

# BNP Paribas Open

Saturday, March 9, 2024

## Grigor Dimitrov

Press Conference



G. DIMITROV/A. Muller

7-5, 6-2

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

### **Q. Does starting the season like you did in Brisbane put wind in your sails?**

GRIGOR DIMITROV: Yeah, it's been a great start. I think it's a dream start for any player.

I think I'm just trying to get into a good groove again. That swing has always been very difficult for everybody, trying to make the most out of it every single day. I have done my best to prepare every single day and try to keep the consistency going. That's all I can do.

Yeah, get after every match that I have. I want to improve. I think I can play a little bit better, and of course physically if I keep up my body and hopefully everything holds up very well, I'm in a good spot.

### **Q. Are you at where you would like to be, or do you feel you've still got to pick things up and can go further?**

GRIGOR DIMITROV: I think as a player you're never fully satisfied, as you know. That's the typical answer, clearly. I'm honest on that, as well.

I believe I can raise up my game a little bit more, and in order for me to get to the top of the game, I need to be able to step it up a little bit more.

What does that mean? That means try to be even a little bit more aggressive on the court, go after the shots, play a little bit more with conviction, stay focused, keep on doing the work.

There are so many little things that I think I'm doing very, very well already, and I'm very proud of where I'm at right now, considering where I was a year ago.

So on that note, I'm extremely proud of myself that I have

been that consistent. So far I think I'm on a good path, and of course, like, I want more for myself. I always will. I think while I'm playing, while I'm competing, there's always going to be that inner voice that will want to go for more.

I think now is no different.

### **Q. The one-handed backhand falling out of the top 10, I'm sure you read that news.**

GRIGOR DIMITROV: How can I not?

### **Q. Do you think it's time to push the panic button for that stroke? I know it's in good hands with you and Stefanos.**

GRIGOR DIMITROV: It is a big deal.

### **Q. Next generation, what are your thoughts?**

GRIGOR DIMITROV: Yeah, I think it's a fair question. Listen, it's one of the toughest shots in tennis, however you look at it.

For now we're holding the fort, let's just put it that way. For sure I'm counting on every guy that's still out there with one hand to keep on pushing and playing for that. Of course I will probably be the biggest supporter of that shot.

Now, when it comes to a different generation, yeah, we're going to see less and less. I mean, I feel like it's -- the game has changed so much, it has evolved, of course, and I think from generation to generation the players traditionally have changed a lot. You see them stronger, bigger, so you need that extra help.

I would love to see more people with one hand. Just how it is for me. To be able to hit a slice, backhand with one hand, I mean, it's just a pure beauty.

I think every time you try to hit that shot and you make it, the feeling is, I mean, simply stunning for me.

### **Q. What is it specifically that the aesthetics of it that make it beautiful to you? Do you think you would**

**enjoy playing the sport less if you were hitting a two-hander?**

GRIGOR DIMITROV: Definitely not when it comes to the sport. I love the sport. I always have.

I think of course at times it's love/hate relationship. I think we all have our ups and downs. I think in general that sport has given me everything in life. So I'm always going to be of that supporter to push through for it.

Who knows, one day of course there is -- it's far, far ahead. I don't know at some point how I would be, of course, but I think there's always going to be a part of me regardless of, you know, of my career on that end.

I think the beauty of the one hand is just there's so much to it in order to hit the ball right with one hand. It starts with the timing, looking at the ball, you know, the swing, the height. Oh, there's a ton.

Even when I think about it, when I sort of dissect the shot, there's always so much to it that even sometimes when I think about it, the way you ask me the question, I was, like, wow, this is actually pretty cool.

**Q. You mentioned how the sport has given you so much. You've had such a great career. A very general question. If you could step back and say, hey, the one or two key lessons that this sport has given me over these years...**

GRIGOR DIMITROV: What it has given me?

**Q. Yeah, the lessons tennis has given you.**

GRIGOR DIMITROV: Discipline, I think probably one of the biggest lessons is that, because tennis uses the same language for life.

I always thought that it is very important to gather a distance from the sport at times, just to get some distance, and then whatever happens outside the court it is, and then whatever happens inside the court is a completely different thing. I always try to, like, divide, you know, life with tennis in a way, but life is tennis (smiling).

So to me I think that's probably the biggest lesson I had to find the balance with. I think in the end of the day, nothing is ever that good and nothing is ever that bad. You win or lose the match, tomorrow is another day. I think that's lessons. When you get out there, you know, use every opportunity you have, and go after it. Have no regrets on your choices.

**Q. Specifically in terms of your discipline, has it been in terms of recovery from injury or the gym or...**

GRIGOR DIMITROV: I think when I say that, it's just a little bit more general, actually. You know, how you eat, how you sleep, how you prepare.

Of course what you want in the end of the day to make out of it, because I think there is a couple of scenarios. I feel like one is you get ready the best way possible for a tournament. You come, you play, you compete, you lose. You're kind of still more on the positive end because you kind of know you've done everything right.

Let's say you come to the same thing, and then you're two, three, four times more disappointed that you don't put yourself in the best position possible to play the match, and I don't think I can live with a regret like that.

**Q. Is Novak the most disciplined guy in the game?**

GRIGOR DIMITROV: Probably, yeah. I mean, I don't know anybody else for -- definitely, yeah.

**Q. I don't know how much you pay attention but you're getting fairly close to the top 10 again.**

GRIGOR DIMITROV: I pay zero attention to that. But thank you, anyway. Keep going (smiling). I'm joking.

**Q. Curious how much you do, because some people sort of get bogged down with numbers and goals. Do you just live more in the moment sort of?**

GRIGOR DIMITROV: It's the most important thing. Most important thing is to be in that moment. I think also the one thing that I've learned not only in the sport that I do but even outside is always we have only that moment in front of us.

I mean, I've been top 10 before. I was No. 3. It was all great. Don't get me wrong. For sure, I would love that. It's a privilege to have a pressure like that. I love it.

But for me, I have a different quest, I have different battles to fight right now. All I know is if I'm conquering them one step at a time or whatever it is that I'm dealing with, all I know is at the end of the day things will come in the right way. Whether it's top 10, top 5, whatever it is, it's great. Of course it's only a bonus. I want to say that.

But it's always great when you set yourself on some achievement, some sort of goals, and then you make them happen, and then you look for the next one.

**Q. You sort of mentioned before, like, compared to where you were a year ago, you're happy with where your game is. Is there anything specific you're happy about that's different from, say, 12 months ago?**

GRIGOR DIMITROV: Overall, I think just overall my whole game has been better in the sense that I'm more aware of my shots. I think I've improved a little bit more on my serve and the return, positioning on the court. Also my movement. I think I'm a tiny bit better in that as well. But in our sport, 1, 2% makes a huge difference.

I think the course of those last 12, 13 months, I've been able to work on these things constantly, and I think that's what actually helped me to explore more the game and also to play it my way, and I think that helps a lot, for sure.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports