

# Australian Open

Tuesday, 16 January 2024

Melbourne, Victoria, Australia

## Casper Ruud

Press Conference



C. RUUD/A. Ramos-Vinolas

6-1, 6-3, 6-1

THE MODERATOR: Congrats, Casper. How do you feel about your performance on court today, straight-set win?

CASPER RUUD: Thank you. I felt good. Obviously it was a straight-set match, which is perfect way to start a Grand Slam. Plenty of energy. Get to have time to rest and get ready for second round, so it was kind of all business today.

I think I played very well from the beginning to the end, so very happy with the level that I showed and that I have been able to keep since the United Cup, during practice, and these days leading up to the tournament.

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

**Q. Last year you struggled a bit at the start of the season. Later during the season I remember you saying that maybe you changed something during your offseason. This year you're starting, like, amazing. Playing so well. What did you change during this offseason?**

CASPER RUUD: Well, I think I just had more weeks to train, both physically and tennis-wise. I have a new member in the team. I changed my physiotherapist, so Alex Strober is now traveling with me. He's a familiar face for many, I think. He's been on the tour for many years. He's a very good physio. He's been helping me also with the body, feeling good. I think it's paid off so far this year.

Just trying to keep it going, and I feel physically better than I have done in a long time now, and also with the fitness routines. I was doing too many, lifting too many heavy weights last year between the seasons, tried to build too much muscle, and, you know, starting -- well, last year was a bit different. I did somewhat of a preseason kind of training after Australia before I started playing in Acapulco, so I had, like, four weeks there.

When I came to Acapulco, I was around 84 kilos, because I had gained some weight with weightlifting.

Currently now I'm around 79, 80, which I think is better match weight for me. Some kilos there can go up and down.

I feel smoother around the court, moving better, and I also feel like that helps me play well.

**Q. Aside from the win, was there something else that was really good that you felt really positive about, that's what I have been wanting to work on, and it worked?**

CASPER RUUD: I think from the baseline I was playing quite well, quite aggressive. With Ramos, it can get some pretty tough rallies from the baseline, and today was quite hot. So you try to avoid the 20-, 30-shot rallies, because in the end you feel exhausted. I tried to play aggressive and it worked.

Played quite good with my backhand I think at times. I hit some nice winners crosscourt to his forehand, and with my forehand I was trying to play heavy and aggressive.

I think the serve could have been maybe a little better, but I played well behind the serve anyway. So didn't get broken. That's a good stat.

**Q. The fans are allowed to move around this year in the seats lower down between games, et cetera, not just between change of ends. Did you know that before the tournament? What's your experience of it today?**

CASPER RUUD: Yeah, yeah, I was told before we played today. So I was prepared for it.

It's fine. I mean, well, I have played UTS tournament in London where the crowd is even more kind of alive, so when you play some of those exhibitions or tournaments you can get used to it.

So I think it's nice. I mean, tennis is, you know, a game that hasn't changed too many things, too many rules in too many years. So something like this should be no problem, I think.

**Q. You didn't have to stop at any stage because of people moving around or anything like that?**



CASPER RUUD: I can understand that, and I know myself that when you're about to serve and you're about to toss the ball and you see some movement in the distance, it can be a bit annoying in a way or disturbing, but just go for it. I mean, you can miss the serve anyway if someone is moving or not. So in my mind, it's just, you know, toss the ball and go for it.

We didn't have to stop for long. Every now and then if it's a little too loud you can wait for a couple seconds. Typically they sit down quite fast.

**Q. I think your best results have come, I guess, outside of Australia in terms of Grand Slams. Was there anything that you have tried to do differently approaching Melbourne this year or is it just a matter of trusting your routines and your processes and with a good offseason, like you spoke about before, the results will come?**

CASPER RUUD: Yeah, I try not to get dragged into the casino every night. That's been helping (smiling). Yeah, it's tempting when you pass by every night, but I haven't gambled too much this time, so I guess that's helping (smiling).

But, in all seriousness, I love coming here, even though I haven't had the best results compared to other slams. It's just really refreshing. You know, summer down here. Back home it's, like, dark and minus 15 degrees. I'm very happy to be here always. It's a long travel, obviously, but it's a really cool one.

The conditions the previous years I think I felt like it was little low bounce, the ball has been a little dead, in a way.

This year I feel on a warmer day it's quite bouncy, so in a way that can maybe favor my topspin shots maybe a little bit more.

I think I just have done a really good preseason and start of the year was really good for me in terms of winning three matches at the United Cup. It's been clean slate so far of this year, so hope to keep it going for a little longer.

**Q. It's no secret how much you like golf, but you had this funny sort of thing about the architect situation.**

CASPER RUUD: Yeah.

**Q. How much do you enjoy those sort of other things? Does it help at all especially with the pressure higher at a place like this to get away a little bit?**

CASPER RUUD: Yeah, I mean, in the end we are humans as well, so we have things to deal with. Currently I got a new place last year and I have to do some renovating. The only fitting time was tonight at 10

p.m., so there's going to be a Zoom call that I have to get on to decide a few different materials and so on.

But it's actually something I enjoy. My mother is an interior designer, as well, so ever since I was young I was quite into it. I've done a few projects in the past back home in Norway. This is for my own personal use.

So yeah, we have other things we do, as well. I mean, I like to try to stay in the zone in the Grand Slam, but just, you know, a 30-minute call in one evening shouldn't be a problem.

I'm looking forward to it. It's small things that we do outside the tennis court that can be, in a way, helping when you're playing (smiling).

**Q. Overnight it was reported in Germany that Alexander Zverev will face a trial over domestic violence charges. He's on the ATP player council. Do you think it's appropriate he continues in that role while that question is resolved?**

CASPER RUUD: I haven't had too much time to think about it, and don't really have an opinion right now.

But yeah, I'm not exactly sure how to react to it, so won't give you a good answer. Sorry.

You can do another one, if you want.

**Q. On a totally different matter, it's viciously cold in Norway this winter, and Finland and Sweden. Have you had much contact with people back there? Seen pictures?**

CASPER RUUD: Yeah, I do. I think one of the practice days here in Melbourne leading up to the tournament was like 33 degrees-plus obviously here. Back home it was minus 30. It's a 60-degree difference, which is quite insane when you think about it.

It's been a really cold winter, a bit unusual, but I think I brought a lot of family and big team this year because they wanted to try to escape the winter. My sister is here, my cousin, my mother, and my father obviously, and my partner and girlfriend, Maria. So they enjoy the sun more than the cold.

**Q. Your next opponent is the Aussie, Max Purcell.**

CASPER RUUD: Did he win?

**Q. He just won.**

CASPER RUUD: What was the score in the fourth?

**Q. 5. You played him in Cincinnati. What do you take from that experience? He obviously offers a bit**

**of a unique look across the net compared to other players, a bit of a different operator. What do you take from that experience and how do you look forward to that match?**

CASPER RUUD: Well, he's a tricky player. Obviously I lost to him in Cincinnati. So I have beaten him once before, so we know each other well. We are the same age. We grew up playing juniors, traveling around at the same time, same places.

He's an interesting play style. He looks quite slim, but he has a huge serve. You wouldn't think it, but he has a really good serve. He mixes it up really well. That was kind of what caught me a little bit off guard. Last time I played I didn't remember how good his serve was but certainly do now. Plays well behind it, he comes to the net, rushes you and plays very different to what you're expecting in a way in this modern tennis.

But yeah, I'm going to try to do my best to get my revenge. He's going to obviously try to get another win here in Australia. It's going to be hopefully a good and tough match.

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