

# Nitto ATP Finals

Friday, 15 November 2024

Turin, Italy

Inalpi Arena, Torino

## Alexander Zverev

### Press Conference



A. ZVEREV/C. Alcaraz

7-6, 6-4

THE MODERATOR: Congratulations, Sascha. Would you say this is your best performance of the week so far?

ALEXANDER ZVEREV: I don't know. Probably. I think it was high level from both of us. Especially in the most important moments, I think both of us raised our games, really produced some entertaining tennis.

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

**Q. You've been saying for a few weeks now that you're not focused on the results now these days, that it's all about next year and getting to the level where you want to be. Is that sort of not caring maybe helping you in some ways with your performances?**

ALEXANDER ZVEREV: Well, hold on. I still care. I mean, I still care whether I win or not here especially.

But, yeah, maybe having your focus away, having your focus on improving maybe helps, helps with your mind. Maybe I should do that every tournament now (smiling).

**Q. Today you haven't lost a serve. Only two break points. One double-fault. Three years ago Marc Rosset said if Sascha learns how to play the volleys from his brother, he will become No. 1 in the world. Tonight you did some unbelievable volleys. How did you work on that? With your brother? Somebody else? How satisfied you are about your level?**

ALEXANDER ZVEREV: Well, it's for sure a subject that we're working on 100%. I'm not volleying like my brother yet. That's why I'm not No. 1 in the world, but No. 2 (smiling).

I still have something to improve for next year. Hopefully I can do that.

**Q. What is your main goal for the next season?**

**Personally I would like you to win Roland Garros. It would be icing on the cake after what happened there.**

ALEXANDER ZVEREV: Yeah, for sure. Roland Garros is always marked in my calendar since the injury. I've been saying that the last few years. It's always, yeah, kind of a big circle around those dates.

But for me, it's no secret, I'm searching for that Grand Slam title. I'm searching for world No. 1. I'm searching for the Grand Slams. If it's not Roland Garros, but it's Australia, I'll sign the paper right now, to be honest.

Of course, it would be special if it's Paris. If it's anywhere else, I would be just as happy.

**Q. Talking about that wild point at the end when Carlos ended up on the ground, what were you thinking after that point? That's where you really won it. Did you talk about that with Carlos at the net?**

ALEXANDER ZVEREV: No, I told him he beat me too much this year, so I had to win at least once, one important one (smiling).

Me personally, I thought there were some ridiculous points in the end of the tiebreak. Really, I mean, this is the thing about Carlos. He might not be playing, like, at his best, even though I thought he played phenomenal today. I'm just saying generally sometimes he's not playing at his best. All of a sudden in the most important moments, he turns into a different person. All of a sudden you can't hit a winner against him. All of a sudden he hits every single passing shot on the line. Like, you could put a coin there and he would hit it. That's what makes him one of the best players in the world.

He did that in the tiebreak, as well. He hit two ridiculous passing shots, one forehand and one backhand lob, which were unbelievable. I thought the backhand lob was insane, to be honest.

To be fair, if I don't hit probably one of the most ridiculous half volleys that I've ever hit at 6-5 in the tiebreak, it goes



back to 6-All, then who knows who wins that.

He turns into a different person. He really plays his best at the most important moments. Same with the last game. I thought the last game was the most entertaining game of the match.

Credit to him, he always finds a way to play his best when he needs to.

**Q. You have the chance to get your 70th victory this year. What would it mean for you, especially after all you've been through?**

ALEXANDER ZVEREV: Yeah, I said it before. Of course it's nice to have such a high number, but it's not something that you personally think about too much.

I think I personally think about, of course, trying to win big tournaments, trying to improve for next year to be able to compete with Carlos and with Jannik. That's more on my mind.

But I'm in the semifinals, and I'm happy about that. I'm getting the chance to play Taylor again, who beat me the last two times we played, at Wimbledon and US Open. I'm looking forward to that match.

**Q. May I ask you about volleys? I asked you about the return. Do you agree that that compartment is where you did the biggest improvement, in general, in tennis? Why do you think that happened, because you improved so much with physical condition, with speed?**

ALEXANDER ZVEREV: Yeah, I think my forehand return, for sure. It was one of the shots last year where I was going through matches sometimes without making a single forehand return. That was a component that I focused on a lot this year, like I did on my serve in the years before, volleys as well, stuff like that. My forehand, as well.

I thought that was one shot that was losing me a lot of matches last year, I thought. I had to improve it. I had to get better at it.

The best players in the world now are the best returners. Jannik is one of the best returners. Novak has been one of the best returners for decades now. Carlos is one of the best returners. So it's not necessarily the best serve anymore, it's the best returners.

For me, that was one of the most important parts of my game that needed improvement and where I was a lot worse than anybody else last year.

**Q. The other day you said you view Jannik and Carlos as the benchmarks. When you go into the off-season, do you find yourself and your team game planning for them specifically, knowing you're going to have to play them five, six times late rounds of a tournament next season?**

ALEXANDER ZVEREV: Well, I can answer that question quite easily. I think everybody talks about how great they are defensively. I don't think they play defense a lot anymore. Tennis is not about defense anymore. It used to be a few years back when tennis was quite different, a little bit slower still.

I think now those guys, 90% of the time they're only playing offense. It's about making sure that you can keep up offensively with them, being able to keep up with their speeds of groundstrokes as well. That's the number one thing. Not backing off, going for your shots in the most important moments.

That's maybe where I struggled, as well, in my career, trusting my shots and going for them when I need to. I think personally that's something that I still continue to need to work on. Hopefully next year's going to be even better.

**Q. You were just talking about some of the extraordinary points played in this match. Are you able to enjoy those situations in the middle of a match or is just too intense to really appreciate some of the shot-making that happens? There was a stage during the match where you and I think your brother, looked like you were having a disagreement or an argument. You were making a point to him. What was that about?**

ALEXANDER ZVEREV: To your first question, after I won the first set, I knew I qualified for the semis. Obviously there was some joy, some enjoyment there. I think the set point was a bit ridiculous. I definitely enjoyed that one.

The second one, to my brother, no, there wasn't a disagreement or anything. I was just asking where I should stand on the second serve returns. He was showing me about 15 different signs (smiling), while this whole stadium was dark.

You have to ask him what he was trying to show me. I went to my dad to keep it more simple. He told me to step back on the second serve return, which was a great suggestion compared to my brother who was throwing me 48 different sign languages and signs, which I didn't understand a single one of them, yeah (smiling).

