

BNP Paribas Open

Sunday, March 13, 2022

Felix Auger-Aliassime

Press Conference



B. VAN DE ZANDSCHULP/F. Auger-Aliassime

7-6, 6-7, 6-3

THE MODERATOR: You came back strongly in the second set but what do you think made the difference in the end?

FELIX AUGER-ALIASSIME: Yeah. It was a long match so there is many moments that I look, kind of look back on and regret, but I think once it was one set all I think I needed to have a much better start in the third set considering that I had the momentum back and, yeah, which is very poor for me to lose that first game the way I did.

Still had some chances to come back. I fought. I gave it my all, but, yeah, it wasn't good enough today. I mean, credits to him, he served well. Yeah, he deserved to win at the end. My game was too poor.

Q. Was serving a big problem today? If you could have done that better would that have helped?

FELIX AUGER-ALIASSIME: Yeah, a very big problem. I've been struggling to, throughout the week to find my groove on the serve in practice. It was getting better and then today again just, okay, you can say the start, you know, you're a bit, get used to the conditions of the court. You're a bit nervous. But when you're out there three hours, I need to be better. I need to find a way at some point to serve better. I did for a few games, but not enough.

The first game of the third set, throughout the third set, really serving poorly today. I don't know. I have to figure out, especially here, why I can't serve the way I serve throughout the year in Australia and other tournaments. I just need to see how to do better here.

Q. What makes Botic so good?

FELIX AUGER-ALIASSIME: Well, he can serve well. Actually today I think he also moved pretty well. Like, he was defending well. Some points I wasn't playing so bad.

I was moving him around and he was making me play tough volleys, making me play an extra ball. So he did that much better than the first time we played, I think.

Again, yeah, he's a powerful guy, so whenever he's behind the ball he can have some strong shots, like backhand, cross-hand down the line. But, yeah, he's been improving well. If you look at his record, he hasn't been at this level for many years, but every year he's been improving, so credit to him and his people for doing that.

Q. It seemed like he was staying in rallies, not doing too much, and then all of a sudden he explodes his shots. Did you see it that way?

FELIX AUGER-ALIASSIME: Yeah. I have to see. There's clearly like I was dominating a lot of rallies that I ended up losing and it hasn't been the case for me in the last few months, just lack of precision also on my forehand and my approach. And, yeah, I have to see is it because of him, his quality of defense today, or me just not being good enough, not being patient enough to hit two or three extra balls or not going for my shot enough. Yeah, I'm a bit confused, of course, of what happened and why it happened this way.

Q. Considering how badly you were serving, were you shocked to still be in it right until the very end? And second part of that is, did that have an effect on the number of unforced errors that you were trying to press a little bit more in other parts of your game?

FELIX AUGER-ALIASSIME: Yeah. I think it's all connected. At the end I was kind of mediocre in all the parts of my game realistically today. I can't say there was one part. Even on the return, I mean, I couldn't find the best position to return on the second serve. There's many first serve returns and many moments that I remember I should have been able to make him play.

Yeah, just not serving well. I think I was just rushing a little bit and forcing my targets also on my serve as the match went on.

So, yeah, I think it was all connected and at the end just

trying to be there, fight, you know, of course when I'm down match point in the second I'm thinking, well it's almost over, but it was good that I was able to give myself a chance.

I think it's better to lose this way than to lose in straight sets, but giving myself a chance, I could have done more, I wish I would have done more with that third set.

Q. How proud are you of the three match points? I know you lost the match, but you played really tough on the first three match points.

FELIX AUGER-ALIASSIME: Yeah, it was good. Yeah, okay, I went down today, at least I went down fighting, I went down trying to play better little by little.

So of course it was positive that I was able to win that second set, even though I wasn't playing great. Of course I was up a break, I feel like I should have been able, again, to close that one serving. But again, not serving good enough, but, yeah, I can be, the effort was there today at least but the quality of tennis not as much.

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