

BNP Paribas Open

Thursday, March 6, 2025

Novak Djokovic

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Questions.

Q. So another miraculous recovery. How did you make it here, especially seeing that video of you hobbling through the airport? Didn't look so promising. What is it that's come about that...

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: Yeah, I saw that. No, it was something different, actually. It was not an injury. The injury is behind me. I mean, hopefully. I haven't felt any problems prior to Doha, end of Doha tournament I felt completely fine, as I have felt in the lead-up to Indian Wells, my training weeks.

It was really, yeah, awkward to see that video, because I arrived to the airport and I hit myself really badly as I was walking out, because it was very early, I think, 4:00 or 5:00 a.m. I was just limping because I hit myself badly in the ankle. That's all. It was just a hit. It was nothing else. But then people connected it to the injury and thought it was something escalating and coming back.

But anyway, I'm feeling good. I really look forward coming to Indian Wells and Miami this year, you know. I'll play the Sunshine Double first time after, I think, six years.

So I look forward to that. I haven't done really well in Indian Wells and Miami ever since 2016 or '17, and I struggled to find my best game here. I'm not going to get younger; I know that. But I definitely look to go deep in the tournament, you know. I've done, I think, the right things in preparation. I've been playing some good tennis these days. So let's see. Let's see how far I can go.

Q. When you had a conversation with Andy after the Australian Open, how quickly did the two of you decide that you wanted to continue working together? Have you discussed Wimbledon? Because there are lots of good reasons, I'm sure, why you'd like to be with him there.

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: I mean, for me personally I want to keep going, like the same day we finished the tournament, so I told him that.

But for him, it took some time to go back and reflect on the partnership, speak to his people, his family, and see how committed he wants to be and where he can travel with me and, you know, work in terms of the schedule.

So I was very glad when he decided to keep going, Indian Wells, Miami, and yeah, most of the clay court season. We're going to speak after Miami, obviously, but I think the plan is to go all the way till the end of Roland Garros, I think, and yeah, hopefully Wimbledon, as well.

You know, I'm enjoying the relationship with Andy. I still feel like we are going through the process of getting to know each other on the court in a different way than we have known each other for 25 years. So it's obviously a new role for him. You know, he's also exploring it and trying to, you know, understand how he can excel in it.

I'm trying to communicate as much as I can on the court, off the court, for us to be able to connect better.

Yeah, I mean, I think we had a great tournament, great run in Australia. I like the way I played, to be honest. It was unfortunate to finish the tournament the way I did it, but it was an injury issue. But in terms of the game, I think I played, yeah, maybe the best tennis that I played in quite some time. Since the Olympics, actually.

So I definitely attribute that to the work I had with Andy.

Q. Novak, we lost a great player a day ago in Fred Stolle. Any comment on Fred's passing? He was 86. He had an amazing record. Obviously a very sad time for the sport.

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: My condolences to his family. Never great to lose a legend of our sport. But the mark that he left and the path that he paved is something that is eternal.

You know, it's important to have all the new generations reminded of Fred Stolle and all the other legends that have created the sport that we are enjoying right now and we get a lot of benefits from.

Yes, it's sad news, obviously. But as I said, his legacy will



live for a long time.

Q. Is developing that relationship with Andy one of the reasons why you wanted to play the Sunshine Double and why you're motivated? Is that part of the story?

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: Maybe not fully the reason why I wanted to play here, but yes, to some extent, yes, because I wanted to get back on the court with him soon, sooner rather than later. I knew I'm going to play Doha, but that was a bit too early for him to be with me on the court.

Indian Wells/Miami was a perfect, yeah, back-to-back Masters events where he was committed to be with me, work with me.

But it's also because I really, you know, other than slams, few tournaments that really give me inspiration when I wake up in the morning and think about where I want to do well. Indian Wells and Miami are definitely at the top of that list.

Yeah, I'm excited to be here and with Andy on board. Hopefully we can have a great month in the States.

Q. Joao Fonseca came in earlier today, very excited to have the opportunity to meet you today. Do you remember what it was like to be 18 and swing that freely? Can you give us your thoughts on him.

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: A little bit. It comes in flashes, but yeah, it does feel great, you know, when you're that young and playing in a high level, not much to lose, a lot to gain.

Of course attention from the people, support, you know, builds up and it all adds to a great evolution of the player and the personality eventually will come to the point where it's going to convert into pressure and expectations from himself, from the others, and so forth.

He seems to be handling it all very well. I mean, I don't know him personally so well, but from what I have seen on the court, not only the way he plays but the way he behaves, and people around him, seems like there is a very good level of balance and professionalism and devotion, like what we have seen for the last couple years with Alcaraz.

He has the potential to be really a superstar of this game. No doubt about it. Coming from Brazil also, one of the biggest countries in the world, where they love tennis, love sports, very passionate people.

It would be amazing for also our sport to have a Brazilian superstar, first really big superstar since Gustavo "Guga"

Kuerten, that was an idol of so many kids, incredible guy and big champion. Yeah, I wish him all the best.

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