

BNP Paribas Open

Sunday, October 17, 2021

Facundo Lugones

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: We have Cameron Norrie's coach. Any questions for Facu?

Q. What has he done differently this year?

FACUNDO LUGONES: A lot of different things. But mainly I would say taking ownership of his career and just putting himself in tougher positions and learning from it, moving on quick, take all the positives, being more comfortable with the bigger matches, bigger moments, being more protagonist in those situations rather than waiting for other guys to miss or something like that.

Overall just taking ownership.

Q. Tim Henman was saying that he thinks Norrie can now be a top-10 player in the world. Would you agree with that?

FACUNDO LUGONES: Well, yeah, I think he should be pretty close points-wise. I think if the rankings were open, he would be right there. But I think the main thing is if he has the level. I think he has it right now. He just needs to keep improving and keep bringing it every single week, just keep getting better at his craft and not stop improving, putting himself in these situations, keep getting through. Time will tell. But, yeah, he needs to focus on the level more than anything.

Q. Did Cam surprise you this week? Did you honestly think he had the level in him at this stage of his career to win a Masters event?

FACUNDO LUGONES: Yeah, a hundred percent. What surprised me the most was today with how things started. He wasn't settled in the match. He didn't look comfortable. Obviously it was the biggest match of his life up until this point. When you're not settled in those matches, it's very tough to get in the match.

I think he was able to find a way and he was extremely smart in the match. I think getting through the win, it was not pretty, but it was a thing from a mental standpoint unbelievable. I think the finals, they're not meant to play nice, it's just they're meant to win. I think that's what he did

today. I'm most proud of that. He just walked out of there with a W.

Q. You've known Cameron a long time. At what point did you realize that he was capable of being a top pro, doing something like this?

FACUNDO LUGONES: Always. I mean, I always thought he was unbelievably good. It's just a matter of when things are going to click and if he can, like, stick to the things that are working and stick to the process, just not giving up, not being let down by tough moments like we had in the past, some terrible losses, a lot of finals, a lot of really bad losses. It didn't matter for him. He always had a bigger vision. He always woke up the next day and brought 120% regardless what happened the day before.

When you have someone with that ability, I think there's no limits. If you're brave enough to go and do it... I think this year he's been really, really brave.

Q. Can you tell us about the shoe situation. Sounded like quite a lot of drama he didn't need.

FACUNDO LUGONES: Yeah, it's very strange situation. But credit to Cam. He never panicked. Even before the match I was more pissed off than him. I tried not to show him. I just couldn't believe it. Obviously, I mean, for anyone who played tennis at a decent level, it's very tough to play with brand-new shoes. They're really hard, especially on these courts. You get stuck a lot. In a match he was going to have to run like crazy to get every ball back.

Then you come to play your biggest match of your career and you don't have your shoes. I don't know what happened. We didn't get an answer. But the reality is the shoes weren't in the locker. He had two pairs of shoes, they were gone. Luckily he had another pair of brand-new shoes.

I knew it was going to be tough for him at the beginning. I tried in the warmup to make him move a lot, get used to it. He said, I'm fine, I'm fine. Obviously when the match started, he didn't look comfortable. He tripped a couple

times. He wasn't moving well.

At some point in the match I think he forgot about it, started moving a little bit better, became more comfortable. He was able to get through. I'm really proud about that, because maybe one or two years ago with this situation, he would have gone away or find an excuse and blame it on the shoes. The reality is we couldn't do anything to change it. He dealt with it, he found a way. I think that's what I'm really proud of.

Q. What has this been like for you, being a coach at the top level of professional tennis?

FACUNDO LUGONES: Yeah, I mean, it's an unbelievable experience for me. I'm learning so much. Learning a lot with Cam. I try to give my best because I know I need to get better a lot of things. I don't have the experience other coaches have or other former players have. So I need to work extra harder than everyone to make sure I can deliver what Cam wants and what he needs.

I always have that chip on my shoulder to do a little bit extra than everyone. Yeah, that's kind of my mentality, where I'm trying to go.

Q. San Diego was a great week for Cam until the final. How were you helping him transition from something like that coming to Indian Wells?

FACUNDO LUGONES: That was not the only one. I think the final he lost with Ramos 6 in the third, he was really close winning his first title. The final in Queen's, such a big event for any Brit to get that close, not getting through the line. The one with Casper was a little bit strange. He played some of his best tennis of the week. In the final he played probably one of his worst matches of the year.

Kind of our philosophy this year has been a lot of just, Let's focus on what's right, what we're doing well, yeah, we're going to fix what didn't go well, but we're going to put the focus more on what we're doing good and try to do it even better the next week.

Another thing that we always said is, We keep building. I think Cam show that after every tough final, tough loss this year, he bounced back even better, play even better. I think that's a great quality from Cam, to move on, take all the positives and keep building. He knows one tournament is not the end of the world. He's looking for greater things. It's just part of the journey.

You lose those finals, and I think at the end of the day it worked out well because we lost all those finals but we had this one waiting. I think that's why he won this final today,

because he lost all the other ones in a certain way where he couldn't get settled in the match, couldn't play his game.

Today was kind of going that way, but he was able to get out of that and find a way.

If he hadn't lost all those finals this year, I don't think he wins this one.

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