

# Nitto ATP Finals

Wednesday, 16 November 2022

Turin, Italy

Pala Alpitour, Torino

## Casper Ruud

Press Conference



C. RUUD/T. Fritz

6-3, 4-6, 7-6

THE MODERATOR: You are the first player to qualify for the semifinals. Must be extremely happy.

CASPER RUUD: Yes, of course. I didn't think I would be in this position when I tournament started, after two matches to be already in the semifinal. Very happy about it.

I'm proud to have beaten two good players on an indoor fast surface. It feels great to sit here knowing that I've qualified for the semifinal, which was a goal for probably everyone playing here. I'm the first one to do it, so that feels great.

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

**Q. Have you ever served like tonight? 70% first serve, 14 aces.**

CASPER RUUD: It's one of my best serving matches, serve performances, in my career. Last year I also served quite well in this tournament. I think also in Madrid actually last year.

I think sometimes the altitude can help me because it gives me little bit extra speed. It's not too much altitude here, but it's a little bit I feel. The court is pretty fast, so it gives me more free points than usual with the serve, a little bit extra speed.

Of course, it does the same for the other players. But Taylor and Felix, they have great serve no matter what surface. You know this is coming. When they are playing here, I guess they are not really thinking I have the biggest serve.

To be able to serve 14 aces and the way I did today is probably surprising to Taylor and I guess an advantage for me.

**Q. Both Felix and Taylor said they think you can beat Rafa on Thursday. You are now in pretty good form, Rafa is not in that good form. Do you feel like your chances are better now than ever to beat Rafa?**

CASPER RUUD: You can never feel comfortable playing against Rafa, no matter what form he is in or what shape.

I mean, he's had two tough losses here. Yeah, the match on Thursday is going to be quite different conditions than when we played in Roland Garros this year, that's for sure. It's faster. It's not best-of-five. It's on hard court. Everything is different.

But you can never count Rafa out. He has proven that many times. Every match here is important. You play for points and the ranking. I'm sure he would like to seek some sort of revenge for his two losses and finish his ATP season in a good way.

I will try to keep it rolling for the semifinal. It would be obviously a dream feeling to move out of the group with three wins. But the next one is going to be probably the toughest match in my career, due to the fact that he's also been my biggest idol for all my life. It's always going to be a little bit extra special to play against him.

**Q. The question might sound weird because the tournament is not over. Once you qualified for the semifinal for a second year in the row, are you proud of anything? Can you appreciate the moment or are you deep in the competition?**

CASPER RUUD: Yeah, for sure. I'm going to go to bed tonight and sleep very well because I know I will play on Saturday no matter what happens in the next match. I can, of course, give my best, but play with my shoulders down, knowing I will still be able to play on Saturday. This is a great feeling.

I guess Taylor and Felix, they will play for the last spot on Thursday. That's how I guess it will turn out. Yeah, I'm very happy to be in the position I am, not needing to think about this too much.



Yeah, I will try to keep going. I feel like I'm playing well, serving well, like you asked earlier. I will try to keep it rolling and keep the momentum going into the weekend.

**Q. When you were growing up, were you watching David Ferrer? You remind me of him.**

CASPER RUUD: Thank you. It's a nice comparison to be compared with David Ferrer. He's in my eyes one of the best players in recent times. He has been a little bit unlucky and unfortunate that he had the big three at the same time as him. He was able to reach one final. I believe he won the Paris Masters one year. He has had a great career.

Yes, I've looked up to him. I maybe looked up to Rafa maybe the most of my tennis idols when I grew up. David has been always exceptional in my eyes, always had great attitude on court. More of a silent worker, not too much show around him. Just focused on his things.

I think, yeah, that's a little bit what I also feel sometimes on court. I'm just focused about the business, trying to win every match that I play. I know of course that's not possible.

I think I have never been too close with David, but watching him on TV when I grew up, it's always been fun, something I enjoy doing.

**Q. If you end up beating your idol from childhood, what would that mean for you?**

CASPER RUUD: Yeah, it's going to be, like I said, a tough match. Of course I'm going to try to win. I think you never know if you will get to play these big guys again. They are getting older, as we know.

I know I will play Rafa five more times in the next weeks in an exhibition. But in an official match, it's different.

It's his last match of the ATP Tour season, and he will try to do his best to try to win it. I will try to do my best to beat my idol.

Is fun when your idols become your rivals and competitors, it means you have been able to do well. I feel just privileged to be in the position to play against him. Of course I will give my best. I will try to learn from what I could not do last time, try to finish the group winning three of three. That would be the dream situation.

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