

# Sydney Tennis Classic

Saturday, 8 January 2022

Sydney, New South Wales, Australia

## Nick Kyrgios

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Welcome back to Sydney. You had a little bit of a setback last week in Melbourne. How is the preparation going for the Sydney Tennis Classic?

NICK KYRGIOS: Yeah, obviously last week, you know, with everything floating around these days, obviously I thought it was COVID. You know, I was feeling pretty average. Obviously was pretty much in bed for three, four days sleeping a lot. Struggled to breathe and was testing like with these rapid tests and all this other stuff, I was testing a lot, came back negative every single time.

I just wanted to get over that. I still am feeling some effects, like my breathing is a little bit affected. I don't feel 100% on court as yet, but I'm just slowly getting better every day. I'm taking my time.

I didn't want to start last week at like 60%, you know, and just -- it's an exciting time of the year for me. Obviously Aussie summer. With all the great results happening with the Australians, I just didn't want to go out there and force myself to play under those circumstances.

So hopefully this week I will feel good. But, yeah, it's good to be back.

THE MODERATOR: Questions?

**Q. Nick, can you just talk about generally your offseason preparations and have they differed much from previous years?**

NICK KYRGIOS: I feel like I had a pretty good offseason. I felt motivated. I definitely put more emphasis of getting in the gym a bit more. But I played a lot of basketball, to be honest, in my offseason. I didn't really have an offseason to train for tennis. I just like being active. I think humans should be active. So I played a lot of basketball. I went to the gym. I trained for tennis a little bit.

But just in general, I just enjoyed life, to be honest, in my offseason, had a great time. Spent Christmas at home, which is always nice. Yeah, just been playing a lot of basketball and tennis, I guess.

**Q. You said that success for you isn't necessarily winning slams or getting to No. 1. What do you hope**

**to get out of this season?**

NICK KYRGIOS: Well, I take it day by day. I'm definitely not someone now in my career at the moment that is setting ranking goals or setting tournament wins or wins in general. I just want to go out there and take it day by day, have fun, enjoy myself. I feel like life gets a bit hard for me on a day-to-day basis, like I try to just work through my problems and then, you know, if I do well on the tennis court that's just a bonus.

So yeah.

**Q. Even though you might not have a rankings goal, this is the first time you'll have to deal with having to rebuild your ranking and the challenges that presents with having tough draws at a lot of events. Do you see that it will be a challenging certainly first few months of the year for you?**

NICK KYRGIOS: I mean, honestly, if I'm ranked 1000 or 10 in the world, I know what I'm capable of. Everyone knows what I'm capable of on tour. I'm not a player that hasn't proven themselves. I'm a player that I feel like I have -- you know, I talk a lot, but I also have beaten a lot of players and I have won a lot of tournaments.

That's not something I'm focusing on, honestly. I just want to go out there and have fun. I want to put on a good performance. It's Australian summer. People are expecting me to put on a good show and I think I'm capable of doing that still.

Ranking-wise, you know, like I have won tournaments, I have won Acapulco unseeded and I beat four top-10 players. So tough draws, and everyone is capable of playing an amazing level of tennis now. I think everyone is an extremely tough draw. I think the level of tennis has never been this deep.

I think -- pause. Yeah, everyone can play. Everyone is capable of doing very, very well.

**Q. I just wanted to ask about your knee. Did you end up having those injections into your knee and sort of how is that all feeling?**

NICK KYRGIOS: That was definitely an option. As soon as I basically got home out of quarantine, I spoke to my

physio about it. I think just the management issue, like obviously with my knee and how it is and, you know, the overload, overload of the years of playing and obviously I do play a lot of basketball. I do, you know, a lot of things on it.

But it was more just the fact I wasn't able to get the right treatment. Obviously on tour with the COVID protocols like getting 30 minutes of physio a day probably wasn't ideal. So being home, doing the gym, getting the correct physio. I think just, you know, having my team around me and able to have access to what a professional athlete should have access to, which obviously some of the restrictions overseas were ridiculous, in my opinion.

But, yeah, like it feels good now, and, you know, I'm doing everything -- you know, obviously could always be doing more. I'm a victim of being lazy at times, like everyone. We'll see how it goes.

**Q. You obviously shared your views on Novak yesterday. I wanted to ask specifically, like you have spent plenty of times in hotel rooms over the last 12 months. If he does get cleared to play, like a guy like him moves so sort of regimented and has a routine, how hard is it going to be for him feeling where he needs to be for round 1?**

NICK KYRGIOS: All I'm saying, and I spoke about this yesterday, is that if he's allowed to play the Australian Open, I don't want any bar of him. I reckon he's going to be pissed off. He's going to be very determined to play well, and stick it to everyone of what's going on.

And I don't want any bar of that Novak. I think he'll have no problem preparing. I think this is just all added fuel for him, in my opinion. Like we all know how good of a competitor he is. You don't become a great champion like that without being able to overcome some adversity like this. I'm sure he's overcome a lot more challenging times than, you know, spending a couple more extra days in hotel rooms.

Look, all I'm saying is he's going to be dangerous if he's on court at the Australian Open, and I don't want to play him right now, that's for sure (smiling). Someone else can have that task.

