

Australian Open

Thursday, 18 January 2024

Melbourne, Victoria, Australia

Casper Ruud

Press Conference



C. RUUD/M. Purcell

6-3, 6-7, 6-3, 3-6, 7-6

THE MODERATOR: Casper, congratulations. A tough battle out there for you, but sweet revenge at the end. What do you think made the difference at the match tiebreak?

CASPER RUUD: Oh, good question.

I think maybe just the fact that I got a better start than him helped. I was up 7-2, and it kind of feels like the finish line is close, much closer than for him. It was good to get an early lead.

He came back to 8-7, I was starting to feel the pressure and the nerves. Luckily I served and played well behind my serve there at the end of the last two points.

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. Did you have a distinct plan as to how to counter his game, which is pretty different to most other players?

CASPER RUUD: Yeah, I think I had my plan. He had his plan. I think his plan was just to stress me as much as he could, just rip balls from the back, try to rush, come to the net. He does it so well. It's tough for me to find any rhythm.

I do feel like it was a well-played match. I just saw the stats after the match. He hit 93 winners I think and he came to the net 101 times and won I think 70 or 72 points out of 100 at the net. It just shows how different he plays from kind of the rest of the guys on tour.

He serves great as well. He's not the biggest guy, but he has a really quick arm and shoulder. He generates a lot of spin speed with the serve, and he mixes up. He's a really tricky player and a great tennis player in my eyes, even though he plays different from others.

I'm very happy with the win. He beat me in Cincinnati. The plan was to do things better from that time, and I think I did, and that was just enough to win the match.

Q. What were you telling yourself at the start of the tiebreak? You'd been playing for 3 hours and 40 minutes, you almost have to start at square one once again.

CASPER RUUD: Yeah, it's so open. You go in there, can't get any more even than what it is at that time.

It is a little different with the 10 point instead of 7. All the fifth set, I felt like I was in the zone really, played quite well. I had break points. I had one match point at 5-4. He just served his way out of it. I had maybe a passing opportunity with the match point. I was just hoping to get a couple looks on the second serve. Luckily I did.

But from 7-2, back to 8-7, he hit a couple of aces and was on fire. He hit a forehand winner down the line, around the net almost.

I don't know. I just got a really good start, which was key. I said I need a better tiebreak than the one I played in the second set. I think that worked well. I was a bit fortunate he played two I think a bit loose points in the beginning to get it to like double break, 3-0 already in the beginning of the tiebreak. That was maybe the two points that made the difference.

Q. Iga Swiatek revealed to us just a few minutes ago that she listens to The Rolling Stones before her match today. What type of music or artists do you like to listen to? What do you want the music to do for you in that moment?

CASPER RUUD: I don't listen too much right before a match honestly. I have my other ways of getting into the zone, routine. I've been fairly open with the fact that I'm a big fan of The Weeknd and his music. Last year I went to three shows during the summer. Almost can't get enough of it.

Yeah, music, it does many good things for many people. For me, most I listen to when I travel on long flights. One nice way to disconnect.

Actually before a match, I'm not a big music guy. I just do my things and get into the zone in another way.

Q. You seem quite sharp to start the year. How big of a difference does that make because you played

so well in those matches when you get in a situation like this?

CASPER RUUD: Yeah, that could be what made me win today, with some more confidence than maybe other times, compared to the previous year. Maybe that's a typical match you could end up losing. You go back with a second round instead of maybe having a chance to reach a second week of a slam.

Just a few points can be the difference of great or not too good in a Grand Slam. You've seen it many times before. I mean, well, I think Novak is a perfect example. He saved match points plenty of times and ended up winning a Grand Slam. You can see how close matches can get sometimes.

Today I didn't have to save match point, but he was basically only three points away from winning. It might be the good start I had in United Cup that gave me some confidence to stay in the rally and play well when I had to, yeah.

Q. You're set to play Cam Norrie, who also had a five-setter like you. You're both going to be similar. A day off. What do you think about playing Cam Norrie?

CASPER RUUD: No, he's a tough competitor, for sure. He's rising his level the past three, four years. He has a cool story. Came from college, took it to the next step from there. He's a great player.

I need to be on top of my game if I want to hang in there with him. I have played him few times before, been able to beat him before. I know what has given me the win. He will try to seek revenge and find a way to beat me. That's how every match goes, for sure.

It's going to be a tough one. In a way we're both in a similar situation, we had a tough five-setter. We're going to try to spend tomorrow in the best possible way to be ready for Saturday.

Q. How was the Zoom call with the interior designer?

CASPER RUUD: Yeah, I guess delivery takes quite a while. I don't think we'll be ready until the summer. But it was fine, yeah.

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