

Rolex Shanghai Masters

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Shanghai, China

Novak Djokovic

Press Conference



N. DJOKOVIC/R. Safiullin

6-3, 6-2

THE MODERATOR: Novak, well done. Do you feel your level is improving each match here in Shanghai?

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: Well, I think so. I mean, these are back-to-back best matches that I played since Olympic games, so I'm really glad that I'm playing on this level, it's very enjoyable, of course, to be on court when you're feeling good, playing well. Hopefully, I can keep it going.

You know, it's no secret that I enjoy playing in China, I've said it before, great energy, great atmosphere, lots of support. I think that influences my game, affects the way I feel on court as well.

THE MODERATOR: Questions for Novak, anyone?

Q. So, Novak, next opponent, 19-year-old Mensik. You practice with him before, and he's a huge fan of you, so can you talk a bit about that.

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: Yeah, of course. I mean, he's the youngster that is coming up. I followed him since, you know, he has played finals of Australian Open, I think it was in juniors three years ago or so.

We had a training week in Belgrade couple times, which, you know, he came over to play at the Serbia Open as well on clay.

I followed his development, I try to be available to him to help him out with advices and guidance, to his parents as well, they're lovely people. So, I'm very thrilled for him that he's doing so well. I always believed that he's got potential to be one of the top players of the world, and he's building that kind of momentum right now.

He's tall, he's got the big serve, he has got the all-around game, and he defends and moves very well for somebody of his height. And, actually, his physio here, Sascha, was working with me as well in my tennis center, so we got a lot

of connections, so to say.

On the court it's, obviously, a different story, we want to win against each other. It's going to be first encounter, it's definitely going to be interesting, but I have a great relationship with him off the court.

Q. I wondered if you could just elaborate on that a bit. I mean, he's knocked out a couple of top-10 players recently, like, are you nervous, and how do you go about preparing to face a 19-year-old, how do you balance age versus experience, freshness?

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: (Laughing) Well, I don't think it can be a decisive factor on the end result of the match, but of course it can influence the experience of understanding how to, you know, maybe deal with certain moments, and big crowd, and big match, and so forth. But at the same time it can also be working against you, because if you have someone like Mensik, who is a youngster, who has nothing to lose, comes out on the court and just, you know, gets excited about being in that moment, you know.

Oftentimes that happens, and we saw it, I think, against Michelsen in my first match here, he played great tennis, and very difficult for me to win that match.

So I expect a tough challenge, for sure, because he's got a big, big serve on this surface that is quick, it puts a lot of pressure. As I said, he's got an all-around game, can come to the net, he can defend well, he's just an exciting player to watch.

This is going to be the first time, as I said, we face each other. We played in some practice sets when he was very young at that point a few years ago. Now he has improved so much, and physically as well gotten bigger and stronger. So, yeah, it's going to be fun.

Q. Now China also have tennis Olympic gold medalist in tennis, single side, Qinwen Zheng. Maybe won one week ago she said she want to take picture with you, maybe bring the gold medal. I want to ask, today is her 22 years old birthday, last Thursday was her birthday, and can you say some glad thing or advice to

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her?

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: Yeah, well happy birthday to her. I heard it's her birthday. She's so young. She made China proud this year at the Olympic games. She brought the gold medal, I think first ever in tennis for China, so it's a big deal.

She's a great person, and a really, really good player that keeps on improving. I like to watch her, I'm a big fan of her as a person and as a player. We have a nice relationship off the court, and when we have a chance, we chat.

So, of course I'm there, she know that's I'm available to her, to her coaching team any time she wants to ask for advice or anything like that.

I heard about the picture for the gold medal, with the gold medal, so that would be fun, that would be great. I don't know if it's going to happen before Australia, because our schedules are different, but maybe in Australia we can bring the medals (laughing) and we can do it there.

Q. Talking about you, actually in the same press conference Qinwen mentioned that she received your invitation to the event at the Great Wall, and due to the clash of the schedule she couldn't make it. But she was really looking forward to playing tennis with you, hitting some balls, and you're going to play a couple of exhibitions in the next couple of weeks. So, have you ever thought about playing exhibitions with Chinese players, maybe Qinwen, maybe ZZZ, in the coming months or if not years?

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: Why not? I mean, it's a great idea. I'm very open for that. I love China, I've had a lots of success in China, I have lots of fans here, people that support me over the years. With her success, and Na Li, and ZZZ as well on the men's side, Chinese tennis is on the rise. I'm sure that there's going to be an interest to organize an event, I'll be very, very happy to do that. Obviously there are different factors that will decide that, you know, we have a different schedule, but hopefully we can, yeah, we can make something happen, let's see where that can be. Hopefully in China, in the next year, I don't know, we can do it, we can do singles, doubles, mixed doubles, it will be fun, you know, to celebrate tennis and have a good moment.

Q. In tennis we have some interesting stats. It is said the last time you didn't wear any red China is 2009. I'm not sure if you intentionally do this.

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: Sorry, you have to speak slower. What was the last? 2009?

Q. The last time you didn't wear any red.

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: Any?

Q. Any red.

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: Oh, any red color. Okay. Okay. Got it.

Q. That's in 2009.

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: Okay.

Q. I'm not sure if you intentionally do this because you know red color...

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: Of course.

Q. ... is important for China or...

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: I know.

Q. ... or you love red anyway.

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: I know. I'm not the only one that knows that. I think the whole world knows that. Of course, I do it intentionally, I wear red as a respect to Chinese culture and tradition. So, you know, hopefully red brings luck, I mean, it does, actually (laughing), I've been playing well in red, so I keep the tradition going.

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