

BNP Paribas Open

Friday, October 15, 2021

Nikoloz Basilashvili

Press Conference



N. BASILASHVILI/S. Tsitsipas

6-4, 2-6, 6-4

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. That's a huge effort on your part to reach the semifinals of a 1000 for the first time. During the match, what were you feeling like, especially when Stefanos came back and won the second set?

NIKOLOZ BASILASHVILI: Just trying to stay very solid from the baseline. My physical levels were going down a bit in the third set because of the emotions. I got really tight in the end of the match.

I was just playing the game. Just trying to focus on the ball and try to go for bigger first serves. In the end, somehow I managed to win the match and to stay solid, yeah.

Q. How do you feel about yourself? Are you surprised? Obviously happy. But are you a bit surprised, as well? What are your emotions at the moment?

NIKOLOZ BASILASHVILI: Surprised? Not really. I have been playing good tennis a long time on practices. I just couldn't, didn't have the kind of first serve. I was missing. I had big minus in the serve. I improved a lot my serve lately.

I think that's why I'm in the semis now. In general, in the game, from the baseline I'm physically as well, feeling really good, I'm playing good, feeling the ball really well. Again, if I will manage this kind of serving well, I can keep playing good.

Q. The conditions here are obviously very different to most other tournaments, because the court surface is slow but the air makes the ball go faster. How are you feeling about that?

NIKOLOZ BASILASHVILI: The courts are slower, yes. As you said, the ball flies a lot here. But in the end, it's about who is going to manage, get used to the conditions faster.

I don't think, for me, for example, I don't know if it suits my game or no. Basically I had so far best results here, so maybe it suits my game, but in the end it's -- coming up to this match, for example, the center court was a little bit slower, so today I actually was not that happy how I played from the baseline. I was hitting the ball very early. But in the end it's a good result.

Q. You had a win over Roger. You have had this win over Stefanos. If you had to choose which is bigger, which one would you say?

NIKOLOZ BASILASHVILI: Roger Federer. My win against Roger meant a lot to me because he was my idol. He is as for everyone, you know.

I would say Roger's win was very important in my career. Beating Stefanos today was, as well, really, really important match.

Q. When you come to a tournament and you find that a surface is playing so vastly different than what is typical, how do you approach adjustments? Is it more maybe reeling in and not going for as much risk, or do you actually work into adjustments and try to change your strokes a bit to adapt?

NIKOLOZ BASILASHVILI: I think the conditions are not that kind of different. You know, it's slow. There is many tournaments which are super slow, especially indoor hard court.

So just couple days, get used to it, and work a lot, I mean, from the basket, for example, trying to find good rhythm.

About the game style, I think it varies which kind of player you play, so you cannot make like one decision to hit hard or slower or come on net. For me, doesn't work like this. I just try to go match by match and focus on the actual player.

Q. In terms of approaching the next match, sounds like you're definitely a stay-the-course person, stick with what's working?



NIKOLOZ BASILASHVILI: Yes, it will be, again, very difficult match. I think I have to just keep kind of these emotions, tightness, a bit, I have to manage this because I have a lot of emotions.

I will be first time in semifinals in big stadium. Just need to stay calm. Try to focus on my serve. Stay solid from the baseline. And then just, yeah, just play the game. You know, in the end it's a game and we will see. Hopefully I can play well tomorrow.

Q. There are so many players out there, but your stats in terms of the speed on your forehand and your backhand are incredible. Could you take a minute and just explain how you think you get such speed off of both sides? What's the key, if you could break that down?

NIKOLOZ BASILASHVILI: I have been having these baseline shots, really strong shots, a long time, but I cannot use them really during the matches. I could not use. I don't know why.

Right now I have been using a little bit better, a little bit efficiently. It takes a lot of energy when you hit fast. But that's how I play. Just difference right now is that I'm physically more stronger and a bit more relaxed.

I have been on the tour some time, so I'm kind of experienced now a little bit more, and just overall playing better.

Q. Is it eye/hand coordination? Is it taking the ball early? Is it positioning, balance? What do you think the key is?

NIKOLOZ BASILASHVILI: I don't know. I have been working a lot physically, and probably this -- I'm not really focusing on all this stuff. It's just naturally I'm hitting fast the ball.

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