

# BNP Paribas Open

Saturday, March 19, 2022

## Rafael Nadal

Press Conference



R. NADAL/C. Alcaraz

6-4, 4-6, 6-3

THE MODERATOR: Rafa will be attempting to win his fourth BNP Paribas Open title tomorrow, his fourth ATP Tour title of the season, 37th ATP Masters 1000 title.

Talk about the win over Carlos today.

RAFAEL NADAL: Well, yeah, have been an entertaining match. I think was my best match so far in the tournament in terms of level. Only thing is when the wind came, was almost unplayable. But before the wind, I think I played a great, great match, no?

Then in the third I play with I think a great determination against a very difficult player to play. He's great. He has a lot of amazing things. He's super young, no? It's an important victory for me to be in the final here again in Indian Wells. Means a lot. So very happy.

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

**Q. You play great players who are young, old, all through your career. What is the difference in playing him?**

RAFAEL NADAL: Well, I think he has all the shots. He can play very aggressive. He can play defensive because he's super fast. He can defend amazing balls. Of course, when he's playing aggressive, is difficult to stop him because his quality of the ball is very high.

I think he has all the ingredients to become an amazing champion, no? I think was a good match. I treat the match like facing not a young player at all. I didn't come to the match more nervous because I played a youngster or this stuff, no. I treat like I play against a top-eight players. In terms of level, that was my feeling.

I saw him playing during the whole week and I think his level is top top. That's what I did: go on court with maximum respect, but at the same time treat him like a top player, try to fight for every point and find solutions.

**Q. You said the conditions were almost unplayable. Did you feel at any point the match should be suspended?**

RAFAEL NADAL: The problem in tennis is we don't have a ruling for that. There is no ruling for wind. There is no ruling saying after X miles an hour we should suspend the match.

I tell you one thing, I enjoy a lot of times playing with wind because for me it's a challenge. It's like playing golf with a lot of wind. I mean, we going to have mistakes. The level will not be that high. But it's about try to find solutions all the time.

The only thing I don't enjoy is when we have to stop all the time because some papers are in, then the net is moving, then the towel is flying. Becomes unplayable for me.

Another tough thing today, in my opinion, was sand. Was a sandstorm. Wasn't all about the wind. On the eyes have been very difficult, no? I start to feel the sand on my eyes. That was hurting a little bit. That's the main thing, I think.

I can't tell you if I believe I have to suspend. I just said to the supervisor I really believe that there is things what we can fix in our sport, but probably this is one of the things that we don't have in terms of ruling.

For some situations maybe we can add that to the books, no? For example, sandstorm, then it's a little bit tough for the players. For me later in the third was not sandstorm any more. I think the sandstorm pass over. Was windy, but is different. When the sand starts to be there, is tough for the eyes, I think.

**Q. What was trainer doing? An adjustment on you in the third set?**

RAFAEL NADAL: I felt honestly something here on the chest, no?

**Q. Ribs, chest?**

RAFAEL NADAL: I think is nothing important. Probably because of the wind, you need to change movements, adjust. Probably I did some bad movements there.

Honestly, I don't like to call trainer before the other guy is serving. I just started to feel a lot of pain and I tried to go as quick as possible. I didn't take the full time. Especially playing against Carlos, he's Spanish, and I have a good relationship with him. I just tried to be as fair as possible, honestly.

I needed to ask because I felt quite uncomfortable.

**Q. You're okay now?**

RAFAEL NADAL: I still feeling a little bit, but remain a lot of hours for tomorrow. I really hope not going to be a problem. Well, you never know, so...

But I am confident that nothing will happen.

**Q. You said you see yourself as a 17-year-old or 18-year-old when you look at him. What are the things you see that remind you of yourself?**

RAFAEL NADAL: Well, the energy. The speed on the runs. The amount of passion and determination that he has to become a great champion. Yeah, that's what I see on him, no?

Looks like he's humble enough to work hard and to understand that we, the tennis players, if we want to be great champions, the only way is to keep improving during all our careers. That's what I tried. I really believe that he's doing that.

Yeah, I don't have many doubts that he will be great. He is already, by the way (smiling).

**Q. What are your thoughts on Taylor Fritz?**

RAFAEL NADAL: Oh, he played great I think. Super aggressive match against a very difficult player to play like Rublev. He came here winning two tournaments in a row.

