

BNP Paribas Open

Wednesday, March 16, 2022

Rafael Nadal

Press Conference



R. NADAL/R. Opelka

7-6, 7-6

THE MODERATOR: Were you glad you closed it out in straight sets?

RAFAEL NADAL: Happy to win. Doesn't matter how many sets.

But I happy of course to be in the quarterfinals of this great tournament, playing better without a doubt. That's my best match of the tournament. Happy the way that I was able to play during the whole match. I only played one bad game with myself. For the rest I think I played solid. I did what I had to do against a very difficult player to play like Reilly.

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. Next round Nick again. What are your thought going in? You have a 5-3 record against him. Beat him the last two times you played. What are your thoughts going into facing him here in these conditions?

RAFAEL NADAL: Well, Nick is difficult in any conditions, no? When he's playing well and when he's excited and motivated, he's one of the toughest opponents without a doubt, no?

Tomorrow going to be a tough match, but we are in quarterfinals of Indian Wells, Masters 1000. We can't expect another thing, no? I have to expect a very tough opponent in front. Tomorrow going to be.

I hope to be ready for it. I need to play well and let's see if I'm able to make that happen hopefully.

Q. I wanted to ask you, did you hear about Roland Garros and their decision about tiebreakers in the fifth set?

RAFAEL NADAL: I read today in the morning.

Q. How do you feel about that? I guess that means

there will never be anymore marathon final sets in the Grand Slams.

RAFAEL NADAL: Well, I don't care much honestly. I honestly don't have a clear opinion. I am not in favor or not against. I think that's what they decided. Happy with it or not? I don't care. Honestly, I don't think going to make a big difference.

I read that everyone going to be the same. In some way that's positive. I don't think in Roland Garros makes a big impact. My opinion the biggest impact going to be in Wimbledon. Sometimes it's so difficult to break, so the matches become very long.

But I don't feel that for Roland Garros change a lot. Okay, yes, can be a few more games, but I don't feel in Roland Garros you going to go normally 22-20. In Wimbledon that can happen.

Q. You were very surprised early in the year that you were playing so well, having such success. Are you still surprised that you keep winning and winning?

RAFAEL NADAL: Well, the human mentality is you get used to the good things. For me, I am not that kind of guy that thinks a lot about what happened, in terms of sports. I just try to keep going. That's how this sport is, in my opinion. You don't have a lot of time to be very sad with the loses, and you don't have a lot of time for celebrations when you are winning.

Of course, for me it's super surprising be in the position that I am, winning three titles already, be in quarterfinals here, Indian Wells.

I can't say it's a dream because I even couldn't dream about that three months ago, two months ago. Yeah, things are going that way. The only thing that I can say is thanks to everybody who helps, everybody who supports me around the world, and thanks to life for this incredible opportunity that I am having. I am just enjoying every single moment.

Q. On this incredible streak this year, it hasn't been



easy. There have been many times when you've been down, had to fight, including today. Talk about the process of problem solving when you're down. Do you try to stay calm? Do you focus on tactics?

RAFAEL NADAL: Well, today I had one break point that I lost. I played terrible. But I don't know. I just feel that it's important, in my opinion, to know yourself, to know what's the things that you have more control about, and in the pressure moments play with these shots that you feel more confident, no?

In terms of holding the pressure, there is different facts that helps. First is the confidence. Depending on the momentum, of course you play better. When you are confident, you are winning matches, you feel more relaxed. It's easier to play in some way that moments, no?

Another thing is about practice. During all my life I practiced with very high intensity. I take every single practice like a professional match. I put myself in that position almost every single day of my life since I was a kid. It helps to hold these kind of moments.

Q. 7-6, 7-6 today. How do you go about managing tiebreakers against someone as big serving as Reilly?

RAFAEL NADAL: I mean, I can't tell you. I can create a story, but honestly I don't have a secret or thing that I am sure that can work.

I can tell you what I tried. What I tried is to don't help him to play from good positions, especially when I am serving. I tried to play with high percentage of first serves, especially in the tiebreaks, because then if you start to miss first serves, you open the door for him to go for a big return. Is not in your hands anymore.

Try to put balls in on the return. Find the right balance between not playing too aggressive, because then you have risk of mistakes, and not playing too defensive because you know he has a great forehand and he going to go for the winner.

Playing against a player like him, it's about trying to find the balance between taking risks and playing enough aggressive without taking a lot of risk to don't allow him to play from comfortable positions.

My English was not perfect there, but I try to explain, no (smiling)? I'm going to repeat because I made mistake.

It's about trying to hit balls that you don't take a lot of risks, but at the same time don't allow him to go in and go for the shot. Is trying to find the right balance between these two

things.

I think that was better (smiling).

Q. Were you in pain out there? Are you in pain when you're playing your matches?

RAFAEL NADAL: Sometimes, yeah.

Q. How about today?

RAFAEL NADAL: So-so. For a moment, good. Then on the second set, a little bit worst, being honest. I felt my foot a little bit on the second set. I was able to keep going, keep running till the end, no? That's the same thing. Yes, being honest, I am not in the moment to lie or to hide things.

I am just very happy to be playing tennis. Today was a little bit worst than other days. It's true that the last couple of days the foot have been bothering me a little bit more. Something that can happen. We know that. Just try to be ready and stay positive because going to be my last tournament on hard. After we going to go back to clay. That probably helps a little bit more.

I will need to do the last effort to do it as good as possible here. Hopefully the foot can keep holding. I am not thinking about the foot much. I am just thinking about my tennis and my next opponent. If something happens, we need to accept it.

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