

BNP Paribas Open

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Denis Shapovalov

Press Conference



R. OPELKA/D. Shapovalov

6-7, 6-4, 6-4

THE MODERATOR: I know it's not the result you wanted today. Tell us what you're feeling now.

DENIS SHAPOVALOV: Yeah, definitely a difficult match. Credit to Reilly. I think he played really well the second half of the match, yeah, served really well. Had a couple chances to break. But, yeah, I mean, he was playing some great tennis.

Yeah, just a tough loss.

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. What makes him so tough to face? What's the challenge?

DENIS SHAPOVALOV: I mean, I was in good control. Yeah, just let it slip a little bit. Had a 40-Love game on my serve. Just let that go, gave him a lot of belief. Then he was serving really well.

Yeah, I actually don't think I served too good, to be honest. I think only 55% first serves. That's not great. So I struggled with that a little bit. A lot of double-faults.

Tough day for me a little bit on that side. Like I said, he didn't give me many looks at all on his serve. When he's serving so clean like that, it's super difficult to get into games. The few chances I did have, he played some great points.

That's pretty much it. You don't get many chances against a guy like that.

Q. How do you assess your year so far? What are you focusing on at this point?

DENIS SHAPOVALOV: I think it's been okay. I think it's been all right. I always want to do better. Just trying to figure out a couple things with myself a little bit on the court.

Yeah, I mean, just working on myself, working as a player, to be honest, working on the mental side, trying to fight a lot more, which I've done a great job. I think again today I fought well, just didn't have chances.

Yeah, just trying to become better. That's really what it comes down to.

Q. Both you and Reilly had people shouting out something in the crowd. Do you feel that's more of an issue? We saw it happen with Naomi. What are your thoughts on that dynamic right now?

DENIS SHAPOVALOV: Yeah, it's difficult. It's difficult. Of course, there were a couple points during the points people were shouting out. Yeah, I mean, it's not easy for the players. I mean, there's not much we can do.

Obviously most of the people are great. Just certain individuals sometimes. It's difficult. All you can ask is for them to be escorted out. If they do it accidentally, no problem. If they're continuously or purposely doing something, I think it's just not respectful for the players.

But yeah, I mean, I don't think there's much we can do or the umpires of the tournament. It's kind of a difficult situation.

Q. Did you ask anybody to get escorted out?

DENIS SHAPOVALOV: Yeah, yeah. Reilly asked for one person to be escorted out. I did the same just because during the rally a couple of times this guy was making comments and saying stuff. Then after the points he was kind of excessive, I felt. I just asked. I think these two guys were actually sitting together. They kicked one out but not the other.

Yeah, it just seemed like something more behind his jeering. Yeah, both those guys got escorted.

Q. What was he saying?

DENIS SHAPOVALOV: What was he saying? I don't



know what the guy said to Reilly. This guy kept saying during the point, Nice shot, Reilly, nice shot, Reilly. After I would miss a shot, he would scream, Yes. Just too excessive, I thought.

But again, I think the two guys were together. They both, like, really stood out from the fans, the other fans. It wasn't anything, like, disrespectful I would say. Not like Naomi's case. Not too bad.

Q. I don't think they were together. I think they became friendly, from what it looked like.

DENIS SHAPOVALOV: Yeah (smiling).

Q. After that in the third set, you kept your cool fairly well. I think maybe on the inside it wasn't quite the same. What was the biggest thing that was agitating you in the third set?

DENIS SHAPOVALOV: It wasn't too much about the third set. I felt like I was in control of the match. The 40-Love game bothered me a lot just because I had break points. Had a lot of momentum. Just made too many mistakes and lost concentration. You can't do that against a player like Reilly.

Then the match completely switched. He had self-belief, started playing better. Just frustrated with myself for letting that happen. I felt like I had a good chance to pull through in the second set with having the break points. I could see he was a little bit down on himself, didn't really believe.

Yeah, I was having a tough time with myself and kind of letting that game go. Then in the third set at the beginning, as well, 30-Love, let go of that game as well. Too many mistakes.

I just felt like I was struggling a little bit, missing too much. Against a guy like Reilly, you can't afford to do that. It was frustrating.

Obviously if you get broken, it's going to be really tough to get back if he's confident, serving the way he did. Difficult, for sure.

