

BNP Paribas Open

Friday, March 18, 2022

Andrey Rublev

Press Conference



A. RUBLEV/G. Dimitrov

7-5, 6-2

THE MODERATOR: Andrey, your 13th consecutive match win, haven't dropped a set here in the tournament. Talk about overall coming into the semifinals tomorrow.

ANDREY RUBLEV: Yes, sure, feeling well here. I'm playing good tennis. Especially today. Yeah, we'll see what's going to happen.

The most important thing is to keep this mood especially outside the court, after this tournament, to keep this mood inside the practices, just to be more consistent during the season and we'll see what's going to happen.

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. Towards the end of the first set, things got back and forth. What happened there?

ANDREY RUBLEV: I mean, it's normal match, of course. Some moments you can feel tight, you can feel a bit nervous, maybe your opponent can play good couple of points. These moments is important to keep, be calm.

Today I didn't control myself. I let frustration go out. In the end I make problems to myself. In the end it's almost cost me a set. But, yeah, I was lucky enough that I was still able to win. I was lucky today.

Maybe tomorrow if we play the same match, because of this, I will lose the set and maybe match.

Q. Last season was long. At the end of the season a lot of fatigue. How did you turn it around so well?

ANDREY RUBLEV: I mean, in my case it's a bit different. In a way I'm really enjoying tennis. I really love this sport. I'm enjoying traveling. I'm enjoying practicing. I really want to improve.

In my case, I don't feel -- of course if I play some tournaments, let's say, like now till the end, from beginning

to end, of course I will be tired. After one week or two weeks off, for me to start to play tournaments again is not a problem.

At the moment I feel I'm young and I really want, I'm really motivated to have, yeah, like motivation to improve, to be a better player. It's like sometimes I cannot wait to go to play next tournament, you know?

Q. In terms of your game, how would you describe your greatest strokes?

ANDREY RUBLEV: I mean, of course, it's tough. I try to play aggressive, especially to take my forehand, to dictate. That's basically the main, let's say, game, my main game.

Of course, on top of that I try to improve everything. I try to improve backhand to be able to play more aggressive. I try to improve defense. Sometimes maybe if I don't feel the ball really well, I can play middle speed and run, defense, because you need to have Plan B in case Plan A is not working. Of course, I try to improve my serve. Volleys. There's still huge things that I can improve.

But I'm trying. If I still not doing that really well, it's means that I still have potential to be a better player. I think this is good of me.

Q. What do you think of what Rafa has been able to do this season?

ANDREY RUBLEV: I don't know. Rafa is the best in history player. He can do anything. Sometimes is better just to sit down, to watch and enjoy (smiling).

We'll see. Last year many people expect that he will play US Open. Suddenly he pull out. He finish the season. Now he came back, he win a Grand Slam, and he's playing here, then he will play clay court season. With him you never know.

But he can do anything.

Q. I hate to bring the world situation into this. It is a very real factor for everyone. In a previous tournament



you wrote on the camera 'no war please'. Have you been watching the news? Have you talked about it with other players? What is this like for you?

ANDREY RUBLEV: Of course, you cannot not see the news. But I try to separate what is more -- I try to don't take everything, let's say, to take all the information because you never know if it's true or not.

All I can say is that, of course, it's terrible that's what's happening. I feel really bad for everyone. I think that's why sport have to be example, we have to be united, we need to be outside politic, to show example at least inside of sport. I think that would be good message, I don't know, for a better world.

Q. We don't know who you're playing. Can you just maybe first talk about if you had to play Kecmanovic, and then about if you had to play Fritz.

ANDREY RUBLEV: With Kecmanovic, I think I play him once at Doha. Was 2019.

THE MODERATOR: 2020.

ANDREY RUBLEV: Which is two years ago, quite long time ago. I won that match. But, yeah, after that he improve a lot. He's showing much better tennis.

Taylor, last time I lost to him in the end of last year in Paris Bercy in two sets. I think I had only one break point in the second set in all the match. So not many chances.

We'll see. I mean, it's going to be interesting. I hope they're going to play again one more time 7-6 in the third because it's already 5-All. We'll see.

Not much to say.

Q. Taylor made a semifinal run here last year. This year he talks about he wants to do better, wants to be a top-10 player. Do you understand that when you face him?

ANDREY RUBLEV: He's a great player, talented. He win many good matches. Have amazing serve. Good, strong shots. Especially here on a hard surface the way he play fits him a lot.

Why not? Of course he have a great potential. Only the way he serve is huge advantage.

Q. When you wrote the 'no war' on the camera lens, what kind of feedback did you get from within tennis and outside? Also, could you comment on the British

minister who is saying that perhaps players who do not speak up against Putin and the invasion might not play.

ANDREY RUBLEV: I mean, in the beginning, before I wrote this on camera, I was receiving many like bad messages. When everything starts, happen in the world, I start to receive many bad messages.

I don't know. I didn't even -- how you say? I was not even thinking how many people will see this or where it will go or something. I just wrote what I feel in that moment. That's it.

After this, somehow it gets over 22 million views. I think I was one of the first sportsmen in the world who say this. In the end, yeah, all the messages I start to receive, almost 100%, all of them were only positive, like, Thank you, stuff like that.

Talking about the British government, it's like I said, I think we should show a great example that tennis should be outside of politic. Not tennis, but in general sport. We're athletes. We want to compete. We were sacrificing so many things. We don't see our family. Many of the athletes, they change home because of the conditions of the sport, they're doing basketball, football. If you go from one team to another, you move completely, stuff like that.

I think that's the most important thing, that we were sacrificing a lot just to be able to compete, to show that we want to do our job, that's it.

I think sport should be outside of the politic because everyone say this, but in the end looks like still it's not happening. That's why I hope that in sport they will show there is no politics and we will be a good example to have, like, a huge step forward.

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