

Rolex Shanghai Masters

Thursday, 8 October 2026

Shanghai, China

Novak Djokovic

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Novak, well done again in Beijing, winning another China Open title. How happy are you to be playing again in China during this stretch?

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: Yeah, hello everyone. Great to be back to Shanghai once again. Yeah, it was a phenomenal week for me, Beijing, the best week of this year, no doubt. I'm trying to build momentum on that here in Shanghai as well, use the confidence and hopefully have another great deep run in this tournament, another tournament in China where I've done very well in my career.

So, I enjoy playing in China. I've said it many times, the fans, the support has been tremendous. Last week it was really something remarkable, very special in terms of the support and love that I've been getting from people on the stadium and outside. So, that kind of energy that I really always need as a player on the court, I try to use and perform as best as I can.

Q. You've been coming to China for almost 20 years now, can you speak about the innovation of this tournament, how they're always getting better with their facilities, and how they treat the players. And, specifically, have you seen the new upgraded 18 hole putt-putt course?

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: (Laughing). Let's start with your second question. I think it was here already last year, wasn't it? The putting golf course.

Q. Yes, but they made it a lot tougher.

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: Have they made it tougher? Okay. So I haven't seen it. I just arrived on site first time now here this year, so I haven't seen.

I have seen it last year, tried my luck. I wasn't top 10 there on that list (smiling). I know a lot of the players love to play it, and it's fun, it's a great game. It's one of the activities and content that is available for players to amuse themselves also with their off time on site.

Alongside, of course, some really mandatory facilities that

we very much like and need here, in terms of the space in the locker rooms. The top guys and seeds have their own locker rooms. There's plenty of space, incredible high level of quality of food. Obviously plenty of courts to train on, no issues there. Great stadiums. Great attendance. It has always been one of the best 1000 events on the tour. Our tour has always been proud of this tournament and this product that is created here over the years.

I remember back in 2007 was the first time I arrived to Shanghai, or to China, for that matter, for the Masters Cup here. They had it in 2007, and 2008 was the last year. I won it in the 2008. And then 2009 the Rolex Masters 1000 Shanghai tournament started, and ever since then it's been ongoing every year.

It's definitely one of the favorite tournaments for many players, including myself, on the tour, for all of the reasons that I mentioned. So, there's always a willingness and somewhat of a need and a challenge for the organizers to meet the demands of players, their respective teams. To make sure that every year there's some kind of improvement is, you know, something even better than the last year, where the players are able to feel like at home, at the end of the day, and have everything they need to perform as best as they can.

Q. Now it's a very beautiful season and holidays in China. How do you like this autumn in the two cities, Beijing and Shanghai?

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: Yes, well, during this period you always have the public holidays, and it lasts for a week. A lot of excited people to come and watch tennis. Families, a lot of kids that have a week off the school, so that's nice to have them around.

For me particularly, I love seeing as many children as possible on the stands, because in the end of the day they should be the future of this sport, you know. So we want as many kids in China enrolled in tennis, engaged in tennis, interested in tennis.

And, yeah, a little bit less traffic, I guess, you know, with Beijing (laughing) during that period. Here, I'm staying very

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close by, so there's no worries about that.

Yeah, it's nice. As I said, the weather actually has been really good both Beijing and here. As I noticed last year, I remember it was very, very humid weather, very unusually challenging weather last year in Shanghai. But it seems like it's really optimal this time, so it's great for tennis.

Q. Did you hear about Kei Nishikori's retirement, and what was the impression of you of Kei on and off court? Also, is there a special moment or any match between you two that can stand out for you?

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: Yeah, again, I would like to use the opportunity, even though I did it before as part of the video farewell for him, but I would like to use another opportunity to congratulate Kei for his outstanding career, a lot to be proud of.

He, unfortunately, was injured quite a lot and struggled throughout his career to keep fit. I think this probably might be the only regret that he has, that he wasn't able to maybe stay healthier longer. Because he was, when he was playing his best tennis, he was a top-5 player. Incredibly quick, so talented, the striking and timing of his shots was exceptional.

Of course, him retiring in his country, in front of his people, is something that I think every player really dreams of, so I'm sure that he enjoyed his farewell there.

As I said, Japan can be proud of him and what he has done for Japan, as being the first top-10 player ever, I think, from that country, I think maybe even from Asia, if I'm not mistaken. So, great career, great career, and congrats to him.

Q. I would like to ask you about something else. As you may know, Holger Rune is back. He always speaks so highly of you. He said the one thing he maybe missed the most those 11 months was his matches against you. Have you missed playing him, and what do you make of him coming back after this horrific injury.

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: Yeah, I'm very, very happy that he's back. I like Holger. I also like playing him. We always have great battles, really.

You know, I watched highlights of that match where he got injured and what happened and, you know, the replay of that. It was horrible to watch, honestly.

I've been in touch with him several times while he was absent from the tour. We went back and forth on different

topics. Of course, I've been keeping track on his return. I was very glad that he was able to come back and make his comeback at Davis Cup in his country, so that was very nice.

I saw that last night he had a tough battle and tough loss. But, you know, it will take some time, I guess. It's really relative. It's very individual, you know.

His injury is one of the worse injuries that you can have. It took him away for a year almost. The match play is completely different than any practice sets or, you know, practice competition that you are getting.

I mean, it's really difficult to compare. Because the nerves kick in, and then, you know, you have your score being called. And then all of a sudden every shot, every point matters and you're afraid to miss. Then you get tense and stressed and that affects the whole game, right?

So he just needs to get more matches going, and I hope that he is going to find his best game very soon.

Q. I'm asking if you are reaching out to Jannik about his season-ending injury, and in general how this kind of moment define the career of a champion as you and as Jannik?

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: Yeah, I haven't been in touch with Jannik since he got injured. I saw the news, well, two days ago. I'll reach out to him to see, you know, how he's doing.

I don't know what it is, really. If somebody says it's a knee, someone, you know, I'm not sure exactly. But as someone that has been through some major injuries in my career, one particularly that took me out for, you know, six, seven months was the elbow, you know, back in 2017. I had a surgery, and the only, like, big surgery that I had, really. So, I'm aware of how difficult that is and making that comeback.

We just talked about Rune's injury, and if you're away from the tour for so long, to make a comeback, you know, you have to deal with more things than you normally have to deal with. Particularly mentally, on the mental side.

Of course, physically, if you're ready, you're ready. You're evaluating that with your team constantly, and you then come back to play at the highest level when you get the green light to be able to compete.

But then it's mental. You know, you're on the court and you're thinking, you know, am I really completely healed and free to make this run. I mean, for him, if it's a knee, obviously it's affecting everything. It's affecting every



single movement.

So, yeah, I'm sure that he with his team is making wise choices. And, you know, he's been the best player in the world, and he's been a dominant force for the last couple of years, along with Carlos, for sure the tennis misses him.

But at the same time, he has to think long-term. And this is what I think I saw that he said, that he's thinking long-term. That's smart because, you know, as someone that is, that was always advised and always tried to have the big picture in my mind, I really support that kind of thinking and mindset. It's important that you give yourself more years to your career, so you have more chances to accomplish all of your objectives.

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