

# Rolex Monte-Carlo Masters

Principality of Monaco

Sunday, 10 April 2022

## Jo-Wilfried Tsonga

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Questions in French.

**Q. You practiced with Gael yesterday. Are you nostalgic about practicing again, or are you really being a competitor in this tournament?**

JO-WILFRIED TSONGA: Yes, I am a competitor in this tournament. I feel light. It's quite pleasant. I'm coming here to enjoy it as much as I can enjoy the time I have to play.

I'm not here to be just an amateur. I will enjoy it only if I do what I like to do for my whole career, which is fight and try to win.

**Q. What ambition do you have for this tournament?**

JO-WILFRIED TSONGA: Given what I have been doing lately, my ambition is not seeing very far. I'm not telling myself I will be in the quarters or the semis or winning the tournament. My ambition stops at my first match. I will want to win that first match, and the ambition will develop only if I'm able to be successful and make a few steps forward.

**Q. So that means even if you lose first round or second round you won't be disappointed?**

JO-WILFRIED TSONGA: Well, I have always been a competitor, so I believe I will be disappointed if I lose, of course. It's my life as a tennis player. Whenever it happens, even if it's the last match or not far from the last match, I will always want to win it.

As I said, I'm not going out there just to have fun. If the tournament invited me and gave me a wildcard, it's because I'm competitive.

**Q. After your announcement saying you were retiring, there were many tweets, many reactions. Now people are aware of your great career. It's a great event that you are ending your career in the French Open.**

JO-WILFRIED TSONGA: When I made the

announcement, I immediately cut off my phone and everything else. I really didn't want, how can I say, I didn't want to be overwhelmed by emotions.

I'm saving that for when it will have stopped, but right now I'm still into it. I don't want to start thinking I'm going away. I want to really play well until the French Open. So I didn't look at anything for two days after. I heard people saying it's incredible, and indeed it became a global thing because I played all over the world, and of course I think it's a good thing. I'm very honored that I'm being recognized so much.

I imagine that when I will have stopped, when I will have retired, I will realize what I was able to achieve in my life. I hope it's going to end in the best way possible and that I will be able to thank everybody at the end.

**Q. This week is full of emotions, and also, it's a difficult week because you had little physical problems. How do you feel right now? How are you starting this tournament?**

JO-WILFRIED TSONGA: I was a bit sick when I came back from Miami, but now I feel good. I was able to play well during those past four days with good intensity, with good players. I played sets in practice.

Strangely enough, I won some of them. It had been a long time I didn't do that. So everything is very nice and going well. I just want to have a good week and play good tennis.

**Q. Back to the reactions, what do they say in the locker rooms? I suppose other players came to see you, and did some of them tell you you should keep going?**

JO-WILFRIED TSONGA: Some of them, yes. They think it's strange, because we are from the same generation and they are still there, so of course they are thinking about themselves.

But generally speaking, everybody is very benevolent and understanding. The younger ones, the less-younger ones, the coaches, everybody is nice. I'm happy.



**Q. You are doing a lot for younger players, and you have an academy. Can you give us more details about your projects with younger players now in your academy? What will be your work?**

JO-WILFRIED TSONGA: There is not a real official goal, but when I was young, I was given a lot. I was supported, I was helped, I was lucky during my whole year.

So this is my way of doing something for others, do something good. I love my game. I really dedicated myself totally to that game, and it's not because competition stops that tennis will disappear from my life.

So I want now to give opportunities to those younger players and to experience what I experienced. It's important for me.

**Q. The fact that you played your last match a year ago in front of an empty court, did it convince you you had to play another year because you couldn't end that way? Gilles Simon tweeted and said, I'm coming, my friend. So can you give us the order of retirement of your three best friends?**

JO-WILFRIED TSONGA: I don't know if I have to give an answer to that. The first question was about the empty court in the French Open. I will be totally honest with you. I just didn't care. What was important to me in this match was to win and do what I like to do, go out there on the Suzanne Court, a court where I never lost, trying to win another match.

And the fact that there was no crowd was not important. At that time I was not thinking about retiring. It was just a fact. I have no regrets from that match, no resentment against the organization, if they scheduled the match there, because for me the most important thing was to play my match and try to win it.

Physically I was not in good shape at all, but I wanted to give myself the opportunity of going further, so I needed to play matches so it was important to play that match for me.

**Q. Is there a moment you remember from this tournament in Monte-Carlo? It's a very special moment?**

JO-WILFRIED TSONGA: Well, there were many moments. I remember our parties in the evening. We miss that. We had a party with all the players that was great. We came in disguise, and we had a lot of fun. It was great.

I remember matches and good victories also, especially

the one against Roger. I spent extraordinary moments here, and everybody knows that here. The view is beautiful, the weather is nice, it's spring coming. It's a very special moment, and it's the beginning of the clay court season, so it's a very good moment to spend here.

**Q. A similar question. You played two semis and two quarters here. Is there anything you regret?**

JO-WILFRIED TSONGA: You always have many regrets. If I had to regret what I did in my career, I would regret everything, almost everything. It's been a while. I have been asking myself some questions. Do I have some regrets? And the answer is always the same. If I started saying if I had done this or that, I would have been No. 1 in the world, I would have won a Grand Slam, and I would have stayed No. 1 for 58 weeks.

But what I did in fact was to write my own history, my own story, and I have no regrets about what happened. It was facts of life. I made choices at a given time in a given situation. It brought me to where I am now.

Honestly, right now I'm happy. I think I'm a well-balanced person. I didn't need to do crazy things on the court to be appreciated by the crowd and the fans, so I have what I deserve to have.

**Q. Your career is not quite finished, but if you were to give yourself a mark, would it be 19 out of 20 or 15 out of 20?**

JO-WILFRIED TSONGA: Same answer. I don't even want to give myself a mark. I would give myself a color like they do for children now, and the color would be a rainbow.

**Q. Do you feel what you are doing right now is a farewell tour? Now, even if you are not asked about it, do you have memories popping up?**

JO-WILFRIED TSONGA: Obviously it's a farewell tour because I announced that I was going to retire, so of course everyone knows that with each tournament I'm getting closer to the French Open and to the end of my career. So indeed you can say it is a farewell tour.

What was the second question?

**Q. Do you have memories popping up?**

JO-WILFRIED TSONGA: Not really right now, because I want to finish the way I started. The memories, the emotions, all that will come once I will have drawn the line and everything will be finished when I will be at the end of my last match.

