

Australian Open

Saturday, 20 January 2024

Melbourne, Victoria, Australia

Nuno Borges

Press Conference



N. BORGES/G. Dimitrov

6-7, 6-4, 6-2, 7-6

THE MODERATOR: A general comment on your match this evening.

NUNO BORGES: Honestly, I'm still processing it. I still can't believe it. I think my reaction at the end was very honest.

I wasn't ready to win this match when it started. I took it, like I said, one set at a time. You know, stayed in the moment, competed right there, those games that I needed in the moment.

Still a tough first set, and I think it was key early in that second set to save those breakpoints, especially the way I did, hanging in there, and then somehow managing to break on my really first good attempt to break his serve. I don't think I had a breakpoint until then.

That's where I think the match flipped, on the third set. He had a weak third set, almost like maybe he wasn't ready for me to come after him that way. I guess I wasn't either.

Just kept playing, kept playing, pushed. Did unreal to take my opportunities when I had the chance, and somehow I'm here today with a win.

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

Q. Did you feel your confidence growing during the match? Obviously the crowd really got involved, as well.

NUNO BORGES: I would say at first I didn't really have the pressure on my side. I tried to use that to get the nerves off of me and try to play a little looser, take a little more risks maybe than usual because I knew I had to play my A game if I wanted to have a chance.

Then throughout I started getting a little more confidence.

At first it felt like it was so fast. The crowd is so huge, the atmosphere was heavy, and intimidating, at least for me at first. Then I started getting more comfortable with the situation, started competing better and feeling the

game more.

That's where I started getting, you know, more comfortable in the rallies and returning, figuring out some little details that maybe gave me a point or two in the right moments.

Really just felt in the moment, really.

Q. You play Medvedev next. I don't know if you have practiced against him. Can you talk about if you have or...

NUNO BORGES: I don't think we have practiced. I don't think we have practiced. I'm pretty new to this still.

I didn't really have many chances to compete against most of the top-10 or top-20 guys. I played with a couple already and it was really tough. I'm expecting a really tough match.

But I'm still not ready to think about that. I'll enjoy tonight, for sure. Worry about that more tomorrow, look into the details.

Yeah, he's an amazing player. He's gone deep in so many slams already. Last few years he's been really consistent at that. It's going to be a big challenge for me. I'm excited.

Q. You're the first Portuguese man to make it through to fourth round of the Australian Open. What does that mean to you?

NUNO BORGES: I think it's big for Portugal, I guess. I'm proud to be Portuguese and be here and being competing in the biggest tournaments in the world. I hope I'm showing the younger kids that it is possible. A little bit of luck and working hard, it is possible to achieve. Just living in the moment.

Q. How good does it feel to be here on the big stage? You played a lot of challenger tournaments, but now you have proven to yourself your game mixes well with the best.

NUNO BORGES: It's crazy. The crowds are huge. The slams, you really feel a different vibe. The attention is more, the games mean more, the matches are. Like,

that's where everybody gives all it takes to get wins here.

Winning best-of-five sets, it really takes a whole lot, really feel like you need to deserve the match to -- winning three sets, it's not like you can win three sets against just anybody. It's really big achievement for me and I'm really happy. Like I have been saying, I have been living the dream, honestly.

Q. Has there been a moment it's hit you what you're accomplishing here?

NUNO BORGES: I don't think it hit me just yet, the fourth round. Maybe the third round. Living like kind of a day and a half behind, maybe (smiling).

Q. How did you decide to play college tennis before you turned pro?

NUNO BORGES: Yeah, I have talked about this many times. So I was 18 coming out of high school. I thought to myself, am I ready? It was in the summer. I decided somewhere in August, I remember.

I was still avoiding at the European Championships, most of the coaches. I didn't like to talk. I'm very shy by nature. So I thought the futures were tough. I didn't have great experiences playing them. And it just felt a little intimidating going towards that step full time and deciding this is what I'm going to do for the next few years, because it does take sometimes four years, three years, playing 30 tournaments a year out there.

Tournaments honestly are not the greatest conditions most of the time. It's windy. The courts are not perfect. You get hooked a few times. Refs don't make the right calls, or you think that.

It can be very challenging. I decided to almost postpone it by going to college and still competing in the summers. But really getting a comfortable setting where I can almost, not professionally, because just know what I was going to do for the four years, but like full time, but I felt like I had a really good professional setting where I could work out consistently and have a team to push me.

That worked for me. I stayed all four years exactly because of that. I thought I was developing. I had all the time in the world to work on myself, my game. I developed my hard court game there. Getting a little bit of more of the game that I have nowadays and learn a little bit about myself too. You're 18, you really don't know much. 22 is a little different.

Q. I think I read that Federer was your favorite player. Looking at the other players left in this draw, is there anyone else you're angling to play?

NUNO BORGES: I'd love to play Novak. Obviously No.

1 in the world. I already played Carlos. Already was No. 1. Yeah, Djokovic would be my next challenge, I guess. I'd love to go on court with him. It would be the biggest pleasure for me to battle.

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