

Rolex Monte-Carlo Masters

Principality of Monaco

Saturday, 13 April 2024

Casper Ruud

Press Conference



C. RUUD/N. Djokovic

6-4, 1-6, 6-4

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. How is the feeling to beat him at last?

CASPER RUUD: It's fantastic. You know, it's, in my eyes, one of the all-time players to try to beat. Today I was able to do it. Something I can remember for the rest of my life and tell hopefully my kids in the future and my grandkids when I'm getting old that, you know, I beat Novak one time at least.

Yeah, it's a fantastic feeling. Obviously I hope I can play more times before -- you know, no one knows how long he plans to play for, but obviously he's getting older, but he's still physically in good shape and playing fantastic tennis. But it's always fun to play against him, because, you know, it's one of the toughest challenges in our sport.

I'm very super proud and happy to overcome it today.

Q. Yesterday you told me maybe you would be dreaming about a tactic in the night. Do you think it was a tactic win today, or...

CASPER RUUD: Not sure. I mean, many things come into play when you play a tennis match. Obviously I played a few more matches on clay this year than him already. He hasn't played on clay since Roland Garros last year.

So he's maybe coming into the tournament a bit more rusty, a few adjustments in his team. There are many things that can be a reason why I was able to win today.

In terms of the game, it's a few points here and there. I started great. I was up two breaks in the first set, and then he kind of came back and showed why he's the best and was toying with me, dropshots, moving me around. I didn't really have any chance to play.

Then third set it's open. If you get a good start like I did,

it's a good thing. Then he came back. Then the last game I just told myself, you know, try to go for it if you have the chance. He did a few unforced errors luckily for me.

Q. He's not doing his best start of a season, for sure.

CASPER RUUD: Yeah.

Q. Did you see some differences in his game, how you felt on court in front of him?

CASPER RUUD: Yeah, a little bit. Obviously Novak is Novak. He's human. Sometimes he doesn't seem like it, but he is like everyone else.

I think what really motivated me and helped me a bit today was maybe that I thought about, you know, he lost a match in Indian Wells to Luca Nardi, and he showed there that he's also vulnerable sometimes. Not many times in a year, but a few days here and there he's possible to beat.

Luckily for me I was able to think about those thoughts in the end of the third set and take advantage of it, believing more in myself that I could beat him now than before, because he didn't have that perfect record so far this year, and that kind of is how tennis works. Fine balance. If you see that someone has done really well in the beginning of the year, it's tough to play them, because you're expecting, wow, this guy is almost impossible to beat.

But if you see that many or other players have beaten him before, you believe a bit more in yourself also.

Q. Congratulations. Tomorrow you will try to claim your first Masters 1000 title.

CASPER RUUD: Yeah.

Q. It is against a player who, like you, excels on clay. What do you expect in that final?

CASPER RUUD: Tough match. Stefanos is a fantastic player on all surfaces, but clay, I think he has had more success in his career so far. He won here two times, so obviously he's feeling comfortable here.



I think he lives here in Monaco, so I guess sort of a home tournament for him. The last six, seven, eight months has not been I think perfect for him, and he fell out of the top 10 and a few things. Maybe he will be back now, I'm not sure, after this week.

He's been a steady top-10, top-5 player for many years already. He is always going to be a dangerous player and seems like he's back in good shape. I'm going to have to expect the best version of Stefanos tomorrow.

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