**Q. Just following up from that, again, you have already said a little bit about Novak's situation, how do you feel about the way it's been handled? Should he have been given clear instructions much earlier so he knew where it was and so we're not all going through this who knew what, what happened?**

NICK KYRGIOS: Look, I don't know. Like I'm Nick Kyrgios, I'm a tennis player. That's not my -- it's not my job to comment on all this. I think the media -- I'll put it this way, I think the media has done a poor, poor job with

it. It's like if someone has an opinion you're either for or against it, do you know what I mean?

I don't think -- obviously it's a bit of a mess with what's going on, and I just don't think we have gone about it the right way. That's just my opinion.

I don't want to speak too much on it, because it seems to be what everyone is speaking about. Media is speaking about it. It's just too much at this point. Honestly I hope it all gets sorted as soon as possible. For the sport we need him here, it's that simple. He's one of the most influential sports people probably of all time.

For the sport, I think, as I said, if he's ready to play and he's allowed to play, I think it's in a way good for our sport with all this attention because probably the Australian Open won't have as many views as it's ever probably had if he's able to play.

But I just want it to end, and I want like -- I don't know. I'm feeling for him now. Like it's not really humane, is it, what's going on? I think like it's just, if this was a normal person they wouldn't have to deal with all this sort of media side of bullshit. His life's probably hard enough as it is, and I know what that's like. I just hope it all gets sorted soon.

**Q. As far as you're concerned health-wise, the asthma aspect, was it a full-blown asthma, was it a respiratory issue and how are you feeling now?**

NICK KYRGIOS: Well, I've had asthma my whole life, and it's pretty -- I didn't really realize how bad it was until I got tested. When I tested at the AIS maybe six years ago and they were almost surprised on how bad my asthma was. His questions were like: Does it affect you when you play? I never really noticed it.

My grandma used to smoke packs of ciggies in the car and her windows were real old, so it took me like ages to roll down the window, and before that happened she had already smoked like two. So I was passive smoking from a young age. So that's probably why my asthma is pretty bad.

No, it's like I just couldn't breathe. Honestly that's what I felt like. I felt like I was playing basketball for two hours, playing tennis for two hours, doing gym, and I felt fine. Like, I felt strong, I felt fit, and then when that all hit me, something obviously came on me and I was bedridden and I couldn't -- I'd hit for half an hour and was out of breath. I didn't feel good, felt lethargic, sleepy. God knows.

I didn't feel normal. That's for sure. Like I wasn't able to -- I don't actually think I was able to compete fully. Like I was scared I'd go on court and feel tired and lethargic. Obviously, I didn't want people thinking, Oh, he's not

trying or I didn't want to deal with that bullshit type stuff because I just wasn't ready to play physically.

Like even I pulled out, I dealt with a ridiculous amount of hate comments and stuff. It's like, Bro, I'm just like sick, do you know what I mean?

**Q. You have never used an inhaler or anything like that, have you?**

NICK KYRGIOS: Yeah, yeah, yeah. I got a TUA for Ventolin. As I said, I haven't been using it the last couple of years, and now I'm using it. I actually need it, like it's -- yeah. We'll see. It's just asthma. It's not like I have a broken leg or something.

**Q. You look like you spent the offseason, had a really good crew around you, playing basketball, in the gym, and then you had your podcast. Do you feel like you're in a really good space, I guess, mentally to approach the year?**

NICK KYRGIOS: Yeah, I feel like I'm just happy in general. Like I don't really -- I don't really, like, dedicate my life to tennis like, say, like I enjoy -- I take every day how it is, like I just enjoy doing whatever I'm doing. I'm not, like, I do -- I don't eat well, like I don't train just for tennis. Like I train just for a general happy living. Like I like to feel good and I like to just enjoy my life.

And I play -- I know it sounds ridiculous, but I play a bit of tennis on the side. Like it's also my job to play a bit of tennis. I still enjoy it like to some extent.

I'm just taking it day by day. Like, I love doing the podcast, I love raising awareness about things. I feel like I have a lot to say, I have a lot of good experiences and I feel like I can help a lot of people with a lot of things. Yeah, I'm doing a lot of things off the court, too, which I'm super excited about. And, yeah.

**Q. One more on Novak. I know you said you think he's being treated inhumane at this point. Have you reached out or was that something you would consider doing to him?**

NICK KYRGIOS: Well, I don't know if we're on talking terms (smiling). That's the funny thing. Me and Novak actually used to be like friends, used to practice at events. And again, the media has kind of divided us, as well. Like they have just blown it out of proportion with some things, and now it's almost made it 30 times worse where it really wasn't that bad.

Like I remember Novak was actually one of the only players when I was young that came towards me and said, If you ever need anything, like, feel free to reach out and I'll be open to help.

And we continued to practice together in Rome. Like I had a great story. I forgot my practice shoes one day in Rome and ended up playing in Air Force 1s and actually beat him in a set.

You know, I mean, I feel like he's helped us as well. Like during the bushfires, he was supportive, he was helping us out. We are so quick to forget I feel like, or the media is so quick to forget or so quick to jump on things like this and forget he's actually helped us, like he's reached out. He didn't have to do that. Most athletes wouldn't do that. They're selfish, most athletes are.

So I don't forget that. I just feel like it's -- like I could use this as a publicity stunt, like I could just agree with the general person and say, Yeah, like, this isn't good and use it. But I don't think that's right. That's why I'm using my platform now to say we've got to do better, we have to do better.

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