

Rolex Shanghai Masters

Sunday, 12 October 2025

Shanghai, China

Valentin Vacherot

Press Conference



V. VACHEROT/A. Rinderknech

4-6, 6-3, 6-3

THE MODERATOR: Valentin, special day for you. A Masters 1000 title, but also this morning you met Roger. Did he say anything special to you?

VALENTIN VACHEROT: Yeah, I met Roger this morning, that was a bit more important than my final to start the day with.

No, no, yeah, it was a really kind word for me, of course. Also to see him watch the match, the whole match was very special, yeah.

THE MODERATOR: Questions?

Q. We saw your emotion on the court, so I would like to start from the court, because yesterday you told us, I entered the court feeling like if it's the first round. We were a bit like, Okay, it's exhilarating. But we saw the performance that you put out today in the third set, especially with the serve. So I would like to know about that, how did you feel doing that?

VALENTIN VACHEROT: I mean, of course today was a little bit more special, it's a final. For any tournament, playing a final is a bit different.

There was Arthur on the other side of the court, my cousin. That was not easy as well to deal with. But I think we both just went on the court to just beat the other one. That's what professional tennis players do.

He played better than me for a little while out there. Yeah, really happy that I turned that around. Probably played close to my best tennis of the week in the third set of this match.

Q. Talk about that third set. 17 winners. Two unforced errors. You won 16 of 18 points on serve. Could that maybe be the best set of tennis you may have ever played?

VALENTIN VACHEROT: Yeah, as I just said, it's probably my best set of the week. I returned almost everything. I don't know the percentage of first serve in, but, yeah, I put most of my first serves in. I was checking the radar, and it's probably the hardest that I was serving.

Yeah, I mean, really happy that everything clicked and came in together in this last set. That's probably what I needed to win, because Arthur was playing and serving really, really good as well, yeah.

Q. This is probably quite difficult, but I wonder, can you just try and put into words what this means to you.

VALENTIN VACHEROT: I don't know. I don't even understand why I'm sitting here right now. It's crazy. I mean, I'm thinking I'm going to start realizing in the next few days. Right now I just want to enjoy the moment.

I just got really, really emotional on the court after the ceremony with being up there with Arthur. Just some unreal moments for both of us, for our family. Unfortunately, there was one winner. But our family won, and the sport of tennis won as well, because the story we just wrote is amazing, in my opinion. Yeah, the emotions were just everywhere after the match, yeah.

Q. I want to ask you about your overall feeling coming here, playing in Shanghai, and on this court. Also, what's the biggest challenge during the whole week?

VALENTIN VACHEROT: I mean, as a lot of people know, when I landed here, I wasn't even supposed yet to play the tournament. I took a little gamble to come play. I started 22 alternate in the list, in the first list. I got to get in a little bit more than one day before the start.

The challenges were just everywhere. Even in the first round of qualifications I was down 7-6, 4-3. I saved a break point of being 4-3 down in the third in the second round of qualifications also.

Yeah, saving break points against Bublik in the second round after being down one first set also in that round. I



won six matches now being down from the first set.

So the challenges were just everywhere. I'm just so happy. So happy that I just cooperated with all that well, that good. And to be even sitting here right now is surreal to me.

Q. Now you are into the top 40, you are going to a new stage of your career and coming to higher-level tournaments. What do you expect?

VALENTIN VACHEROT: Yeah, I don't know exactly what is my ranking now.

Q. 40.

VALENTIN VACHEROT: 40? Wonderful. (Laughing). No, but, yeah, as I said, I still had the little goal before coming here to be top 100 before the end of the season. So I knew that it was going to take so much, because we know how hard it is to even win one Challenger. So I knew that if I wanted to be top 100 before the end of the season I had to win a few.

