

Rolex Monte-Carlo Masters

Principality of Monaco

Tuesday, 9 April 2024

Gael Monfils

Press Conference



G. MONFILS/A. Vukic

6-7, 6-3, 7-5

THE MODERATOR: Questions in French.

Q. You did the same thing as you did in the French Open coming back into the match. How did you find resources to do that? Did you still believe that you could win after that first experience?

GAEL MONFILS: Well, quite early in the match I felt very tired. In the second set I really, in general, felt extremely tired. Suddenly I said it to my coach, and I said, Really, I don't know how I'm going to do.

I had the break in the second set, but my back was hurting, was even not feeling really well, but the fact of saying it to my coach made me more relaxed.

I didn't start the third set very well, but I felt I was becoming more and more confident. Each time I think every match is important. Even if you don't play your best tennis, if you win, it's good for you. So I felt when I was able to hit the ball well that I could trust my shots, so I was able to relax a bit, to play deeper, hit harder, take more risks, and I was able to pull up.

Until the end of the match, I developed this type of game, but I had had many opportunities to kill the match before that, but I knew it was not impossible for me to break him back.

Q. Last week you said that clay had become the most complicated surface for you. Is it because you ask yourself many questions when you play on that surface?

GAEL MONFILS: Well, I'm happy you're asking that question, because now you will write it the way I said, because when you say it's more difficult, people believe that you are not good on clay.

It's not true. It's just more challenging physically. I don't

feel as comfortable, but it doesn't mean I'm not playing well.

People don't understand that. Of course it's more complicated. The rallies are longer, the serve is not as efficient, it's more difficult to make aces.

Everything is more difficult. Of course I don't like that surface as much as the others, but still, I can be very good on that surface in spite of all that. Yeah, sometimes people stop at the first degree. Physically it's a lot tougher, and the surface is more demanding.

Q. In spite of that, don't you feel it's better to play Daniil on clay? Because it's not his favorite surface.

GAEL MONFILS: Well, I would like to not like clay as he does. He won Rome, he went to the quarters in the French once. So I take it. It's the same thing. He says he doesn't like clay, but that doesn't mean he's not good on that surface.

Of course it's not his favorite one, but he's still Daniil Medvedev, and whatever the surface, it's always very complicated to play him.

Q. He has an additional advisor in his team. Is there a nonaggression pact with Gilles, or is Gilles going to tell him what he has to do?

GAEL MONFILS: He will tell him what he has to do. That's what he has to do. It's good for Daniil.

Q. What are you going to say?

GAEL MONFILS: I don't believe the match will depend on that anyway. I will try just to play good points, good games, and try to sustain the physical effort.

Q. When we had asked you last year about the Olympics, you said you didn't see that far. But now you are winning many points. Are you starting to believe you can be part of the team?

GAEL MONFILS: Well, when I said that last year, I was

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400 in the world. But I'm not even thinking about that, because last year I wrote various articles on LinkedIn and I read them recently, and a year ago I had the impression that people wanted me to quit tennis. I was 400 in the world. People don't let you believe in your own dreams. People don't know you.

This is why I try to have interactions with my real fans. I don't need to win 20 tournaments, but if I win one match here, another match there, this is what it is about. There are only the legends who won everything.

They don't allow you to say, you know, I'm 36, I'm 400 in the world, and I still want to come back to a good level. Everybody was laughing at me at the time.

Q. Who are you talking about? The fans? The journalists?

GAEL MONFILS: My community is perfect. They see what I'm trying to do.

As I said, my goal is not to qualify for the Olympics. It was a sort of midterm goal. I said I want to change my goals, like when I was asked do you want to win the French Open? Of course I want to win the French Open, but playing a good French Open can be only winning three, four matches, and when you move forward, then you start hoping. So the Olympics is the same.

When I was 400, I was thinking Olympics would be great, but it's going to be tough. There are younger players playing well. If I don't qualify, I don't mind. It will just mean I'm very close to the ranking I want to be. That ranking will allow me to find another goal. Great.

Q. If you qualify, are you ready to give up totally Wimbledon to prepare for the Olympics?

GAEL MONFILS: I really want to go and play Wimbledon. I don't have so many Wimbledons to play in the future. The Olympics is one goal, not the only goal.

You don't know what my goal is. My dream is of course to be part of the Olympics. I played four times the Olympics. I'd like to be there again. But I also really want to do well in Wimbledon this year. To reach my goal, it has to be including Wimbledon.

Q. Do you know exactly how you can qualify?

GAEL MONFILS: Well, I was told it was quite complicated.

Q. Who should carry the flag for the Olympics?

GAEL MONFILS: For me, it's Teddy Riner. I think the two, the man and the woman who did it in Tokyo, should do it again in Paris.

Kevin would deserve it first. Florent. And the one from biathlon, she would deserve it too. She's a great champion.

Q. There could be Karabatic, Florent Manaudou. And among women?

GAEL MONFILS: Melina.

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