

BNP Paribas Open

Sunday, March 20, 2022

Rafael Nadal

Press Conference



T. FRITZ/R. Nadal

6-3, 7-6

THE MODERATOR: Rafa, I know it's not the best outcome you wanted. Talk about the match.

RAFAEL NADAL: Well, have been a difficult day. Yeah, congrats to him. At the end that's the main thing. The main thing in tennis, there is a winner and a loser. Today he's the winner. He deserve it. He played aggressive, well, so congrats.

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. Talk about how you managed to battle out there today.

RAFAEL NADAL: I try my best. Of course, have not been my day. But that happens. I have experience in all these situations. So is the moment, of course, is tough to play a final like this.

Yeah, tried till the end. That's it. Even I had my chances in the second set, I didn't convert too many chances. That's it, no? I think it's a difficult match to analyze personally from my side because I was not able to do many things.

But yeah, it's a great victory for him. First Masters 1000. Big day for him. I just hope he enjoy it. I wish him all the very best.

Q. Do you know what's issue is with the chest? Is it something entirely new to you?

RAFAEL NADAL: I don't know, honestly, no? It happened yesterday night just at the end of the match last night. So finishing that late yesterday and playing today in the morning, as you can imagine, I didn't have the chance to do many things, not even a chance to check what's going on there.

That's it. All the thing I can say is tough to breathe for me (smiling). I don't know, I feel very, very -- when I try to breathe, it's painful and it's very uncomfortable.

But that's it, no? Is not the moment to talk about that honestly, no? Even if it's obvious that I was not able to do the normal things today... That's it. It's a final. I tried. I lost against a great player.

I think it's not the day to talk about what's going on on me. It's his day. We don't need to hide that in my comments.

Q. Obviously you had a lot of support in that stadium even though we're in the U.S. What do you think of his game and this young generation of American players, Brooksby, Opelka, Fritz?

RAFAEL NADAL: They're doing very well. Victory like today helps. He played well. He went through some great matches during this week I think, especially yesterday. A lot of credit to him on the victory of yesterday that, in my opinion, his victory of yesterday is much bigger than his victory of today because he had much tougher opponent in front yesterday than today I think.

But, yeah, I mean, he already played great matches in Australia, this year if I'm not wrong, against Tsitsipas. It's obvious that he is improving. With this victory, it's a great start of the season for him. He will have chance to be very close if not in the top 10 very soon, no?

Going to be a big battle there for these numbers because there are a lot of young and great players fighting for these spots. Yeah, Brooksby is another kind of player. I saw him play a couple of times. He does a lot of things very well, with a special style, but doing things very difficult, doing very difficult things easy. Probably he going to have a great future, too.

Q. You said it is Taylor's day today. This season has been significantly about you. Even in this difficult moment, can you speak about what this part of your career has meant to you.

RAFAEL NADAL: Well, honestly, I wanted to make it perfect before clay, no? Have been very, very, very beautiful. Honestly I am sad because the way I was not able to compete. Is tough to have these feelings,



especially every day, but in the final is very, very ugly, no?

But, yeah, in sport is not about talking of the past. We need to talk about today. And today is a difficult day for me, no, tough.

As you know, I am sad now but I am not kind of person that goes down or goes very high emotionally depending on the moment, no? I am normally stable, putting everything on perspective. Of course, the last two months I have have been amazing, unforgettable, very emotional. I enjoy things that I never thought I could live again a few months ago.

Yeah, have been amazing. Now is the moment to try to solve this problem as soon as possible, try to start on clay, no? Practicing starts another part of the season that I enjoy to play. Of course, every single event is so special for me. I hope to be ready for it.

The thing that worries me now, it's about what's going on there, what I have to do now to recover and how long going to take.

Q. I understand you saying about being sad at the moment. When you were sitting at the end of the match on the bench, your head was down, what was in your mind at that stage?

RAFAEL NADAL: Oh, I had pain, honestly. As I said, I have problem to breathe. I don't know if it's something on the rib, I don't know yet. When I'm breathing, when I'm moving it's like a needle all the time inside here, no? I get dizzy a little bit because it's painful. It's a kind of pain that limit me a lot. Is not only about pain, I don't feel very well because affects to my breathe.

More than sad for the lose, something that I accepted immediately, and even before the match ends, it's more about that I am suffering a little bit, honestly.

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