It's pretty crazy to say, but even this summer I had this tournament in my mind. I knew it was the biggest tournament before the end of the season that I will have my chance to get into with now the big draws in the qualifications. I knew I had a chance to get into it, and if I wanted to reach my goal of top 100 I had to do good here. Little did I know that's what I would be doing here, I mean, yeah, it's amazing.

Q. I would like to know how you feel about the audience, the crowd tonight, and what's your future plan.

VALENTIN VACHEROT: Yeah, the crowd was amazing tonight once again. I got to play my last four matches on center court. First of all, the first one that I played against Tallon Griekspoor in the round of 16, to step on that center court, to just even walk in was already surreal to me. To have played now four and to have won all of the matches is crazy.

There's so much pressure today, of course, being a final. We tried to put on the best show possible for the fans. Arthur was playing better than me for a while. Maybe his intensity dropped a little bit in the start of the second set. Because we were both also serving really well, really tough to return.

All of a sudden everything just came a bit through for me. I started playing way better. The crowd started to get really involved. The end of the second set and the third set was

just very crazy out there. I think, yeah, I want to say thank you to all the fans.

Next for me is, first of all, to just go home, see my family, see my friends, and celebrate all that with everyone. Then the season is not over. There's still a few weeks to play, so I will see where I will play.

Q. How does it feel to win the title with Roger watching?

VALENTIN VACHEROT: Yeah, I mean, I'm not going to lie, after winning or losing some points I had a little side eye to him, to see how he was reacting to some of the shots.

No, I mean, it was amazing to have him out there. Whenever they were putting him on the screen I think it was making more noise than after some of the great points we played. That's how amazing and great he is to the sport, and still now having stopped tennis for four, five years, I think.

Yeah, I got to play Novak yesterday. I got to meet Roger today. I mean, even outside tennis, it's just a crazy week just about that for me, yeah.

Q. First of all, is Arthur okay, because he sort of keeled over at the end. And sort of connected to that, I just wonder if you can share with us a little about how you guys plan to celebrate as a family after this.

VALENTIN VACHEROT: I mean, celebrate together, it's not going to be easy. Maybe we're just going to see each other again in one of the last tournaments. Yeah, as a few people know, me I'm in Monaco. Arthur's a bit more from the north of France, Paris and Brittany. So we're each going to go on our side. I think it would have been even just more special to celebrate together.

I think that what is also tough also for him is that he was just here with one of his best friends. His whole team didn't come. So he didn't get to share all that with his coach, Lucas, his wife, Hortense, fitness coach, physio. No one was here. Yeah, I wish for him that at least a few of them would have been here.

What was your question?

Q. Is he okay?

VALENTIN VACHEROT: No, yeah, yeah, he's okay. It was just a little bit of cramping. As everyone knows, this whole week was really hard for everyone. Really hot, really humid. And, yeah, I mean, really surprised, and



really happy how I cooperate with that.

And, yeah, it brought a bit a little bit of laughing on the stage after how emotional it got, to see him down. But thank God he's okay. He has just some cramps. And, yeah, I think he's already on the plane now. He didn't have much time to, yeah, I don't know what time it is, but 9:30 he had to be on the plane.

Q. How did it feel to hold your country's flag right after you won there, and it looked like it was a very emotional moment right after you won.

VALENTIN VACHEROT: Yeah, I turned on my phone, but I haven't really watched anything yet. I can't wait to watch the videos of, especially at the Monte Carlo Country Club. I knew they had a big watch party. Because it's Sunday, everyone is off work, so I think this probably the day there is the most people.

And just to hold the flag, and to be able to do that for my country is, it's unreal, of course. I'm just thinking about our little federation, our little small country, one of the smallest countries in the world. Probably the smallest federation. We have such, we have not many players, and now we have one Masters 1000 in singles, two Masters 1000 in doubles. One final also in Grand Slam for Hugo in the Australian Open two years ago. And what we get to achieve for Monaco is unbelievable. Yeah, I hope that just everyone is, we're making everyone proud of us, and I hope just to keep going.

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