

Brisbane International

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Nick Kyrgios

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. Long time coming for a lot of people. How is it feeling? Nerves? What you remember from pretournament in the past?

NICK KYRGIOS: Yeah, look, it's good to be back. I don't know. I mean, I'm obviously a little bit, I don't know if I'd call it nervous. More just I guess, I mean, today when I was hitting on stadium, playing another guy that's in the draw that's also had a couple injuries, I guess we just reflected on...

I mean, I look where I was at 18 months ago, and I had the surgery. It's been about 16 months. I honestly never thought I'd be back playing at this level. Even entering an event like this, preparing, doing all the right things.

It was surreal to be back out there. I took it all in. I'm really excited to just go out there and play, just play tennis. I saw Novak in the gym, playing doubles with him, a lot to be excited about that I'm able to get out there and compete again.

Q. Tell us about that decision to play doubles with Novak.

NICK KYRGIOS: He kept, like, messaging me over and over again. I was just like, I'll give him a little handout and give him the pleasure of playing doubles with me (smiling).

But no, it's going to be a lot of fun. Look, kid from Canberra gets to play with the greatest of all time in his hometown in front of the fans is pretty special. It's something that I'm able to tell people when it's all said and done that I played doubles with him. It's pretty special.

Q. Who were you hitting with?

NICK KYRGIOS: Reilly Opelka today.

Q. How did you feel? How is the wrist?

NICK KYRGIOS: Yeah, it felt good. It was definitely a step up returning that serve from the practice court. But it was good to go right in the heat of the pace of the ATP

Tour. He's got one of the biggest serves. To test my wrist out against that... I play Perricard which is arguably the biggest serve on tour. It was good preparation.

I actually booked Reilly a week ago not knowing the draw at all, and it came out today, so... Really good preparation.

I'm not even thinking about that. I'm thinking about waking up, doing the right things for my wrist, my body, try to get back on the court and stack the days together.

Q. Everyone is wondering what level you'll be able to get to. The serves will be part of that. Where is the serve at? Can it get back to being one of the best on tour?

NICK KYRGIOS: Look, I think I've seen athletes, not necessarily tennis athletes, but tennis athletes, NBA players, they have horrible surgeries and they have bad injuries and they come back and everyone expects them to be back to the way they were when they were in their prime.

I would love to be able to go out there and play the way I played in 2022, compete for Grand Slams. I still believe I can, whether or not that's factual or not. There was another player who was like, You have to be realistic. That's not how I am. I always back my ability. I always go out there believing I can win. I still feel I can produce a level that's pretty high.

I think especially against Perricard, I could play like Roger and still lose. I could play the worst match of my life and still lose. That's the type of player he is. He takes the racquet out of your hand.

I think I'm playing pretty good. I think I'm still able to play well. To expect to be the exact same after such a career-ending injury really. Been tennis players had this injury before, never come back. We'll see how it goes.

Q. Has your relationship with tennis changed in your time away?

NICK KYRGIOS: I mean, it's always been I guess most tennis players say it's like a love-hate relationship. You go through hating it months, then you go through loving it.



I guess for me, it was not even a tennis thing. It was my everyday living was affected from this injury. I couldn't carry groceries, couldn't turn a door knob. It got to the point where if I get to play tennis again, it's just a bonus. I don't look at it any differently.

I'm just not going to take anything for granted. I'm going to go out there and play. It's literally going to be a day-by-day symptomatic injury moving forward. If I play a long match, jam it the right way, who knows how it's going to pull up the next day. That's the type of injury it is.

I enjoy still being around tennis. If I didn't... I obviously commentate, and I'm going to be commentating for a long time. I didn't have to put myself back in this position of the preparation, the training, the competing, dealing with all the media scrutiny, going out there and putting myself basically in the pressure cooker again. I didn't have to do that.

I still think I enjoy parts of the sport. That's why I tried to go through the process, the hard process, of getting back.

Q. You've been outspoken about Jannik Sinner. Talk about what the motives are behind that? Is it a bit of fun? Is it about making a statement about drugs in tennis? Both?

NICK KYRGIOS: First of all, I mean, someone like me who I would never even in my entire life ever try and dope in this sport. This is something, I mean, especially going through an injury like I went through, obviously there are things out there that could speed up healing, help me get back to prime level, help my recovery. There's so many things out there that are prohibited in our sport that I could have been doing to get me back quicker.

Two years out of the sport in my prime, basically I was 28, competing for Wimbledon, US Open. I had an injury where I could have been doing things to get back. That's just not who I am. I'm always against that.

So for me when people are saying that I'm disrespectful to the sport, I think someone like that that has tried to cheat the process, and actually not done it completely on their own merit, is the disrespectful one in my opinion.