Q. You talk about working on the mental side. What is that challenge like? You can't practice it on the practice court.

DENIS SHAPOVALOV: Yeah, it's difficult. It's difficult because, I mean, tennis means so much to me that I try to leave it all on the court. Sometimes that's a little bit too much.

It's about finding that balance of, like, wanting it but not excessively killing yourself when you're losing matches and stuff. That's been pretty difficult with me. It's kind of how I grew up. Tennis is really my life. It's kind of understanding there's another side of it. There's more to life.

Yeah, it's tough to practice that on the practice court. When you're playing practice points, you're not as nervous, you're not going to be frustrated if you get broken because it's practice, right? It's difficult.

Like I said, it's a work in progress. Something I've been working on a lot. Definitely think I've come a long way. Sometimes there's still hiccups and steps backwards. I think I'm on the right road. Yeah, I'm happy with the way I've been able to fight and compete this season.

Q. You're not ever going to be like van de Zandschulp, looking catatonic out there. What will you be satisfied with in terms of getting your cool and managing all of those things? You're never going to be that guy.

DENIS SHAPOVALOV: (Laughter).

Q. I don't think you have it in you.

DENIS SHAPOVALOV: I don't think I've ever had more than a hello from him. Maybe that's what I need to be (smiling).

Q. That's not you; you can't be. Where would you be satisfied that the work you've done is enough?

DENIS SHAPOVALOV: Yeah, I'm not sure. Still trying to find that balance, still trying to learn. For sure it's difficult. Like I said, I've put so much into it. When I'm on the court, everything means so much to me. Maybe, yeah, it's just finding a balance between van de Zandschulp and myself or someone else like me.

I think I've done a much better job more or less. Sometimes obviously I still have a tough time. Yeah, it's just about finding that balance I think as you grow, as well. As I'm working with a psychologist, I think it will help a lot. Yeah, just understanding me and understanding at the end of the day if you lose a tennis match, it's just a tennis match, and life goes on.

Q. You mentioned sort of the word 'disrespectful' when referring to Naomi. We don't see a lot of that kind of taunting in tennis.

DENIS SHAPOVALOV: No, for sure not. I think in other sports it happens way more often.

I mean, yeah, it's a shame. It's a shame because people come out to watch great players like Naomi. I don't know what the reason was. There's no use for saying something like that. Like I can relate to Naomi. Not to speak for her, but I think she's put everything she can into her tennis.

When you step out on the court and someone says, You suck, something like that, it sucks. It sucks to hear or feel that.

It's difficult, but yeah, unfortunately we need to put up with it because there's no controlling what other people do and what other people say.

Yeah, it's definitely a tough kind of thing or challenging thing that athletes do have to deal with it. Like you said, luckily it's not too bad. So yeah.

Q. As a sportsfan, have you ever yelled anything at a hockey game or...

DENIS SHAPOVALOV: No, no.

Q. Be honest.

DENIS SHAPOVALOV: No, no (smiling). I would never do that just because I can relate to the athletes. I mean, obviously I'm a diehard Toronto fan and they haven't done the best in the playoffs. Every year I still support them. I would never do that.

Yeah, I just take a second to think of myself, how much I leave on the court, how much I try. I just know what these athletes put into it. Yeah, I think there's just no need for that. You're coming to watch great players, and great players can have an off day. Like it's normal. Second of all, you just need to understand that, yeah, these athletes, they put so much into it.

As much as maybe you're not pleased with their performance, they're definitely not also pleased with it.

Q. Is it worse when you have somebody in the audience saying it to your face as opposed to the shit people will send you online after you lose a match?

DENIS SHAPOVALOV: Yeah, both is brutal. Both is brutal. I think online is just getting worse and worse.

In person, I haven't personally been involved in too many. People, like, tell you something. I think most people that write on Instagram, they don't actually have the balls to face you up front and tell you something. I think it happens way more on the media. That's difficult and you need to be careful, just kind of not cope with it but find ways to deal

with it.

Like I said, it's getting worse and worse. Especially I think for my sake.

Q. It's like it's spilling over into real life now. People are getting...

DENIS SHAPOVALOV: ...more aggressive. Here maybe. I don't know.

Like I said, I think in real life most people, they don't have the courage to come up and say something negative. Obviously there's a couple that do. But I think online people feel like they have so much power. Yeah, there's nothing that can happen to them, right? So it's difficult.

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