

# BNP Paribas Open

Saturday, March 12, 2022

## Rafael Nadal

Press Conference



R. NADAL/S. Korda

6-2, 1-6, 7-6

THE MODERATOR: What made the difference at 5-2 down in the final set?

RAFAEL NADAL: I don't know. I think is true that probably he got a little bit more nervous. He made some more mistakes, being honest. I think I played a little bit better at least. I think in the 5-2 I started to play a little bit more cross-court with my forehand and with having a little bit more of calm. He made a couple mistakes and I was able to save myself.

In the 5-4, he make a mistake with his forehand, but I played two great backhand passing shots, a good lob at 30-All.

With the 5-4, there is pressure, but hit some good shots. Then in the 5-All he had again break point and an easy forehand he missed.

I don't know, I was super lucky today to be through, honestly. Accepting that, I need to play better because I didn't play well. I will work tomorrow to try to be ready for after tomorrow.

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

**Q. He's only 21. He hasn't been in those situations too many times in his career. Could you feel him tighten up a little bit when he was serving for the match?**

RAFAEL NADAL: Well, is obvious he make some more mistakes. That's true, no? For everyone is the same, no? We all get nervous when we have to win matches. If somebody tells you that, there is two options. That he lies you, or the other option is he really don't care about the sport.

The rest of the players will get nervous to win the matches, no? That's it. Sometimes happens these things, but he has a great future in front with an amazing shots, good serve. In these conditions today with this ball that is not

easy to feel it because is a ball that I feel this kind of ball, we know that since a long time ago, with this kind of ball, is not a ball that you feel a lot. When the ball is on the string, is sometimes you feel is like a stone on the string compared to other balls that you have the feeling that you can manage the ball.

Is difficult to explain for me, but I tell you one simple thing to understand what happens with this ball, with me, I can't talk for the others. Is nothing new. I play well with this ball, I win tournaments with this ball, play well with this ball. Is a ball that sometimes I hit the ball and I don't know why the ball goes out or why the ball goes in, no? I don't have that immediate feeling on the racquet comparing with another balls that I have, with other balls that we play on the tour.

When you miss the ball, you know immediately when you touch the ball, when you hit the ball, if you hit it well or bad. With this ball, is difficult to find this kind of special feeling.

**Q. What happens to you when you get into these situations? We saw it at the Australian Open final. You're in dire straits, yet you're able to turn it around. Is there something that clicks in your head that you're able to do it? We've seen you do it so often.**

RAFAEL NADAL: I don't know. I thought I was lost today, so... And in Australia, very similar feeling. But that not means that I going to keep trying or keep fighting, that's all.

Even if I think I going to lose the match, my mindset before returning that 5-2 game is, Okay, I am playing bad, I had two breaks, but even if I going to lose, I going to try to finish the match having some better feelings. So I need to fight to find these better feelings in that last game.

I played a little bit better. He had some mistakes. Then with 5-3, if you are able to save that game, 5-4, you never know what can happen. 5-2, is very difficult to come back, honestly. Two breaks is very unusual. With 5-4, one break, as I say, if you are able to hit a couple of good balls, the opponent gets a little bit nervous, something that happens every single week on the tour.

With 5-4 I need to play a good game, but you know that



you can do it.

**Q. How much does the things in the past that you accomplished, all the comebacks, victories, play into the present when you're in a match? Does that give you extra strength or confidence?**

RAFAEL NADAL: I don't know. The only thing that I can tell you is, if the people believe that I am a believer all the time that I going to come back, not true. I am not this. I don't have this amazing self-confidence that even if I am 5-2, okay, I going to come back. No.

But in my mind is, Okay, is almost impossible. I don't want to give up. I going to keep trying. But I know it's going to be almost impossible. Let's try to let him win, not help him to win. Just try to keep going and to put the things a little bit more difficult to the opponent.

Normal thing with this kind of match, in that position from 100 matches, probably you going to lose 90. But if you give up, you're going to lose 100. If you are there, you can win 10%.

**Q. I have a question about Paula Badosa. She mentioned earlier you are her big idol. How well do you know her? What do you think of her rise the past year?**

RAFAEL NADAL: Well, it's amazing the way he improve last year. He increased a lot his level or, his, her level, her ranking.

Yeah, it's a great story. She's playing I think great. She started the season winning in Sydney, if I am not wrong. I know the last couple of weeks was not perfect, but she was able to win here a couple of months ago.

When she's playing well today, is a player that can fight for every single event. She has an amazing shots. She hits the ball very strong. She's able to compete well and win against anyone.

Potentially she can accomplish a lot of things here in this sport if she's able to stay healthy and to stay with the focus and the mind in the right position. I think she has the potential for everything.

**Q. All tennis players fight for victories. Some say maybe with Jimmy Connors, Lleyton, Novak, your fighting skills are so exceptional. Could you talk about how that emerged, how you nourish it, and is that a talent in itself?**

RAFAEL NADAL: Well, the word 'talent', it's difficult

because in this world there is so many different talents, no? We can name talent every single thing because everything is a talent.

From my point of view, of course you need to feel the passion for this sport, but at the same time everything -- you can practice everything.

The reason why I have been fighting during all my tennis career or I have the right self-control or I have the right attitude or fighting spirit during my whole tennis career is simple, because I grow with this kind of education.

My uncle, my family, never allowed me to break a racquet, never allowed me to say bad words or threw or give up a match. Probably when I was a kid, they didn't care much about winning or losing. Of course, all the parents and family, my uncle of course, my coach, wanted me to win every single match. But probably that was not the most important thing. The most important thing was the education and the fact that I grow with the values, with the right values.

So I didn't have many chances. I had to do it that way. If not, I will not play tennis. Honestly, no? If I went on court and I create a circus or break a racquet or lose my control, my self-control, I will not be playing the next tournament, without a doubt.

That's probably why I have this mentality.

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