But, yeah, I mean, I have to be outspoken about it because I don't think there's enough people that are speaking about it. I think people are trying to sweep it under the rug and saying that about the amount and all this.

It's like nothing about that. And there's not fair treatment for every single player. We've seen that with Max Purcell. The reason that's different is because he went to

the authorities first, he admitted he had done something that was on the prohibited list. He was outspoken about it. That's how it should be, rather than all this sweeping under the rug, not knowing, question marks.

Okay, he's No. 1 in the world, he is an amazing tennis player. I never said he's not. I just think the treatment has to be fair for everyone. I just think that it's been handled horrifically in our sport. Two world No. 1s both getting done for doping is disgusting for our sport. It's a horrible look.

Yeah, the tennis integrity right now, and everyone knows it, but no one wants to speak about it, it's awful. It's actually awful. And it's not okay.

I know that people don't like when I just speak out about things, be honest about things. For a kid that grew up playing tennis, I enjoyed the competition, I enjoyed playing. I can get emotional, I can throw a racquet, but that's nothing compared to cheating and taking performance-enhancing drug performance-enhancing drugs. That's ridiculous in my opinion.

I'm not going to shut up about it anyway. Like, yeah. Sorry, I probably went a bit too long. That's just my honest thoughts.

Q. You are very confident that you believe he has done something wrong? When you say he's tried to cheat...

NICK KYRGIOS: Well, I mean, your question is do I think that he failed two steroid drug tests, which factually happened? He did fail two doping tests at separate times, as well. It wasn't one after the other. They were a different time frame.

So, I mean, if you think that that's the way that it got in his system. If that's how you think it's happened, then...

But, I mean, if he didn't do anything wrong, then why did they take his prize money and points away? Obviously they found something wrong with it. Obviously WADA has appealed it because of all this.

Like, I mean, I employ my team hundreds and thousands of dollars to be the professionals they are, to make sure that doesn't happen. So they knew it happened. Why did they wait five to six months to do anything about it? He kept his team for five months. Do you know what I mean? Like that doesn't make sense. Like if they knew about it two weeks after, why did you keep the same team?

I'd be livid. If my physiotherapist contaminated me, put me in this position, I would probably never talk to the guy again. He had the guy on his team for five months, acting like nothing happened. That's susses anything, if

you ask me, yeah.

Q. On Novak, you coming back to tennis, spending time with Novak this week, picking his brain a bit.

NICK KYRGIOS: I don't pick his brain.

Q. What is that going to do for you as far as your tennis goes?

NICK KYRGIOS: I mean, you're acting like I'm not a decent tennis player. Like, I've beaten the guy twice. Look, he's an amazing player, the greatest ever to play the court. I wouldn't say I'm going out there and, Oh, my God, Novak, you're the best. Please give me advice.

I'm not like that. I'm just going to go out there, have some fun. I think I actually help him more because he's got to the point in his career he wants to obviously have a bit of fun.

You don't get to a position like that and you don't get to have a career like that without serious discipline day in, day out. Now he's starting to have a bit of fun. Obviously employing Andy Murray as his coach. He is looking for a change. He's playing doubles with arguably the most controversial tennis players.

He is I think to the point where he wants to have something fresh, have a bit fun, remember that he can reward himself at the end of the day. It doesn't always have to be super, super straightforward, no fun at all.

I don't know. I don't know how it's going to be. We might get absolutely snipped. We've never played doubles before. We might not win. Everybody thinks we're going to mesh. Two complete different personalities. See how it goes.

Q. The Australian Open, how big would it be for you to win that?

NICK KYRGIOS: Mate, I don't even want to... I don't even think... I haven't thought about Australian Open once, honestly. With the way my body is, with the way my wrist is, if I don't take a day-by-day process, I won't be able to play. This week I have to concentrate and be diligent with everything in my recovery. I can't think about the Australian Open right now.

Q. We've obviously seen throughout your career you've played with such bravado. Has this been I don't know if humbling is the right word, but the limits with the wrist, partially putting limits on yourself and expectations, has that been tough for you?

NICK KYRGIOS: I think the media is to blame for me playing with such bravado. I've just played the same way

since I was a junior and how I am now. I've played the same way.

I guess they kind of created, like, every time he steps out on the court, something could go. Where I've played years and years of tennis in my life, I've played normal matches.

I don't think it's been humbling. I actually think I'm probably one of the most humble tennis players. I've never taken myself too seriously. I know at the end of the day I'm just hitting a ball over the net to be honest.

I guess it's just made me understand that, yeah, I'm not young anymore for sure. On the tour they got those young guys, like, Rune, Sinner, Alcaraz. These guys are freaks of nature. I know I'm not in that position anymore. I'm just enjoying the ride. This is definitely the latter stages my career. Just trying to enjoy it all.

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