

Miami Open presented by Itaú

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Miami, Florida, USA

Grigor Dimitrov

Press Conference



J. SINNER/G. Dimitrov

6-3, 6-1

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

Q. Congratulations on a great run to the Miami Open final. On the way, you beat Hurkacz and Alcaraz and Zverev and played some incredible, incredible tennis. You brought the one-handed backhand back to the Top 10. Florida is where they discovered the Fountain of Youth. I wonder, have you been drinking from that or is it total hard work?

GRIGOR DIMITROV: Thank you. I should have had maybe one more glass of that juice. Unfortunately, 10 years made a huge difference today (smiling).

But overall, I just want to focus on the positives this week. It's been a tournament I have not been able to do well I think in the past years. In a way, it was also a goal of mine to come out here and give my best shot.

I was extremely determined throughout the whole week. A lot has been happening also behind the scenes, and beating very good players, I mean, high-quality players, let's don't forget I was down a set and 5-2 in the tiebreaker in the first round. So a lot of positives for me, honestly.

Clearly it's Jannik's week. He's been playing amazing tennis. It's really impressive how he's been able to keep that way of playing.

Yeah, I need to look forward to whatever is next for me. I don't think I have much time to be down on myself. I just want to embrace this moment as well. Just as you win, you need to be able to handle matches like that, I think even better than winning those type of matches.

So I think this is the next step for me. Now we start with the clay, so this is something I'm looking forward to. Yeah, I think definitely I will have some days off to evaluate, see what I did good, what I could have done better and so forth. I think, you know, overall it's a very positive two weeks for me.

Q. Tough luck today but congrats on a great week. Can you talk about the biggest challenges of playing Sinner these days? It seemed that he was lights out today. Obviously you had great performances so far, but today was especially, like, he was very, very strong. Can you talk about that?

GRIGOR DIMITROV: Yeah, I feel like a lot of his matches have been like that. I think he's one speed of game right now. I think it's really working.

But of course I always say every player has his little weakness. I mean, let's see. Maybe next time when I play him I will try to do something else. But today clearly I was unable to, you know, to match his game and even to match his shots.

I think for a little bit I was doing well, but a lot of the important moments went his way. That makes a huge difference in a match from that caliber. It's as simple as that.

Then also once he has a little bit of confidence or he's a break up, he becomes even more difficult to play and to even, you know, get him on the back foot. But I think that's just how it is.

I think any player from the top 10 is a very difficult player to play, very tricky player. Each one of them has his own way of playing. I think that's the part where you need to adjust that.

I think last I played against him was a year ago here again. I understood, like, couple of things and hopefully understood more from that one today.

Q. You have played some of the best players who have ever played the game in their prime. How do you compare those experiences to what you saw on the court today from Jannik?

GRIGOR DIMITROV: (Smiling.) Good one.

Q. Thank you (laughter).



GRIGOR DIMITROV: Very good one.

I know for me I was going to say the toughest player that I have played at his absolute prime was Roger. Just too funny, actually. I remember a few times even at Wimbledon, once I remember it was just -- I wanted to dig a hole and disappear (smiling).

I haven't had that feeling yet against anyone, so I will leave it at that, I guess. Yeah, probably that's going to be the player I felt like, yeah, I suffered the most with.

Q. Grigor, a couple of things. Comment on returning to the top 10 after 260 weeks. Also, a similar point to what Matt was just making, do you think we are seeing a level from Jannik that we would have expected from the likes of Federer, Nadal, Djokovic the way he's playing at the moment?

GRIGOR DIMITROV: I mean, all these wins that I have been able to put back to back, not only not just this week, I think the past seven, eight months, that's the reason why I'm back into the top 10.

Of course extremely happy, no doubt about that. But yeah, it starts, for me personally, starts to be even more interesting how I can make it difficult for any one of these guys. I think slowly but surely I'm starting to understand that a little bit. Learning that now I think a little bit more, since I have played against so many different generations, I always feel like I had to adapt sort of or learn.

I think at the moment clearly Jannik is playing, I mean, outstanding tennis. There is nothing to say to that. You see how focused he is, how determined he is, the way he's hitting his shots, there is zero doubt, so a lot of that level, it's extremely high up. I don't feel the need to compare him to any other player or any player, for that matter. I think it's just clearly that's his time of, you know, like, prime tennis that he's playing.

Can he play any better? I don't know. He's the one to show that. But at the moment that he's been able to really put so many matches back to back with the same level, so all credit goes to him. And he is the best player right now in the world.

Q. Congratulations for this run to the finals. You said that you're fighting your own battles and running your own races. My question is what does pressure mean for the tennis players and their life?

GRIGOR DIMITROV: Oh, I think each one is very different. I really don't know how to answer that too well.

More on that, I think it's just I think each player has his own goals, targets, long-term goals, short-term goals. I think each player tries to find their own way to feel ready to compete.

It's just simple as that and then what it actually means to you, what it means to you to compete, what it means to play at certain tournaments, what are certain wins means to you. So it's very personal.

I think for me it's about being consistent. For example, that's the one thing that I have been really focused on, how I'm going to prepare, how I'm going to put myself in the best situation to get out there and play my best, but along the way enjoy. Because also, you're your own critic, you're your own best friend, and you're your own, you know, teacher at times for things.

I, for one, also want to thank myself for the work that I have been putting in, for the discipline, for the hard hours that I have been, doing for the heartaches, for the pain, for everything that we're going through behind the scenes.

You need to also acknowledge those things. You need to embrace them as well. You need to cherish them. I also think those things are making you a better person. My mom always used to say before being a great champion is be a great person. This is the thing I have always focused on since I was a kid.

I think at some point all the trophies and all that, it kind of paled in comparison to what else is. I think at the moment, all of us that we're playing tennis out there, living our dream.

So it's a little window of our life, and I think after that it's going to be different. That's why I feel like right now I'm in a very interesting path. That's what I'm saying, I'm running my own race.

Q. You mentioned obviously the level of play he's had up to this point. Today's match, what stands out to you the way that the breakpoints he was able to gain today in the match today for you?

GRIGOR DIMITROV: Yeah, I think, I mean, you never know if I would have broken him in that game how the match would have turned out to be, but also, he's the player that he's a frontrunner. If he's up a break, I think his confidence kicks in even a little bit more. He starts playing a little bit more loose and free.

I think he's been able to do that not just now, not just today, but every single match, to play with that level. I think that's probably one of his biggest weapons right now.

You know, from the baseline and all that, I like my chances. I can rally with him. I felt fairly comfortable, but on a few occasions clearly he put me in a very bad position and he was able to take the initiative. I think that was, in a way, at the moment, that's enough for him.

But again, he's been able to do that amazingly also throughout the whole time of the match for a couple of sets and, you know, with less mistakes, good first serves, good returns, puts a constant pressure.

So of course if you're unable to get out of these moments, it becomes very difficult.

Q. I guess the silver lining for you was the crowd support. What did you make of the Grigor chants all match?

GRIGOR DIMITROV: Yeah, man, I felt like a rock star these days, to be honest (smiling). It was amazing. I felt so embraced, and the support has been outstanding, honestly outstanding. I have never played a night match here let alone play on a center court. But after those last two, three matches, I really felt the crowd. I felt the love.

Honestly, it's amazing. But also, I think it's very fair. I think the crowd overall supports both ends. In battles it's very nice, it's nice when you have that. Kind of holds you in the match on both ends.

It's been amazing weeks. Honestly, of course I'm bummed about today, but again, I don't want to go too down on myself. I just need to acknowledge the good and the bad right now and move on with it.

Of course it hurts. Nobody wants to lose in the final. That's that. I mean, I will keep on pushing. I think after so many years I have never really, like, given up keep on dreaming, playing. Now is no different.

Q. A great week. Big wins over Carlos and Sascha. How do you put this tough loss behind you and not let it affect your confidence? Moving forward, how is your psyche when you play Sinner next time?

GRIGOR DIMITROV: If I could play him tomorrow, I probably would (smiling). I think when you lose matches, doesn't matter even if it's a match like that or if it was in three sets, you still want to compete again.

I think that's the part where you need to keep on doing and believing. I think I definitely need a couple days off just to kind of reassess where I'm at. I think also a little bit physically. I think that's going to help me to get over all of

that and then just get back at it. That's the only way.

Fear has never been a good friend I think of anybody. Of course at times it helps for certain things, but I think not in our sport. Again, those are the matches that I want to play.

It's been a while since I have been able to play against these guys back to back, and I think that's also a bit of a difference. He's been playing those matches on a regular basis for, let's say, a couple of years and all that. But it's been a while for me that I have been able to put wins like that.

I think this can only fall into a good place in my memory bank and remember that I'm still here, that I still can compete against these guys and do good against them. I think that's the ultimate goal. For sure, he's the one to chase right now.

Q. I have heard a lot of people at this tournament say, players say they love how this tournament is being run and the atmosphere. What are your feelings about the atmosphere and the Open since it moved from Key Biscayne, and especially this year?

GRIGOR DIMITROV: I don't know. Like, I had one of my biggest wins at Key Biscayne, so I'm super biased on that. Not saying much on that.

You know, it is what it is. I think as I said in the past years I haven't been able to, like, really adjust the way I wanted to play out here, but I was very determined this year to do that (smiling).

I think everything else, in a way, it's in the past. I forgot the feeling of playing back there, but so far everything this year has been quite well for us. I think a lot of the players are really, most of the players are very focused on the game, and I think this is the part where we are really focused.

Doesn't matter where we're at, what conditions are. We have to adapt. I think this is what I have been able to do very well, especially this year and even in the previous years that I have come to play here. Yeah.

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