

Rolex Monte-Carlo Masters

Principality of Monaco

Saturday, 15 April 2023

Romain Arneodo

Press Conference



ARNEODO-WEISSBORN/Krawietz-Puetz

7-6, 4-6, 10-7

THE MODERATOR: Questions in French.

Q. Can you say how you feel after this week, this prospect of playing the first final in a Masters 1000?

ROMAIN ARNEODO: It's great. I know the place by heart. Here is the ping-pong room normally. So I feel at home.

But it's difficult for me to realize what is happening, because we were just playing match after match. We didn't have great ambitions. I just wanted to enjoy the tournament. I just wanted to win the first round. That was some kind of pressure.

After that first win we felt relieved, and then we played really well. We just played one match after the other, one point after the other, and we made progress.

Today it was a lot more difficult, because we were starting to realize something was happening, because we were playing on center court. Center court is always difficult to manage because it's a lot bigger than any other court we play on. So we know something is happening, something different, and we had to manage this.

Tennis-wise also it's a bit different. Today psychologically it was difficult to manage the situation, because we had many breakpoints and we didn't convert them. I don't know why we missed those opportunities, but it was better to have them than not to have them, but we felt a bit frustrated.

In the end we were able to win the first set, all the same. Sometimes when you have many opportunities and you miss them, it turns wrong for you, but this time we were able to keep playing well and it went well for us. I believe because we were tired that we felt less pressure.

Q. You don't seem emotional at all of being in your first final.

ROMAIN ARNEODO: Of course I am emotional. Maybe you don't see it. But it's been a while since we finished the match, and at the end of the match I was really emotional.

But as I was saying, I'm very tired today. It was not easy. I think I was more happy yesterday.

Now, you know, I'm 30, I stopped my tennis career a few years ago, I became a coach. I know what this is worth. I'm happy to play tennis. I love tennis. I earn my living with that, and now I appreciate being in that final maybe more than any other player because I know what it means.

I'm just living that present moment as it is. I'm not thinking about rankings or what will happen afterwards. We are just here in the final at our home tournament. The Prince will be there for the Monegasque Federation. It's something great.

Q. Why did you stop your tennis career for a while and start it again? You'll have your best ranking anyway on Monday, whatever happens. Can you tell us about your history as a tennis player?

ROMAIN ARNEODO: Well, I was a very good tennis player at first. I played in futures tournaments for years. I became top 400. At that stage you don't earn any money. You lose 10,000 Euros per season. You can buy nothing for yourself, and you have to really fight every day to be able to practice. When you are 400, I remember I won Lajovic who was 80, and I couldn't make a living.

So I became a coach. I had my degree. I was in an academy in Cannes where Daniil Medvedev was at the time, and it was good for me to be a coach. I learned a lot of things. I was still young. And thanks to the 2017 wildcard I came back to playing tennis. It was something I was not hoping for anymore, and since 2017 I kept playing.

Sometimes I was playing challengers and I felt depressed. I wanted to stop tennis because I was not earning money. I was in bad places, but what happens now it shows that at one point it ends up paying off, and this is really worthwhile.



Q. Can you tell us how you became tennis partners with your doubles partner?

ROMAIN ARNEODO: When you play doubles, you always have the feeling that maybe you could play with another player that would be better. If you don't play well for a match, you think I have to change. So everything was fine with us, but we didn't play for a while together. I was becoming less ambitious. I just wanted to enjoy playing tennis with a friend.

As Sam is a really good friend and we get along very well and we like playing together, we started playing together again. He has a child. He's relaxed, as I am. We go skiing together. We have a lot of fun.

Every week we get messages from other players who ask us, do this, let's do this, let's do that. Like Nicolas Mahut, I was told you can play with him, so I thought Nicolas Mahut is great. I will show him Monaco.

It seemed a better player, but now with Sam we are in the final. If you go and play an ATP tournament with another doubles man, it can affect your friendship, so now we stayed together with Sam for a while and we are rewarded. I am really happy that he is experiencing this tournament with me. It's just happiness.

Q. So you knew you were going to play until the end of the season together, or now are you going to change something?

ROMAIN ARNEODO: Well, we are trying to find players to go to the French Open, because I'm trying to write to all my friends in France, Mannarino, Lestienne, and others. Before we were top 90, top 100, we needed players that were top 50 to be able to enter, so we had decided with Sam to play the challengers. But we wanted to try to get good enough to play the ATPs, and now it's great because we will be able to do everything together. We don't need another partner.

Q. Just the day before this big final, how do you feel? Today you seemed to have used a lot more energy than in other matches. And maybe you are tired?

ROMAIN ARNEODO: No, physically I'm absolutely fine. We are professional players. We are on the tour all year round, and we are well trained.

But mentally you have to be ready. Doubles is not so tough physically, but mentally it's extremely tough, because like if you are at the net while your partner is serving, you might not touch the ball for a while. But it's like a goal

keeper in soccer, you know, you have to really be focused because anything can happen in one second.

So today I was tired. I hadn't slept well the night before, but I'm very happy we were able to win. So physically it's all fine. We need also to manage all the requests. Of course I'm happy to have to manage that, of course, but I'm sure tomorrow will be fine, in good shape.

Q. I'm sure you will feel pressure tomorrow playing on center court again, and you will try everything to get that win. How are you going to manage this?

ROMAIN ARNEODO: Honestly I don't feel too much pressure. I'm already very happy to be at that stage. It's not that we don't have ambitions, but this is how we do. When we are relaxed and we enjoy ourselves and we are living the present moment, then it's good for us.

If we start thinking, oh, we need to win, it's finished. We can't play the point. So I'm going to tell him, Let's play our game and enjoy ourselves. We can't have any regrets.

So we will prepare well tomorrow and we will try to play and enjoy ourselves and use the energy we will feel on the court. If we win, it's going to be exceptional. If we lose, anyway, we have to enjoy ourselves all the same and stay in the present moment.

Q. What does it mean to you to be the first Monegasque in a final in this home tournament? You have a history with Monaco. You represent Monaco in Davis Cup and you do a lot for Monaco tennis. What do you feel?

ROMAIN ARNEODO: I'm very proud. You're making me think about it, but I'm here in this club every day. It's a beautiful club that is even better when there are not all those stands for the tournament. They have the names of all the winners on the walls.

Imagine if I win, I will see my name every day there. But this puts pressure on me. I can't think about it.

But also this gives credit to all the work we have been doing until now. We have an excellent Davis Cup team, better than ever, with very good players, and we have coaches working all year long. I'm very proud to give these emotions to everyone, because that shows our work is paying off. We work all year long, and sometimes they don't know why we do all this training. Well, now we know, and this is why we are here.

I want to spend my life in tennis, in Monaco, and what will happen tomorrow will certainly be a good line I can add to

my résumé.

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