

Laver Cup

Friday, 23 September 2022

London, England, UK

Roger Federer

Rafael Nadal

Press Conference

SOCK-TIAFOE/Federer-Nadal

4-6, 7-6, 11-9

Team Europe - 2

Team World - 2

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. No question for you, Roger. Simply thank you. The question is for Rafa. Can you explain to us all the emotions that you got through with Roger on the court tonight.

RAFAEL NADAL: Well, difficult. I have to say that first couple of serves for me were super difficult. I was not able to do the normal movement. I started with double fault (smiling). I was shaking a little bit. Have been a difficult day to handle every single thing, and at the end everything become super emotional.

For me, have been huge honor to be a part of this amazing moment of the history of our sport, and at the same time a lot of years sharing a lot of things together.

When Roger leaves the tour, yeah, an important part of my life is leaving too because all the moments that he have been next or in front me in important moments of my life. So have been emotional see the family, see all the people.

Yeah, difficult to describe. But, yeah, amazing moment.

Q. I'd like to ask both of you the same question. Maybe, Roger, you could start, and then, Rafa, answer it, as well. Years from now, when you think back on this night, what will be the strongest memory, do you think? Is there a particular moment or aspect of the night that will stick out in your mind?

ROGER FEDERER: I would think everything after match point (smiling).

I mean, the match, yes, in itself, sure, is special, but it's really everything that happened after because I wasn't



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aware who was going to come to sing, what was going to happen, where I should go, what was expected of me, or how long it was going to go.

Then I guess looking around and seeing how everybody got emotional, obviously it's even better, or even worse, I'm not sure what to say.

Yeah, that's what I will remember, is the faces I saw emotional, yeah. Rafa was one of them (smiling). I'm sorry.

RAFAEL NADAL: Well, I mean, everything. All the full pack have been unforgettable and enjoy this moment being a team. It makes the things even more special.

So I can't say a particular moment. Since I arrive here yesterday, everything was special, and tonight was unforgettable.

Q. To Roger, I saw the video of you in the car, a bit of nervous laughter, I guess. You have been in many kind of pressure matches. What was it like going into a match knowing that it's the end, basically?

ROGER FEDERER: Yeah, it came in phases today. Some moments I was horribly nervous like before a big finals, then some other moments I totally forgot about it because I was with the guys and we were joking. Classic goofiness comes through, and you forget about everything and have a good conversation. You forget that actually, Oh, yeah, I'm about to play in 15 minutes. That's kind of how I always used to be.

The last two days have been tough, you know, to say the least. Thankfully in moments I totally forgot about it, slept great, everything was wonderful, I could enjoy it, I feel. And because of that I think I will be able to have a better recollection of how it went, because if it's all just stress throughout and I want it to be only perfect, I know I will remember half of it.

So because I felt the way I felt, and I feel like I have dealt with my retirement strongly for the last month, I felt I was actually able to handle the situation pretty well.

I know some people on my team and in my close circle have not gone through the same emotions maybe prior until tonight. That's why, for them, it was extremely difficult probably to go through tonight. But I felt overall I did okay, even though, yeah, sure, I was crying, too.

For me I didn't have fireworks in my head where I see my career flashing by, all the things I'm gonna miss. This

... when all is said, we're done.®



was weeks ago.

Yeah, so there it was hard for me making phone calls, letting people know that this decision is happening. There I felt pain, but now, tonight was all happiness.

Q. Roger, presumably beforehand you did have a certain image where you envisioned what this was going to look like today. You just said that you didn't know that a lot of things were going to happen.

ROGER FEDERER: Right.

Q. How much different did it look and feel to you?

ROGER FEDERER: Well, this is the part I was extremely worried about, is taking the microphone. All I told Tony was I want to be able to have an evening where I do not have to take the mic.

Maybe you think it's logical that I have to take the mic. In my mind I don't, just because I know how impossible I am on the mic when I am emotional, because I had it many times before.

But I was able to remind myself always on the court again how wonderful this is. This is not the end-end, you know, life goes on. I'm healthy, I'm happy, everything's great, and this is just a moment in time, you know. This is obviously supposed to be like this.

So it's okay, and this is how I was able to always get a second wind, and like really able to at least say everything I have wanted, I believe. I was able to get to all those places. Jim helped me. He was very nice. It was wonderful.

Weeks ago, for a fact, I was so scared of this moment that it really worried me.

Q. Roger, I just wondered, you made clear in your retirement statement this was your last appearance on the ATP Tour. Wonder what you have in mind in the future, perhaps some exhibitions and whether this might open up a new avenue for you in terms of going to new places in the world, new types of matches?

ROGER FEDERER: Yeah, I mean, I think the message from me was just making sure I relay my passion for the sport to the fans, and I let them know that hopefully we'll see each other again on a different type of tennis court, like you said, somewhere around the world.

I have no plans whatsoever, where, how, when. All I know, I would love to go and play places I have never played before or go say thank you for years to come to all the people that have been so supportive of me.

