

Nitto ATP Finals

Thursday, 17 November 2022

Turin, Italy

Pala Alpitour, Torino

Rafael Nadal

Press Conference



R. NADAL/C. Ruud

7-5, 7-5

THE MODERATOR: First question for Rafa, please.

Q. How much did you need a match like this? What does it mean for you for the following days, months, to be able to play like this?

RAFAEL NADAL: About how much I need? I don't know. I really don't think going to make a big difference in the future.

At the end it's about finish the season with a victory. It's about see myself competitive against a great player with chances of victory. It's about to have the personal satisfaction that after a couple of very tough days, I went yesterday on the practice courts and I make a very good practice with the right attitude. Today I receive the prize for that practice of yesterday, and that's it.

It's about come back home with the satisfaction that I gave my best till the last match. Now a victory, a perspective to be better and better.

Three matches here. At the end that's what I need now, as I said even before the tournament start, even if I practicing well, I need days on court and matches, something I was not able to make. That happened the last month, and I think I was able to improve every day a little bit, no?

Today was a good level of tennis for me, serving well, playing with more determination at the right moments. Now is the moment to back home couple of days, then a tour in Latin America. Going to be a couple of matches. Even if it's exhibition matches, that helps to be in shape. Then come back home and work on the right preparation for the beginning of next season. That's it.

Q. How do you compare this court here to the hard courts that you're going to play on when you do go to Australia?

RAFAEL NADAL: Oh, I don't know. I don't even remember the Australia courts. That courts are changing. Are not always exactly the same.

At the end is tennis, you know? Even if the courts are different, it's about being competitive and be under confidence and be under the rhythm of the competition.

At the end, in my case - I can't talk for everyone - but in my case, if I am in rhythm of competition, winning matches, in a good confidence, normally I don't have a big problem to be competitive in every single court or surface. That's the thing.

Australia going to be a challenge, of course, but it's the beginning of the season. Hard court, I played well plenty of times, even if I only won twice.

But just excited I going to be there. If nothing goes wrong, going to be there early. That's what I need. Even if it's an effort for me and sacrifice to go very early from home, I think that's what I need to do after what happened the last five months.

Try to be there early, not only because of the preparation of Australia, but because of preparation for myself for the rest of the season.

Q. I would like to know your reaction to the fact that Novak Djokovic has now the chance and the option to go and play the Australian Open, which he was unable to play last year. Also, you won five years the Davis Cup. You're not going to play this year. Spain will not have you and will not have Alcaraz. Probably is very difficult for them to win the Davis Cup. How do you think about what? What is your reaction? Are you sorry that Spain doesn't have big chances to win as if you were there?

RAFAEL NADAL: Well, the chances, we will see if we have chances or not. We have Bautista. That's your opinion and I respect, but we have Pablo and we have Bautista. They are top players. A lot of countries would love to have those two players on their team. They have



the capacity to win against everyone. Of course, less chances than if Carlos is there.

I was not an option because the captain knows since the beginning of the season that I was not an option this year after all the things I went through last year, and especially what happened at the end of the last five months or six months. Even if was a small chance, I was not able to put all the effort there.

If I am representing my country, I need to do it with the full passion, full confidence, and full spirit as I did in 2019 in Madrid. I don't think this year I am able to be at that level of everything. The captain know that since months ago.

I don't know what can happen in the future. As everybody knows, I am getting old (smiling). Even if I would like to be everywhere, I can't, I simply cannot.

Let's see if I'm able to play again the Davis Cup one day. I am not sure about it. Of course, in my mind, would love to say good-bye from that beautiful competition playing. Let's see what can happen in the future.

In the other hand, I always said the same: tennis is better when the best players are on the court. At the end we don't have to create many stories. Even if was a big mess what happened last year in Australia, was not good for our sport. That was past. Roger is not playing any more. I missed lot of Grand Slams for injuries. Last year Novak was not able to play there. That's past.

What's next is Novak will be able to play again. That's the best news possible, especially knowing that now the virus is more under control - seems - around the world. So why not?

Happy for him. Happy for the tournament. Happy for the fans. That's it.

Q. Once the Latin American tour finishes for you, how much time will you take off? Obviously this Christmas is going to be special for you with a new baby. You say you will go to Australia early. How early will you go when you consider United Cup starts on the 29th of December?

RAFAEL NADAL: In Latina America, I going to be able to play multiple matches against a great player like Casper, a couple of ones, then against Davila.

What I need today is spend hours on the court in a competitive level. That's going to helps. At the same time every time that I played in Latino America, I charge the batteries of energy because the crowd there are so

passionate. I enjoy the fact that I going to be playing there in front of them.

I don't know if maybe last time in my professional tennis career being active. So excited about that. Probably going to be one of the last opportunities.

Then going to be back home and try to enjoy little bit the fact that I will be home for a while, family and work. Well, work? For me is not work, is practice. Just practice, try to make the right plan to be able to stay healthy enough and to stay ready for the beginning of the next season.

How early? I can't tell you yet because, as you can imagine now, my life changed a little bit. I don't make unilateral decisions (smiling). I need to check a little bit.

If the United Cup starts 29th, I hope to be playing about 1st or 31st, 1st of January. 27th, I don't know. That's going to be the idea, if nothing goes wrong.

You never know.

Thank you very much, everyone. All the best for the rest of the season.

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