

Rolex Shanghai Masters

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Shanghai, China

Valentin Vacherot

Press Conference



V. VACHEROT/N. Djokovic

6-3, 6-4

THE MODERATOR: Valentin, congrats again. It's been about 30 minutes, but can you sum your feelings of this incredible day so far?

VALENTIN VACHEROT: Yeah, I mean, to be honest, a lot of emotions, actually. I took a little bit to come back up, but when I stood in the locker and opened it and turned on my phone it was pretty hard to not have a few tears, just having messages from everyone in Monaco back home, my friends, my family and everyone. So just about a hundred words I could put right now. It's unbelievable for me. One more match tomorrow.

THE MODERATOR: Questions?

Q. Talk about the historic occasion. First player from Monaco to reach a quarterfinal, semifinal, and now final. I was looking at the rankings, I believe you're the only player in the top 1,000 from Monaco. Talk about this historic achievement.

VALENTIN VACHEROT: Yeah, yeah. I mean, in singles I'm the only one in the top 1,000, but then we have two guys in the top 40 in doubles. So we're far to be a bad team in Davis Cup.

But, yeah, I mean, of course it's historical. I mean, I probably broke the record on everything around now. Yeah, I mean, it just means a lot for me and for the country. I mean, this is probably the smallest country in the world. It's so small, and we have just not so many athletes. But to see all the joy that I'm bringing back home, that's probably what feels the most special in my heart right now.

Q. Just an extension of that, great to have Melanie and David come across and fly over and be in the box. Just talk about the federation. I learned a bit about it when I went to Monte-Carlo earlier this year, but the support that it's given you across the journey.

VALENTIN VACHEROT: Yeah, I mean, they came, but also the first thing when I won the quarterfinal is that I texted my fitness coach and I said, Do you want to come, with a laughing face. And I think five minutes later the flight was booked. He arrived last night and he was here in the box. Also Melanie and David came. I think it helped me a lot to have a few more people in the box, to be honest.

We're just such a small federation, we're only four players. Four players at that level is crazy for Monaco. We're a little family. We have a bunch of young kids that train every day. And just the videos of seeing them jumping around when I win is, yeah, as I was saying before, what's in my heart is the most important is the joy that I bring back home, yeah.

Q. Yesterday you said it was going to be unreal to play Djokovic. So how does it feel to have beaten him? What does it represent to you?

VALENTIN VACHEROT: Yeah. No, I mean, yeah, as I said, I missed Federer and Nadal in my career because I was such a lower ranking, and they stopped their career before I was a little bit getting into the mix of the same tournaments as them.

To get to play Djokovic already once is unbelievable. To be on the other side of the court, I'm actually really surprised of how I managed it mentally. Straight away in the match he broke me straight away, playing just how I thought he was going to play.

I was really happy that I broke back as quick as possible. That's really I think when the match started. Then it started just being a battle. We know he's 38 years old, that it's so hard. I mean, it's already unreal what he's doing at 38 years old. It's hard on his body.

Yeah, I mean, I had to stay the course. I had so many thoughts in my head, even when I just won the first set and everything. But every time I had little thoughts I was just putting it down to just thinking about the next return I was going to hit, or the next serve I was going to hit.

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Yeah, as I said, like really, really proud of how I managed this match mentally, and to not focus too much about the fact that it was Novak on the other side of the net. So, yeah, really happy.

Q. Coming back on this great management you are doing, especially in this second set. If you can elaborate what's going through the mind of a player, for example, when Novak in the fourth game, it's Love-30. So I think it's very tough that he's struggling, you're struggling, you have to fight. Also, I know that your favorite player of all times is Roger Federer, so just wondering if you managed to meet him here.

VALENTIN VACHEROT: No, I haven't got to. I didn't cross him yet. I didn't cross him yet. My girlfriend has seen him 10 times, I think, and me zero times. I don't get it. Every time he's not in the place where I am.

No, yeah, there was a few tight moments. He started really well. As I said, he broke me straight away. I got to break back, playing two good games. I was really surprised, as I said, how I managed to just start the match, even mentally. So, yeah, really happy on that side.

He helped me a little bit with the break in the first set. He didn't play a great game. We played three really physical games before, and I think that got a little bit on him. Yeah, I got to close the first set way easier than how I closed the set in the second set.

Yeah, the beginning of the second set was really weird. We had long points on his serve to start. The tension really, really rised up. I was feeling really free from the middle of the first set, in the first set and, yeah, more tension in the second set, of course.

I feel like he started to just, he managed to move me more in the second set. He had to. I feel like he had to, to get some mistake off me. I got a little bit defensive in the beginning of the second set. What is good is I got to change that towards the end of the set.

I already played a good game at 3-2 or 4-3 on his serve, to get a bit closer to the break. He helped me a little bit with a couple double fault at 4-all. I think I broke him both times on new balls, unlike the first game of new balls on him. Why, I don't know.

Yeah, and the last game, I'm not going to lie, my hands were shaking. My hands were shaking a little bit. He made all the returns he needed to make when he was on the ball. Even he saved the break point, I think, at 5-4, if I'm right. Yeah, just so proud of myself for that.

Q. Going not only in the top 100, but now well into the top 100, into the top 60.

VALENTIN VACHEROT: I have no idea.

Q. At 58. Talk about this amazing jump that you've done now.

VALENTIN VACHEROT: Yeah, I mean, yeah, to be honest, yeah, this is, of course, a huge achievement. As I said, what I went through last year, being so close from top 100, having to stop for a while.

Yeah, I still had, even before this tournament, even though there was not that many tournaments left for me, I was supposed to play Shanghai and four or five more Challengers in Asia. I still thought the top 100 was possible for me before the end of the season. We know how it works. I told one of my friends when I was hurt in July, I couldn't play for five weeks. I said, I'm seeing Shanghai. Shanghai is the only tournament I'm seeing because there was, I know it was the biggest tournament towards the end of the season that I could have a chance to get into those big draws now in the qualifications. It got close. I got in 24 hours before the start of the qualifications.

Yeah, maybe I visualized that I could do good here. Of course, I didn't think that I could do that good. I wasn't thinking of doing that good. Already winning a couple matches was already good, as I said. So I was still thinking of top 100 before the end of the season. I thought it could be possible. As we know, winning one Challenger, sometimes it happens, player gains confidence, and starts to win, two, three in a row.

But I would have been happy finishing just 99 or 100. Thinking now that I'm going to be at least 58, yeah, I need to realize a little bit. But it's good. Now I'm just going to get to play all the biggest tournaments in the world, so really happy for that, yeah.

Q. Won't have to worry about qualifying.

VALENTIN VACHEROT: Maybe still a few tournaments at 58 don't get me in straight away, but I think 90 percent of the tournaments is fine.

Q. There's still a chance you could face your cousin in the final. How do you feel about that?

VALENTIN VACHEROT: I have no idea. What's the score right now? Yeah, there's still a chance. I'm still going to have to do all the media, but as soon as I can, I think I



want to go watch a little bit, of course, and see the end.
Because if he wins, there's no chance I'm not going to be
in the box for that moment.

Yeah, I think as I said already, our family group is just a bit
out of control these days (laughing).

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