

Nitto ATP Finals

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Turin, Italy

Pala Alpitour, Torino

Goran Ivanisevic

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Goran, you had a lot of memorable weeks and victories with Novak. How do you rate this one?

GORAN IVANISEVIC: Because of everything what happened this year, with Wimbledon this year... But this one is special. Very tough year. To finish the year like this, to win tournament like this after how many six years he won a Masters? I call it Masters, now it's ATP Finals.

I think somebody from upstairs look at all this year and say, Okay, you going to win the year like this. He deserve it. Nobody knows how was it to be him, to be the part of the team, was not easy year. But paid off.

A lot of ups and downs with all the team, everybody who was the part of the team. I have to mention everybody because make my job easier.

It was Marco, Uli, Ella (phonetic), Edo and myself. Was not easy for us. Was even worse for him. He deserve it. Especially the way he play this week, that's really impressive.

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. Which one was the most difficult thing to deal with during this year? Pressure?

GORAN IVANISEVIC: When you tennis player, you deal with the pressure all the time.

But waiting, making schedule, you could not make a schedule. First you're allowed to play, then restriction you're not allowed to play. You prepare for something that you cannot play. You don't know where to prepare, what to prepare. It was a roller coaster. Luckily the things settled down and more and more countries were open.

Then again after Wimbledon we were waiting for positive news from U.S. Didn't come. Then waiting for the positive news from Australia hopefully. That came.

But, you know, this waiting. You want to play. You just want to play, but you don't know where you allowed to play. In the end, he could finish No. 1 in the world if ATP didn't take the points from Wimbledon. I don't want to talk about 8,000 points that he could not even defend or be there.

This waiting. Just waiting, waiting for something that will happen. But in the end this trophy happen, and this is really something big.

Q. You said the waiting and the summer, the difficulty of waiting for good news. Can you explain how you spent the summer? At Wimbledon you said, Maybe I'll go to the beach, long hot summer. The other day Novak was talking about all the training and the practicing you did. How did you spend July and August in order to stay sharp?

GORAN IVANISEVIC: Actually, I didn't mind this June, July, August. I had a great time (smiling). I was home on the beach.

But again, in one moment after Wimbledon, okay, he took some days off, but he has to start to practice because we were hoping for good news from U.S. I had my bags packed. I was there waiting. That's another waiting, waiting, waiting.

He was practicing, he was preparing, and we were waiting. The news were not coming. The news were not coming. Then Cincinnati passed. Another week. Then when US Open kind of started, we knew we not going to the States.

I spent my summer very nice. I was in Umag. We had a great tournament. Was with my family. But I wanted to go to New York. I wanted to be there. Unfortunately U.S. is not open yet, and hopefully they're going to do it very soon.

Q. Novak is 35. In the past most of the players were retired. What does the change in his training program, the fact he's 35, he's more or less picking, but I guess you don't drive the training session like if he was 22? What does that change?

GORAN IVANISEVIC: He's practicing even harder than



when he was 22. That's why he's still so good and that's why he's still going to be even better.

The will to practice, the will to improve, the will to be better is amazing. He's taking care of his body. In my time we stop tennis with 30, 31. You were already old guy ready to leave.

But now unbelievable. Look at Roger couple years back. Look at Rafa. Look at him. They all talk about, yes, young players are coming. It's great for the tennis. Few of them, you have youngest No. 1 in the world who made unbelievable things this year, Carlos.

But look at Novak. He's still hungry, he's still winning the tournament, playing unbelievable tennis. He's still already thinking now about preparation for next season.

Till he's like that, in his mind he's going to be always competitive, favorite to win majors and the big tournaments.

Q. Can you talk about his serve. In my opinion the serve is incredible. Do you think there's room for improvement still or is almost perfect?

GORAN IVANISEVIC: But his serve was very underestimated shot all through all career. If you look so many matches, five, 10 years ago, his serve always saved him somehow.

But now he's even better. Now he always wants to improve. Especially this week, amazing percentage, amazing precision of the serve. Every time he needed, he hit unbelievable first serve. His second serve is much better.

But his serve is one of the best shots which people, they don't talk, because they have so many other things, they forget to talk about his serve. He has one of the best serves. Especially when it's tight, it's tough, especially this week he was hitting unbelievable serve under pressure.

But you can always improve. You can always go backwards. With the serve, it's very tricky. So far it's working well. Especially this week. The court was a little faster, but still serve was working unbelievable.

Q. How do you explain the fact that you said when we were 30, 31, We couldn't go on any more? These other players have been able to play until 38, 37. Why are they so much fitter than you were? It's a matter of the medical team that everyone has? The three are phenomenal on the tennis profile, but how do you explain physically they could last so much playing so

many more matches? Why did you stop early, Sampras, Agassi?

GORAN IVANISEVIC: Okay, I stop because of my shoulder. I had a surgery. I could not come back any more.

I don't say they're fitter than us. I don't agree with that. They're not fitter. I started to play with a wooden racquets through my career when I was young. To play wooden racquets takes...

Now they take more care of the body. The teams are bigger. Before you travel with a coach. Now you have a lot of people in the team. You have a lot of possibilities to take care of your body.

Materials of the racquets, unbelievable. Strings, everything. Yes, they slow down the courts so they train different, matches last longer. For example, Novak, he's a genius in that. He's guy who wants to improve all the time. He's taking care of his body. Look at how he moves on the court, slides. He's amazing.

It's always something that now the world offers you to be better, to improve. I think in that case players are playing in much older age, and they're playing well. Maybe some of them, they're playing best tennis. They're looking unbelievable.

Just a matter of everything change, everything change generally in sport, and it gives you more opportunity to recover, to take care of your body.

We didn't do that too much in our time. If I can go back in my time, I will do it a lot of things differently. Now I can watch him and just be impressed every day when we come to the practice, when is a match to be impressed with what he does on the court. Not only him, but other players that I admire to watch. Amazing athletes and tennis players.

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