winning this. I felt like I was doing good things, I was comfortable in certain situations. I definitely believed that I could win.

I think it helps, of course, that I've been playing better, and he hasn't had a lot of matches, a lot of wins in the last part of the year.

Q. You probably won't answer to this, but I'm going to try anyway. Which kind of tips Toni give you before the match?

FELIX AUGER-ALIASIME: We talk about the things I need to do for myself. At the end of the day he doesn't give me - him or Fred...

I know Rafa. I've seen him play. I've watched him play. I've played him before. If I play him or play Djokovic or even players that I've known for a long time, Fred, my coach, gives me the stats of previous matches, what has been working, what hasn't been working, so I can have a little bit of a clear idea.

Outside of that he didn't give me a secret that nobody knows (smiling). That's it, so... Nothing really special. More just for me to try to give my best effort, to feel like I did everything I could when I step out of the court, win or lose. That's the most important for him and for us on the team.

Q. You were just saying the last match was close. Did you adjust or change anything from then to today's match? Completely different players. What did you do different between the two?

FELIX AUGER-ALIASIME: Well, for sure, two different players. In terms of my game, I felt like I was hitting my backhand much better today. That's one thing I tried to work on yesterday in the practice, tried to do better today. That was a big improvement.

On the return of serve also I feel like getting in the first match here, the conditions. The center court, a few players have said, it does bounce a little bit more, it's a little bit quicker than the practice court here or the practice court on the other side. It takes a bit of adjustment.

At the end it's great conditions for me. It took me a while to



adjust on the serve. I feel like today I felt much more comfortable. I don't know, better rhythm, better distance when I was returning. I think these two parts of my game - the backhand and return - were two things I did much better. The serve and the forehand were still at a very high level.

It's been a big key for me to win that one.

Q. Even if now we are talking about ATP Finals, what was the satisfaction to beat Nadal when he was becoming maybe No. 1 in the world, then you stopped him? ATP now is cooperating the Davis Cup, which never happened before. You may play the second round against Italy if you win, or against United States. What are your expectation for that match? Maybe we don't need to have a chance to talk about it.

FELIX AUGER-ALIASSIME: Yeah, that's true.

Q. How important is for Canada?

FELIX AUGER-ALIASSIME: That's a long way ahead, right? There is this tournament to play, then there is a few days, the first round against Germany.

Look, to answer your first question, I didn't think about the fact that he could be No. 1. Actually I didn't know. I think was just an opportunity for me to win my match, to keep going in the tournament. Also, yeah, extra motivation to play. Always when you play great players, you try to bring the best out of yourself. That's what I was able to do today.

It's special. The fact that I was able now to beat him and some of the best - Novak in Laver Cup, Roger before - it's special memories as a young player. So that was great.

For Davis Cup, we'll see. I'm also motivated for that. There's this tournament to take care of. After we're in the quarterfinals, and the draw is tough. We play Germany. Of course, we're favorite for that I guess. The next round could be difficult, so on.

Let's see how it goes. The two challenges would be very difficult. But let's see.

Q. You played against both Rafael Nadal and Casper Ruud this tournament. Based on those two games, their form, et cetera, do you think Casper also has a chance to get his first-ever win over Rafa?

FELIX AUGER-ALIASSIME: I think he does. I mean, why not? Not sure how Rafa is going to feel. It must be difficult. I was also thinking today, it never happens that

we lose two matches in one week. One already, usually you're done. To lose two, it's difficult.

I mean, I'm sure it's not his first rodeo. He'll be ready and try to give himself the best chances, so let's see that.

In terms of Casper's game, I feel like he's playing great. I think he played a little bit under his ambitions in the last few tournaments indoors, but he recovered well. I feel like he's been training well.

Definitely against me, he was hitting the ball really well, serving good, solid from the backhand. I think there is no reason why there's not a chance for him to win also.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports