

Rolex Monte-Carlo Masters

Principality of Monaco

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Casper Ruud

Press Conference



S. TSITSIPAS/C. Ruud

6-1, 6-4

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

Q. It looked like you felt a little bit nervous in the beginning of the game. Is that true?

CASPER RUUD: Yeah, it was not the best start unfortunately. Obviously I was broken early. I had a few chances to break back. I didn't get it. Was always kind of playing defensively, coming on the back foot, coming from behind.

Yeah, didn't really get the game going unfortunately. Stef played well. He played aggressive, fantastic with the forehand, and playing also really well with the backhand today I think.

So I didn't really find any holes in his game. Yeah, I didn't play good enough. Simple as that.

I think there were a few maybe small chances in the second where I had again some break chances, breakpoints, but when you don't convert, it's tough to win the matches.

Q. Well done, anyway. Great tournament. Beating Djokovic is not that easy.

CASPER RUUD: Thank you (smiling).

Q. You had five breakpoints in three different games in the second set. Do you regret particularly one of them? Do you think you had a better chance in one of those? I mean, actually in one game you had three breakpoints.

CASPER RUUD: Yeah, the only one I remember, which I will kind of think about and regret, is one time I had a forehand and I went big for it inside in, and it went long.

I think that was a problem all day. When I played Stef in

the past, I think the guy who is able to play most aggressive and best with the forehand typically wins the match. I think we both prefer our forehand sides over the backhands.

But today he played also, like I said, heavy, good from his backhand side. It wasn't like I found any big holes. I was a little tentative sometimes with the forehand in the beginning, so I missed a few in the net. I was thinking, okay, play loose, go for it, at least go for the winner. Then when I did, I felt like it was going too much out.

I didn't really find a good balance today. I had one breakpoint there where I went first one inside out and then I had a forehand to go inside in and I missed it long. So of course it's annoying. I wish I could have that shot back. Maybe I would have done something else. But at least I can say that I kind of went for it, but it didn't go in, unfortunately.

Q. Stefanos makes a lot of serve-and-volley on the second. Do you think it was a key point of this match?

CASPER RUUD: Yeah, it was. He didn't do it so much in the first set, and in the second he changed up a bit. Yeah, I didn't return well enough today. I had a few breakpoints here and there like we talked about. So I was able to get the breakpoint but just couldn't really punch through and get the break. Sometimes because he served well, sometimes because he did the serve-and-volley.

It's unfortunate, but it's a part of the game. Part of when you're standing so far behind, as I'm doing, I'm vulnerable for this play.

Q. Yesterday Sinner tried to play some dropshots sometimes when Tsitsipas was standing a little bit farther back. You, is not your kind of game? You don't like to do it ever? Is there a reason you don't feel confident about it?

CASPER RUUD: Yeah, I don't consider it my best shot. I consider my forehand better than my dropshots. It's just something that I can be critical of in my own game, because I never do it enough.

Like you said, Jannik has developed it as a very good shot. Carlos does it perfectly almost every time. Djokovic also plays the dropshot fantastic. It's a shot to have in your repertoire, and I don't have it so good at the moment, but maybe something I should consider to work on.

Stef does it also quite well. Yeah, but I just feel like if I have an easy forehand and I play with 100% power and topspin, I will maybe win seven or eight out of ten shots, and if I hit the dropshot, maybe I will win four or five. So statistically I don't always see the point, but if I can develop it to become a better shot, maybe I will try to do it.

Q. Was it maybe difficult to handle emotion after such a win against Novak?

CASPER RUUD: Not really, but, you know, it was obviously a tough match with Novak yesterday. Today honestly was the first match that I played kind of during the day in these hot conditions.

Honestly was a bit different, because when the sun goes down, you're playing in the evening, it's not as fast and bouncy as it was today. So it was a little bit to adjust to the condition and the speed of the court.

But emotionally, yeah, I was ready. I woke up today and thought, you know, today is a day I'm going to try to win a big title. Just wasn't able to perform when I came on court.

Q. How close do you feel from that big title you're chasing? Is it difficult to forget the negativity like fourth times, fifth time, sixth time?

CASPER RUUD: Today didn't feel so close because I lost straight sets to Stef, but he also played very well. I told him on the court. I mean, he's maybe had a few struggles the last six, seven months. I think we can be open and say that. He fell out of the top 10 a few weeks ago for the first time in a really long time.

Now he will be back in it. I think that's where he belongs. His level is really good when he plays like this. It's nice to see him back in the top 10.

Yeah, from my sake, I think I have taken a few steps this week, but today it just didn't work out well. Obviously saying that I took a few steps, I think I played well on the clay and also yesterday beating Djokovic was a fantastic win for me and something that I hope I can kind of take confidence from. Maybe not today but maybe next time I play a big match or hopefully next time if I'm in a big final again I will think about maybe the fact that I have beaten Novak before can be something that can give me

confidence.

Q. You have been very close to become No. 1 in the world.

CASPER RUUD: Yeah.

Q. You were No. 2. What were you missing or what should you do in order to go back to that situation if it's possible in your dreamings or in reality? And also, you were sometimes in great finals, but unfortunately because you didn't win them, I mean, Roland Garros, US Open, here, what is missing? What would you like to have more apart from winning?

CASPER RUUD: Yeah, obviously we cannot go back in time, but one year and a half ago, like you said, I was maybe not a few points but quite close to winning or I played at least the final in US Open and was fairly close to become World No. 1, like you said.

That year for me was fantastic. 2023 was a bit of a disappointment compared to 2022, but coming into 2023 I was prepared for, you know, it's going to be a really tough year because I have a lot of results to try to defend, and hopefully you always want to do better but it's not always easy.

This year I'm feeling like I'm a little bit more back on track, I play a little bit more loose, not too much to lose anymore.

I have achieved, sometimes when I think about it, more things than I thought was possible in my career, but by doing that you also want to chase and push for even more. Obviously a Grand Slam or ATP 1000 is the next, you know, big dream, big goal of mine. Today I was able to play a final of a 1000. Wasn't able to win, so I will continue to chase and try to improve my game always.

I have taken a few small steps I think in the right direction last six months tennis-wise, physically also, and I think we are doing something right, and hopefully can continue on this positive trend that I'm in.

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