I think he played with great determination, very aggressive. Yeah, I saw a while of the match. Yeah, he play very well, honestly.

**Q. Would the match from 2020 in Acapulco mean anything when you play him tomorrow?**

RAFAEL NADAL: I don't think so. I think different circumstances, different moments of our careers. Okay, when matches happens in a short period of time, maybe

yes, you can have a reference - is correct, the word? - on that. When it happens two years before, a lot of things changes on our lives, on our careers.

Yeah, probably both us, we are different players. So, no, I don't know. I don't think makes any important. I am ready to face a very tough opponent, that he's playing with amazing confidence, he's playing well. Since the beginning of the season, he's playing a great level of tennis, so is going to be a tough one.

But we're in the finals of a Masters 1000, so...

**Q. The energy that Carlos brings that's similar to you, where does that come from?**

RAFAEL NADAL: Sorry?

**Q. You talked about the energy that Carlos brings. Is that something taught or learned?**

RAFAEL NADAL: I think you need to ask to him.

**Q. What about with you?**

RAFAEL NADAL: Well, when you are young, when you are living new experiences for the first time, everything is new. You are playing in stadiums, against opponents, in tournaments that just one, two years ago you were only watching these events on TV.

I think you're excited. You have the passion. You have nothing to lose because when you are young, especially you have this process that when you are coming up, going up in terms of ranking, in terms of results, you have this (indiscernible) on that process that you feel free to do whatever.

If you lose matches, not happen much. If you win matches, every victory is amazing. I mean, in terms of pressure, for him, I don't think he feels the pressure the way that probably a player like Stefanos or Zverev or Medvedev feels today.

He's at the beginning of this process, no? For him, probably this different approach and different feelings are going to happen next year, but not this year.

**Q. Are your volleys a part of the game you enjoy? You're very humble, but can you tell us why your volleys are so wonderful.**

RAFAEL NADAL: Well, I did some very terrible (smiling). Honestly, no? Today I did easy volleys, bad volleys, and very difficult volleys, great volleys. Especially at the end I

saved some amazing balls with the volley. I played aggressive. Determinated to do what I needed to do to win the match.

As you know, I like to come into the net. The last couple of years I am doing more and more all the time. Even I do some serve-and-volley more often than what I used to do.

I think I have a decent volley in general, no? I think probably a lot of people, because I achieved a lot on clay, people always thought. But if you see the statistics I have a very good percentage on going to the net and winning points with my volley, no?

I feel comfortable there. It's something that I need to do it. As part of my game at this stage of my career, I need to do things to play more aggressive. Going to the net helps my game in general.

**Q. I'm sure it's not the first time you are going to play on the same day at El Classico in Spain. Will you be able to follow it?**

RAFAEL NADAL: Well, it is at 1. I play at 3. First half, yes. I really believe that I have work to do then (smiling).

**Q. How are you feeling? You're not 18 anymore.**

RAFAEL NADAL: No.

**Q. 20-0. How is the mind and body?**

RAFAEL NADAL: Good, no? Of course, have been awhile outside of home. Now four weeks and a half away. Not much time at home after Australia, too. That was four weeks and a half, too. Yeah, I want to be back, that's true.

Physically I feel well. I played three hours, almost three hours the other day, three hours today. In terms of physical performance, I don't feel very tired.

Is true that these dry conditions helps a little bit to me because I am a guy that sweat, as you see normally, in Acapulco, even Australia sometimes, even Miami in the past, I am sweating a lot. In terms of body feelings, when that happens I am more dehydrated so I suffer a little bit more.

Here with the conditions, I always felt good physically here.

I think I never lost a match here for a physical issue, in terms of being tired. Yeah, I am quite well, honestly. I can't complain. I am enjoying. Yeah, I had plenty of tough battles this week, but I still alive, so...

I am in the final and I want to enjoy the final. Again being

in the final here in Indian Wells means a lot to me. Is a very special place. Yeah, I'm going to try to be ready for tomorrow. A match like today helps for the confidence.

I know tomorrow I need to be ready physically, mentally, in terms of playing at a very high level of tennis because he's playing well. I going to try to do the work that I need to do to be ready for tomorrow and then let's see.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports

