

BNP Paribas Open

Monday, March 11, 2024

Casper Ruud

Press Conference



C. RUUD/A. Fils

6-2, 6-4

THE MODERATOR: Congratulations, Casper. Convincing win for you today against Arthur. How would you rate your performance on court today?

CASPER RUUD: Yeah, it felt really good. From first to last point, felt like I was playing well. Playing aggressive. I know that he's an aggressive, explosive player. I got a taste of that last year in Hamburg. He beat me quite easily and comfortably.

Just the plan was to try to bring it to him, as well, and not playing too defensive from the beginning, and I was able to luckily do that well. Got a perfect start. Broke him right away, and that's a good way to start a match obviously and from there built further on.

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

Q. How much golf are you playing here?

CASPER RUUD: I've only got to play two rounds because I got in Sunday after Acapulco (smiling). Monday and Thursday I played, and then the rest has been tennis. Wish I could play more, but, you know, I have to focus on tennis, as well.

Q. Will you play on the off day before your next match?

CASPER RUUD: No, I never play the day before a match. It's too competitive with me and my dad and my friend, we play. I actually get quite tired after playing 18 holes because it's a battle from the first to the last shot (smiling).

Playing four hours of golf the day before a match is not something I typically do. So I need to be fresh and ready for every match. Maybe when the tournament is done I can play one more.

Q. You have now won more matches on hard courts at this point of the season than you did all of last year.

Curious what the biggest difference is this year from last.

CASPER RUUD: Well, I think physically I'm feeling a little bit better this year, and moving better out on court. I said it quite honestly or honest and openly a couple of weeks ago that I slimmed down a little bit, I took off a couple of kilos from last year. I think that's been working well for me. I have the power still in my shots, and I'm moving a little lighter on my feet.

That's something that I have been working on. And, you know, moving a little more mobile and flexible out there is always a good thing. Trying to play more aggressive, you know, tennis-wise. So there are a couple of things that I have adjusted from last year, and obviously I had a longer probably better preseason period in December than what I had coming into 2023, so that is probably also part of the reason to why this year has gone better so far.

Q. What goes into a diet when you're already ostensibly in elite shape?

CASPER RUUD: Diet?

Q. Yeah, to lose the weight.

CASPER RUUD: Well, not too much sweets, chocolate, sugar, all these things, just to slim down a little bit. Eating clean, maybe eating a little bit less, you know, carbohydrates and stuff.

I haven't been on a specific this and this, that many calories-only diet. But I had it in the back of my mind, not something that was kind of time pressure that I need to be this certain weight within this time. But last year in February I was around 84 kilos and this year I'm 80, so it's 4 kilos less. Maybe doesn't sound too much, but it's 5% of my weight, which is something or at least something.

So it's something that I'm not going to say I have worked on it but it's come naturally after working hard and changing a little bit in my diet, yeah.

Q. Can you explain the process, thinking about and

ASAP sports . . . when all is said, we're done.®

deciding to lose the weight. The small amount of weight that it is, was it you just didn't like the way you were moving or more just to avoid injury?

CASPER RUUD: Well, leading into 2023, I didn't really have any offseason, preseason. I decided, I took the decision to join Rafa and play a few exhibition matches in South America, which didn't leave me any time to do a proper preseason before the season.

So after Australia last year, I took four weeks off from tournaments to do a little bit of a preseason but kind of after Australia. We focused a lot on lifting weights and building, you know, mass, muscular. And, you know, I was a little kind of too stiff in my movements, too heavy. Not going to say I was bulking, but I was a little bit bigger than what I am now, and that led to me maybe not being as light on my feet, quick in the reactions and so on.

So it was something that I felt, you know, for quite some months last year that kind of bothered me a bit. I wasn't quick enough. So something that we have worked more specific on on the fitness regime to do other exercises, not as much kind of weight lifting as we did last year, and I think it's been working out well.

Q. Were you tracking your movements and explosiveness with wearables or is it just a feel thing?

CASPER RUUD: No, it's more of a feel thing. I do track my pulse pretty much every session I do, but I don't track. There are a lot of other things I could track, but my fitness coach, Marcel, he's really, really -- he knows his stuff really well. It's something we have sat down and talked about. I kind of told him what I wish, what I wish with my tennis, what I feel like I need fitness-wise in order to play my best, and we have done a few adjustments and it's working really well.

Q. Casper, there was a little bit of a slump and you went out of the top 10. During that period, was there a lot of frustration for you? Because there had been such consistency with you, your tennis, the form, et cetera.

CASPER RUUD: Yeah.

Q. Do you feel this time around, getting back in is going to be, I don't know, something even more positive?

CASPER RUUD: Yeah, it's a good feeling. It's where you want to be. It's the most kind of fun to be ranked, in the top 10. I've been it for a couple years and it's more fun to be No. 9, which I am this week, than being No. 12. It doesn't

change your life necessarily.

