

BNP Paribas Open

Saturday, March 8, 2025

Novak Djokovic

Press Conference



B. van de ZANDSCHULP/N. Djokovic

6-2, 3-6, 6-1

THE MODERATOR: Let's go straight into questions.

Q. Tough one today.

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: Thanks.

Q. You seemed to be struggling a bit with your wind out there and maybe even something with your stomach. Curious, like, is that a function of just not having played that much? How do you anticipate being able to kind of find your rhythm moving forward?

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: I mean, it's always something happening, but I don't want to talk about it. I mean, obviously no excuses for a poor performance. Just it doesn't feel great when you play this way on the court, but congratulations to my opponent. You know, just a bad day in the office, I guess, for me.

You know, I regret for the level of tennis, considering how I practice these days. To be honest, the difference between the center court and the other courts is immense. Ball is bouncing on the center courts higher than some of the highest clay courts, to be honest.

Yeah, just struggled a lot with that. Couldn't find the rhythm.

Q. Can you explain, you got back into the match, leveled things, and then Botic just ran away with that final set. What made that difference?

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: Yeah, the first three games, four games of the third set were quite close. Had my chances. Was just some awful mistakes. I thought I was on most of these points in the beginning of the third.

Yeah, just, I don't know, when I reflect on this match, obviously I'll see a little bit more what, you know, I could have done more, but I think I -- he played, I think, some

really good points to break my serve. But just, yeah, just putting myself in that position, I shouldn't allow myself to do that.

Q. You don't often lose in early rounds. A couple of them in a row. Does it make you sort of appreciate the incredibleness of you just never losing a first round over such a long period?

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: Yeah, hard to appreciate anything now, really. I'm disappointed that I lost, but I guess, you know, if you put things in that larger perspective, of course I've had an incredible career. Being consistent for so many years, obviously you have high expectations of yourself.

You know, things are different obviously for me the last couple of years. I've been struggling to play on the desired level. Every now and then, I have couple good tournaments, but, you know, mostly it's really a challenge. It's a struggle for me.

So it is what it is. You know, I guess nothing can prepare you for that moment, in a sense. You have to experience it and try to deal with it in the best possible way.

Q. Is the plan unchanged now to have some practice time and head to Miami?

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: Yeah. I mean, still haven't talked with Andy and the team, so going to do that and make a plan.

Q. I'd like to ask a difficult question at this point, but I wonder if you could step back. You've had just this extraordinary career and you're known for just seeking and growing in your life. I know it's a difficult time, but can you talk about how the sport, how you've grown through the sport through your career as a man.

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: I am who I am because of this sport. You know, it has consumed most of my life since a very young age. So, you know, I try to be best I can be in different roles outside of the court, but this is what I know the best in my life (smiling). Dedicated everything to it.



Yeah, so it's the perspective of what this sport brought to me is very clear. Has brought everything that I have experienced and I'm eternally grateful for that.

But, you know, hard to reflect right now a bit more. I hope you understand.

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