

Rolex Shanghai Masters

Tuesday, 8 October 2024

Shanghai, China

Novak Djokovic

Press Conference



N. DJOKOVIC/F. Cobolli

6-1, 6-2

THE MODERATOR: Well done, Novak. Can you just assess your performance today, and looking ahead to your match against Roman tomorrow night.

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: Yeah, I mean, great level of tennis I think from me from the beginning. I had a clear game plan what I need to do and how to execute it. It was first time I played Cobolli, but I watched him play last night. Particularly, I think that has affected, that long match has affected his physical condition a little bit today, he wasn't as sharp or reactive.

But, yeah, I think I was really solid from back of the court, always trying to look to dictate the play. All in all, a great two sets and, yeah, looking forward to tomorrow's match that is going to be, of course, against Safiullin, who is playing really well on the fast surfaces. I played him couple times before, I know his quality, I know that what he can do on the court. He loves to play fast, take the ball on the rise, so I have to be very sharp for that one.

THE MODERATOR: A few questions here.

Q. Two wins in a row, although three, two days apart. We can see that your movement and your body is recovering very well. So, how are you holding up, especially the knee, when can we see you get away with that protection?

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: Yeah, I mean, I'm feeling good. I think the advantage of not playing many tournaments is that you're fresh. So, I don't mind playing long matches every single day, whatever it takes. I've been recovering pretty well, and as you said, couple days of no match also helps the body. Yeah, maybe it's not ideal, you don't want to make too long of breaks when you're in the tournament already because of the game and kind of feeling that you have in your hands with the racquet.

Yeah, I'm pleased with the way I kind of bounced back off

that hard-fought first round win, I mean, second round win, first match. So, I look forward to tomorrow, I'm feeling good about my game and about myself.

Q. You posted some photos taken in the downtown area in Shanghai in the crowd. One thing we're very curious about is, did no one recognize you at any time, because in China there are always lots of friends waiting for you everywhere in front of hotels and stadiums.

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: It was staged very well, I would say (laughing), we took the photos very quickly. The longer we were there, I mean, some of the photos were done on the actual street, on the crosswalk from one side to the other side of the street. Some photos were done next to the certain cafes, restaurants. But it was done pretty quickly, you know, because the longer we were there, the more people would start recognizing, and it would be becoming a little bit challenging.

But it was a lot of people, so we kind of wanted to do it where there's most people. I don't know exactly the name of that street where, it's a main street, pedestrian street in Shanghai, but that's where we were, and that's where these photos were made.

It was fun. It was something I don't think I've done in a very long time. It was during the holidays in China, a lot of people, so it was quite exciting. I'm enjoying myself doing these kind of photo shoots and contents that are a little bit different from what I've done throughout my career, and kind of embracing the fashion and embracing the, yeah, kind of these off-court activities that really bring kind of good and joyful emotions to me and the good vibes.

China has incredible history and tradition and culture, so we try to combine that with kind of a modern touch and, yeah, I hope people like it. It was fun because, we didn't know at the time, but one of the photos was done in front of the sign that actually meant hot pot. So, yeah, I think it was quite fitting for me, sleeveless, to be in front of that sign.

Q. Talking about picture, we also saw the picture of



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you watering that huge magic tree in your hotel, and it's not the first year you did that. Which reminds me, you said that the botanical garden brings you good luck, can you talk about how you draw the positive energy from the Mother Nature?

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: I mean, Mother Nature has so much energy and incredible vibrations that we are sometimes forgetting about how beneficial they are for us. I'm a big nature lover. I love to spend time on the mountains. I grew up on the mountains, so I respect every tree, every plant, every flower, every root, every stone has importance in our existence. So, I have a very respectful, I guess, relationship with nature, and I try to be, as much as I possibly can, because of the clean air, because of all the incredible health benefits that nature gives.

So, yeah, that fortune tree in the resort where we are staying is a tree that I have hugged and kind of put water on five years ago, so I repeated this little ceremony this year as well, kind of wishing good luck and just paying a tribute to an incredible life of that tree that is, you know, a thousand years plus old. We sometimes forget how the world around us is so powerful and so old, and it carries a lot of wisdom and intelligence and power and energy, and we sometimes lose ourselves in the modern fast-pace life. So, a tree like that, it just, you know, I guess, grounds me and puts me in place, and reminds me of, in a way, how small we are, you know, comparing to nature, and how respectful we must be.

Q. At this stage of your career you've been quite reasonably, and I think we all understand that, placing your priorities at the Slams, and also picking only a few other tournaments. Knowing that, I feel like most of the fans, a lot of fans that were here supporting you, as if they were believing they were supporting you the one last time here in China. I know it's too early to talk about next year, but how does that or does that make it maybe a little more stronger push for you to try to do extremely well this week here?

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: Well, I always want to do very well in China, and I think my past results are a testament to how I feel in China. I always had tremendous success, both Beijing and Shanghai. It is definitely due to incredible love and respect and support I'm getting from the Chinese people.

So, my connection is very profound, and five years has been a very long period of not coming to China, so I will do my best to come back next year. I don't know what next year brings in terms of my schedule and so forth. I know that I still want to keep playing. I have to see where I am in my life with my body and everything, but I still have plans

to go ahead, you know, as previous years, prioritizing the biggest events, but then I still would like to make my annual trip to China, at least for one tournament, because of the incredible energy and love I feel here.

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