

BNP Paribas Open

Saturday, March 12, 2022

Sebastian Korda

Press Conference



R. NADAL/S. Korda

6-2, 1-6, 7-6

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. Can you talk about the range of emotions, like how much fun was it going toe-to-toe with your idol and how painful was it not finishing it off?

SEBASTIAN KORDA: Yeah, it sucks. But it is what it is. I mean, yeah, I played a really good match, brought out the best in me, put him in a tough situation.

But he does what he does best and always comes back and fights. Yeah, I mean, it sucks, but overall very happy.

Q. What went through your mind at 5-2 when serving for it?

SEBASTIAN KORDA: I don't know. Not really sure. I don't know, he started playing a lot different. He moved closer to the baseline. Yeah, I could see that he was a little worried, changing up his tactics. Yeah, just didn't play a good games, and he took advantage of it.

Q. As young as you are still, seems you have a very calm, cool demeanor out there. Is that true of all matches or was today exceptionally special? It seemed like you just were there.

SEBASTIAN KORDA: I think I do a pretty good job in 99% of my matches. I mean, occasionally I'll get a little upset and I'll show some emotion. But usually I'm pretty good with just staying calm and staying kind of on course.

Yeah, I thank my mom a lot for that. Whenever I started playing tennis, she kind of put the poker face in me and just told myself to always stay calm and always show some good emotions, never be negative, don't throw your racquets.

I have a lot to thank her for it. I think I use it really well. I don't think my opponents really know what's going on in my head at any point in the match. I think it's a really big tool

for me.

Q. What lessons would you say you take from today's match?

SEBASTIAN KORDA: A lot. I kind of proved to myself that I can play with anyone. I have a really big game. Now I just kind of got to use the momentum that I built here and keep working hard and just try and break that barrier of beating the top-level players, and hopefully just keep on going.

Q. Did it help having hit with him on that same court? How much did that demystify that experience today?

SEBASTIAN KORDA: Every single time we practice, he kind of destroys me a little bit (smiling).

This time was a close set. Every single time I practice with him or play with him, I feel I'm getting better and better. Yeah, it's progress. He's one of the greatest players of all time right now. He's super hot. Hasn't lost a match this year. To kind of push him to the edge was awesome. Shows a lot of my game, how dangerous it can be against tough opponents.

Yeah, just overall happy.

Q. 5-2, what happened? How much of an aspect of nerves came into the situation? Have you spoken much to your dad so far?

SEBASTIAN KORDA: Yeah, overall everyone's very happy. It's a little tough kind of finishing a match like that.

Yeah, at 5-2, started to play a little different. Maybe nerves got a little bit to me. Yeah, I think he changed the way he was playing a little bit. He stopped missing a little bit more. Came closer to the line. And I made some easy mistakes, and he took advantage of that.

He's an incredible fighter. Probably one of the greatest fighters of all time. And just used it and just kept going.

Q. Was there any moment in the latter stages of the



third set where you may have been thinking, I'm close to beating my number one hero?

SEBASTIAN KORDA: Of course. He'll always be my idol in tennis, he'll be one of the reasons why I picked up a tennis racquet. Yeah, super close.

But there's a new day tomorrow, good things happening in my tennis. Hopefully I get many more chances against him.

Q. You haven't played in that many full stadiums. How fun was it to have that experience?

SEBASTIAN KORDA: Yeah, no, it was awesome. Especially when you're playing a guy like Nadal, you're not going to get very many supporters. I had quite a few. It was super cool.

When we played at the French Open, it was maybe 30%, so it wasn't quite as loud. This was awesome. The crowd was amazing. They showed so much love and support. It was a great moment for me.

Q. I thought you came in, served and volleyed exceptionally. I was hoping toward the end you were going to hit that serve, take a couple floaters, do the same thing.

SEBASTIAN KORDA: Yeah, I have a pretty good net game. In certain situations you kind of tend to forget what works. Your mind is somewhere else. Nerves play a big part of it.

There's a lot to learn from these kind of matches. Hopefully next time I won't make the same mistakes.

Q. What would be the number one positive you take away from this? I suppose on a negative side, how long will it sit with you?

SEBASTIAN KORDA: I mean, I don't think there's any negatives. He's the best player in the world right now, one of the best. He's definitely got the best record. Hasn't lost a match this year. Three tournaments, three titles. Not very many negatives when you're that close against someone like him. 21 Grand Slams. Arguably one of the greatest of all time.

To be that close, it's a lot of positives. It shows me that my game is going to hurt a lot of people. People are going to get nervous. People are going to get worried. Yeah, just overall a lot of positives from it.

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