But, you know, if you look at the people that are either a couple of spots ahead of me or a couple of spots behind me, it's a lot of great players. You have Zverev, Rune, you know, ahead of me. Rublev, Hurkacz. Then you have Tsitsipas, de Minaur, Grigor. They're all great players. This will change during the whole year, obviously.

But it was a goal of mine this year to break back into the top 10. Obviously I want to finish top 10. I don't want to be it for a couple of weeks now and the drop out of it again, because that might happen.

But finishing the year top 10 is a goal and winning a bigger title than I've won before is a goal this year. That's something that I worked hard for. Because, you know, the last two years I got a taste of being at the really, really top of the rankings, and all these things, and it's more fun than being No. 11 or finishing the year No. 11. That's just the way tennis goes.

Q. Last week it was reported that "Break Point" probably won't be coming back for a third season. You participated in Season 1 and maybe had some thoughts on how they could improve the next season. Curious if you saw Season 2 when it came out in January and how you look back on the experience now that it's all over?

CASPER RUUD: I didn't watch it, honestly. I see this every day anyway, so it's not a must for me to watch. You know, I sat down and watched my part together with kind of the guys who made it, and, you know, no offense to them, but I wasn't really impressed with the show.

It was too much about -- I understand that you should try to get to know the other players too much, but it just demanded too much of my time, because they want you to do this and they want to do this, and everything was a little staged in my eyes.

I didn't really feel like -- well, first of all, I didn't find two extra hours of my day during Roland Garros to invite them to join the coffee with me and my girlfriend. That was the first thing. You have to kind of invite them to do these things if you want more screen time. That's not me. That's why I guess it turned out the way it turned out.

I wish it was more kind of focused on the real results and the real matches and the kind of stories behind the matches, but just my opinion. I think in general it was positive for tennis to have few new eyes on the sport. But I wasn't really -- it didn't catch my eye when I watched it so I actually never watched any of the other episodes.

Q. Is that the kind of thing you'd be interested in pursuing in the future with a different format?

CASPER RUUD: Could be. Honestly, I'm not sure -- I feel like I read it somewhere that there's going to be a documentary about Roger and his kind of final months. At least I feel like I read a rumor somewhere that it's going to come out. I would be really interested to watch if it does.

You know, if there are anything, there is something that catches my eye, I will watch it, but "Break Point" really didn't to me, because I live this every day anyways, and I see all of the things on my regular lives, I didn't feel the need to watch it at night, as well.

Yeah, for some it was really cool and for some it was probably good experience. But for me, it just took too much time of my day and hours that I'd rather spend on playing golf or doing what I feel is better for my life, my career. So that was just kind of my opinion.

Q. During your dip last year, did you and your dad ever discuss either taking a break or bringing in somebody else? If not, why not?

CASPER RUUD: Well, I mean, it's just, to me, it's a little simple. One year where you don't do as well as the year before and you should change your coach. I don't think that's the way it should work.

Of course if you're not happy with your coach you should seek for something else. But I'm happy with what my dad does, the work he does, the chemistry we have, the connection we have, and, you know, professional relationship that we have.

So it wasn't something that crossed my mind. I do, however, think that at some point in my career I will need to seek maybe other advice, who knows? Because I'm not sure if we will -- how should I say? -- finish the next ten years together. He also has a life and he has two daughters that he likes to follow up on. I really understand that.

Who knows? I hope we can, but I think at some point it will be natural for us to try other ways, but for now we are really happy. I think he enjoys the ride and the kind of life that we have built. And yeah, I think there is no need to change in the nearest future, but at some point, there might be a time for bringing someone else in.

Q. For a very long time you had the same sponsors. This year there seems to be a change-up with a whole lot of new sponsors. Thoughts?

CASPER RUUD: Yeah, it's exciting, because there are a few new logos here, Salmar, my new main sponsor, besides from Yonex obviously. It's in the region of salmon farming country. One of the biggest in the world. Great family that has started in. Great company.

Yeah, Arctic is no longer around. It's sad. They were my main sponsor for almost nine years. We built a special relationship, good connection, and it was a sad day when they were out, because they were one of the first, you know, companies back in Norway that kind of got their eyes up on me and helped me fund my travels, my expenses, and they really believed in me from when I was 15 years old.

So it was sad to, you know, say good-bye to all the employees when I was there and the boss who was, you know, the guy controlling everything, and the guy that really made the call to in order to sponsor me in the beginning, so it was, you know, a little sad to not have them around.

But I'm really thankful for what they did for me, and being able to fund all my kind of my traveling expenses. Having a coach, having a fitness coach, is important. They know how much they meant to me, but yeah, it's time for something new.

I have a new car sponsor, as well, Renault, French. Just got a new car back home, electric, so it took the winter quite well so far. Looking forward to drive it more.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports

