

Rolex Monte-Carlo Masters

Principality of Monaco

Friday, 16 April 2021

Andrey Rublev

Press Conference



A. RUBLEV/R. Nadal

6-4, 4-6, 6-2

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. I would like to know if you consider this one the most important victory in your career?

ANDREY RUBLEV: I mean, depends from which side to look at it. If we look about like a player, Rafa, who is the best clay court player in history, then of course it's one of my best victories for sure. Like him or Roger...

But if you look at in a way from other side, how he feel, like for sure he didn't play his even good level today. In his position is so tough when people expect you're the best player on clay and you have to win yes or yes every time. You cannot lose on clay because you're the best. It's so tough to play with this feeling.

Every time you have to play even great player, like Djokovic or someone else, people is still expect Rafa to win because this is clay. It's so tough to play every time with this feeling.

He's doing this year by year. He's winning all the tournaments or going deep every time on clay tournaments. This is amazing how he handle this. That's why he's one of the legends.

So it depends from which side to look at it.

Q. You had opportunities to go up a double break in the second set, then he took the second set. How did you manage to keep your cool? You mention a lot of the time it's your head that affects you. How did you handle that?

ANDREY RUBLEV: To be honest, I don't know. I mean, all the situation was strange. I mean, was not real that I was winning 6-2, 3-1, having breakpoints for second break. It was not real.

Probably inside I understood that something is going to change. It cannot be like this all the match. If it's like this all the match, then I don't know, probably Rafa had his worst day of his life.

I don't know. Was unreal to play against Rafa on clay and winning 6-2, 3-1, have break points for double break. To win double break, 6-2, 4-1, is something unreal.

I understand at that moment and I understand for sure, even the previous games on my serve, I save some breakpoints. I understand for sure in one moment he will probably turn this around and he will break me back. At the end he did it.

In my head, of course I was a bit disappointed. But still I was accepting this. I was a bit ready for this. I just tell to myself, Okay, just keep playing the same way and we'll see what's going to happen.

Q. Not only did you win after losing the second set against Rafa, but against Roberto yesterday as well. Can you comment on the improvements you've made on the mental side of your games. What are the biggest factors in those improvements?

ANDREY RUBLEV: I mean, I would say this week I am controlling really well my emotions. At the end that's the key. Especially with Robert, if I would let to show a bit of emotion, I would lose for sure yesterday because he was winning with a break. He had break points for second break. Second set he was winning a double break. Third set I was up with a break and he come back. If I would show a bit emotion, for sure I would lose.

Same thing today with Rafa. If after the second set I would say something or if I would show emotions, for sure the third set will be over, will be 6-2 for him. So I'm happy that I could handle it.

We'll see. I don't know. The way I am, I'm very emotional. I can go from zero to hundred. Next day can be completely opposite. That's the thing I still need to learn and to improve, to learn how to be able to be like this most of the matches.

Q. As a player, have you ever thought you were going to beat him?

ANDREY RUBLEV: I mean, of course when I was a kid I knew that when I will be -- because in my head when I was kid, of course I was only dreaming that I'm going to play tennis. There was no Plan B or Plan C. In my head was only that I'm going to be a pro tennis player.

While I was imagining this, of course in my head was, Okay, I'm going to be 22 or something, Rafa will still be 30 something. For sure he will still play tennis. Of course, I imagine that we're going to meet before he will finish career. Of course, in my head I was imagining that it will be great to have chance to beat him (smiling).

But that was a kid, so...

Q. This is a tournament very special. I've never seen in the same tournament Djokovic saying, I played the worst match of my life, then listen to Nadal who gave credit to you for your win, said you played very well, but he also said his serve was a disaster. Do you think it could be because of age, inactivity? How do you explain it?

ANDREY RUBLEV: No, for sure it's not about the age. I remember even my match against Rafa in London was completely opposite. I couldn't make serve. I was serving disaster. He was serving so good all the match.

So it's just happen this things. Some day you going to feel something better, some day you going to feel something worst. It's part of the game, part of the sport.

Today I was a bit lucky, especially the first set, he was not really feeling the serve well. Then I think from middle of second set he start to do doubles. He was not doing one double.

Anyway, I feel the same. I feel here is really tough to serve. Is like I said a bit before, I think it's because of the angle of the court is a bit like this, like a triangle. Because of the angle, it looks like the net is higher. It's really tough to serve.

I feel it from the first match till today that it's not easy to serve here.

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