Because the hard part about the Laver Cup was that tickets were already sold out. You know, the people who maybe would have also loved to be here couldn't make it. Maybe there is another way down the stretch we can party all together.

Q. Roger, obviously endings are incredibly difficult to plan for competitive athletes. Is there something about the nature of this event, the fact that you were surrounded by rivals, colleagues, friends, newcomers, family, team members, did it make it easier in a way than it would have not done had you been in a competitive major-type of event?

ROGER FEDERER: 100%. 100%. Look, the Laver Cup happened to be in this time of year. I was considering doing it a month earlier. We had long talks with Tony about it, as well. I just felt if I announced it, I had to be there. I couldn't not be there. I just felt I would be horribly unhappy about just calling it and nobody knows what I'm doing. I go about my normal life. And people, like, Oh, so you're retired?

Yeah, I'm done.

Okay, cool.

I didn't want it to be that way. As I was going through the scenarios, I just wanted to make sure that the Laver Cup was safe, you know, that I was not using the Laver Cup just for me.

But at one point I came to terms that even if I didn't play at all, still I was going to be around, and it was going to be great. I asked if it was not possible for me to be on the team, even if I'm not playing, just because I know how much fun it is with the guys, and it would be a fun weekend.

That I played at the end, it was 50/50. Months ago I kept on telling Tony, looks likes 50/50, 60/40, 70/30. Honestly I was so surprised how well he was able to play tonight. So I just enjoyed it. It was great throughout.

Like you said, everything of course helped. To be not alone on that court for an entire evening, it helped a lot.

Q. First of all, Roger, thank you so much for what you have given us over the last 24 years.

ROGER FEDERER: Thank you.

Q. We are going to miss you very dearly playing in Australia.

ROGER FEDERER: Me too.

Q. Can we hope to see you there any time soon in any capacity, whether mentoring or commentating or

even just on holiday?

ROGER FEDERER: Yeah (laughter.)

I love coming to Australia, you know that.

Q. We'd love to have you.

ROGER FEDERER: Yeah.

I have no plans yet, you know, to be honest, with any of those types of trips, big trips, long trips. So this is a complete family discussion, as you can imagine, so this one needs some time.

You know, of course I would love to come to Australia at some point. I don't know if it's gonna be... Somehow it seems hard right away to do it this year, and especially under the situation that we are still under.

But all of a sudden, you know, I will look at the schedule the next few weeks anyway. I have to now see what comes at me the next few weeks and then I have a chance to speak to my team, Mirka, and everybody. We'll see.

But I would love to, of course. You know me.

Q. We have heard you both speak about how much you mean to each other in terms of your tennis career. Obviously tonight was very emotional, so it would be nice to hear about what you mean to each other personally away from the sport.

ROGER FEDERER: Yeah, I mean, I don't know how we got to this place over all these years, you know. We have been very connected, especially, I feel, especially last 10 years, I'd say.

I guess maybe also since I have children, who knows? I don't know if that's helped me or that's changed me in any way or our rivalry evolved. I have no idea.

Anyway, I'm very happy it is where it is today, that I can call up Rafa and talk about anything. I hope he feels the same way. It's not like we do that on a frequent basis.

But just also having Rafa's family here this weekend shows that this is not just, Okay, Rafa is coming here to play and nobody cares of his surrounding team, you know. I can feel their passion, I guess, for me, who I am as a person. That obviously resonates big with me.

I think he feels the same way when he sees my parents, my children, my wife, everybody. That is a nice thing.

He's got a lot to look forward to with his hopefully many children you're going to have. I can give you some advice, because it's not easy (smiling). But as parents,

we always try our best.

No, it's been great. I think we enjoy each other's company, and we have so much to look back on, but also just enjoy spending time together. We have a million topics to cover. I always feel like any evening we ever spent together we never have enough time.

RAFAEL NADAL: I think I said everything about how I feel. Have been super long and positive journey.

I mean, we started with I arrive on the tour, and when I started to be better player, then was Roger always there in front of me. For me was always the guy to beat.

So at some point we were probably the biggest rivals - I think always in a very good way. We respect a lot each other, families, teams. I mean, we never had big issues, no?

But is true that the personal relationship the last, I mean, when we were getting older, I think every year the personal relationship gets better and better, you know, in a daily basis. I think in some way we understand at the end we have a lot of things similar. We approach the life probably similar.

On court we have completely opposite styles, and that's what probably makes our matches and our rivalry probably one of the biggest and most interesting.

But in the family life, personal life, probably we approach life not in a very different way, no? So that's why we can trust each other, we can speak very often, and we're able to speak very feeling free, feeling confident. Having somebody like Roger that I feel confident to talk about any personal thing, it's something that it's very beautiful after all the things that we shared together and all the important things that we fought for such a long time.

Very proud to be part, as I said before, very proud to be part of his career in some way. But even for me happier to finish our career like friends after everything we shared on court like rivals.

(Applause.)

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