

# BNP Paribas Open

Monday, March 14, 2022

## Gael Monfils

Press Conference



G. MONFILS/D. Medvedev

4-6, 6-3, 6-1

THE MODERATOR: That was Gael's second win over world No. 1. In 2009 Doha he defeated Rafa Nadal in the quarterfinals.

All right. We'll start off with questions.

**Q. Where do you put that victory in your long line of victories in your career? Where do you place that emotionally and importance-wise?**

GAEL MONFILS: It's tough because you guys make it, I make it like a good win, you know? But tough. I played a great player, of course, one of the best players. I just felt good today. Tactically, I was good. I'm full of confidence, of course, so, you know, I'm just happy to win this match.

**Q. Do you think the crux was, in that second set, you had broken him. Daniil had chances to break you back, but then didn't consolidate. Do you think that was the real turning point of the match?**

GAEL MONFILS: Yeah, a few because in the first set don't forget that I had the opportunities before him and then the beginning he was, actually had the opportunity, so, you know, the momentum going in and out.

But for me the real changer was the first break. After the first break in the third set, I felt something was a little bit different. He was a bit off, complaining. He broke his racquet, complaining about his forehand a little bit. And of course when you have this information you try to press a little bit more on it and be more aware about it. And, you know, I gave him more forehands to play, of course, and moving him more towards the forehand. And then it was a quick, quick, again, second break, so at that time I knew I would have to play tough.

**Q. Your wife has been very outspoken about her determination and her emotions right now because of what's happening in Ukraine. You've spent time there and are married to her and have Ukrainian family now.**

**How much is that affecting you or inspiring you in this moment?**

GAEL MONFILS: Yes. It's not easy to see all my, I don't know in English, step family.

**Q. In-laws.**

GAEL MONFILS: Yeah. I mean, my second family, let's say, battling. It's not easy to see my wife a couple weeks ago crying every night. It was tough. You know, it was tough. Of course, I was, and I'm being there for her every day, for her, for the family. Still quite a lot of family still there. It's tough to describe because I'm in it. I'm in it. And it's just kind of crazy, you know, when you think about it.

But we try to manage it the best way that we can. And definitely for myself, you know, I try to be the shoulder, to be everything that she can lean on, and definitely to my second family, you know, I do anything for them to make them happy, safe, and everything that I can do.

**Q. It's the second time for you to win against No. 1, but if you look back on your career, can you pick one or two important, big moments or big like turning point or biggest tournament? What do you think it would be?**

GAEL MONFILS: Of course, you know, when you beat big players. Of course, I beat Rafa. I was happy. But let's say Roger, when I beat Roger at the Davis Cup final, that was a big moment. It was an important match, key match. I was happy to beat him there.

Then I have few matches for sure, like Florian Mayer. Even my first top-10 win for me, it was big. It was in 2005 against Gaston Gaudio in Doha. Those matches for me are big. When I beat first time David Nalbandian. It hasn't been easy, you know. I feel like I'm old, you know.

So I have many, but I don't remember exactly which one. But of course many matches that you beat the best player in the world is always a great moment.

**Q. At one point you were taking the towel and you were wiping the court. Was that from where he had broken his racquet?**

GAEL MONFILS: Yeah, because he has a lot of carbon, and I know myself, you know, I can cut easy. I can put my hand or have a slip on it. It looks fun, but it was actually in the way to make sure that I won't cut myself, you know?

**Q. But the fans seemed to enjoy it.**

GAEL MONFILS: Yeah. I make it fun, you know, in a way, but I knew exactly what I was doing too.

**Q. What are your thoughts on playing Carlos Alcaraz?**

GAEL MONFILS: It's going to be a tough match. He's full of confidence, young, hitting big the balls. I just have to play my game and be there and try to find a solution.

Obviously I've never played him, so it's going to be interesting. I see him winning quite comfortable today. I haven't seen the match. So it means that he is ready to roll. But, yeah, I hope he will find hard work for him in two days.

**Q. A different question. With the world opening up a little bit people are starting to travel, and my question is: In your great country, France, if you could suggest one place for Americans to visit, what would that be?**

GAEL MONFILS: Pointe-à-Pitre. Like, the Caribbean for sure. Guadeloupe or Martinique and Fort-de-France.

**Q. I know you're friendly with Naomi Osaka. I'm curious if you saw what happened with her a couple nights ago.**

GAEL MONFILS: I heard about it.

**Q. What do you make of that moment of having to deal with hecklers or people who just are being negative energy?**

GAEL MONFILS: It's never easy. It's never easy, for sure. Everybody is reacting differently. I feel like for her it's really hard to handle it in some moments and some moments she's better with it.

But, you know, it just shows that also, she's a human, you know, and people, sometimes they, because they see her where she is a superstar, but at the end, she's a, how old is she, 23? 22? 24? 24-years-old girl. Not unlike my daughter. Some people, rubbish, says stuff to my daughter.

Of course, you know, our jobs make it in the way, but at the end, you know, you can be a superstar, but you're a 24-years-old girl and it's not easy, you know, and it's not easy even -- you're doing it for many years, but it's not easy, you know?

No one can tell you when you walk on the court even. You know, when the people scream the name you don't have goosebumps. You know, there's no chance. So imagine when the people start to be negative, it's really hard. It's really hard. And we all have this at some stage and it's not easy.

So I hope she will find peace for her, you know, and then I hope she won't let this go too far because she's a real champion.

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