

# Roland Garros

Friday, 25 September 2020

Paris, France

## Rafael Nadal

### Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

**Q. You're coming off a quarterfinal appearance in Rome. How can you build off that result coming into the French Open?**

RAFAEL NADAL: I don't know. I think is a very strange situation for everyone. The situation here is completely different than in Rome, no? The conditions to play tennis in Rome have been good. Here the conditions are very, very tough. The weather is so, so cold. That makes difficult for everyone.

But the conditions are a little bit extreme to play an outdoor tournament.

**Q. Novak Djokovic said in Rome that he felt you were beatable on clay this time because of the conditions, because of the lack of preparation. What is your reaction to that? Do you as the 'King of Paris' over the last decade or so feel more vulnerable going into this tournament because of the lack of preparation?**

RAFAEL NADAL: Yeah, 100% true. I always have been beatable on clay. He beat me a lot of times. But at the same time is true that I had a lot of success in this surface.

Situation is special. Conditions here probably are the most difficult conditions for me ever in Roland Garros for so many different facts. Ball completely different. Ball is super slow, heavy. It's very cold. Slow conditions. Of course, the preparation have been less than usual.

But you know what, I am here to fight and to play with the highest intensity possible, to practice with the right attitude, to give me a chance. That's the main goal for me.

Be competitive on Monday, and let's try. Just day by day. I know very well this place. Is about be patient, be positive, just trying to find the positive vibes every single day.

**Q. Everyone is speaking about the challenges that you're facing here, the difficulties. What about the upside of the long break? Your health over the years**



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**has always been compromised in tournaments, including the French Open. Presumably you're completely healthy now. Talk about that a little bit.**

RAFAEL NADAL: No, we are just about to start a very important event, the most important event in my tennis career historically. I am just happy to be back here in this place, no?

Of course, very sad about the situation, how it is, just having to do the press conference like this, not having you in front. No crowd. The situation is a little bit more difficult than usual without a doubt.

But that's it, no? I going to keep trying my best. I know going to be a big challenge to play well here. But I do it in the past. Totally think I know very well I have to keep giving me chances to find the best level possible.

**Q. And your health condition?**

RAFAEL NADAL: I am fine.

**Q. You talked about the conditions on the court. Off the court obviously things are very different. You're used to staying in the same hotel, having all your routines. How different will things be away from the court? How much of a challenge is that?**

RAFAEL NADAL: Oh, that not make a big difference. That's the routines outside of the court are not making a big impact on what can happen on the court. The conditions on the court, yes. The conditions on the court are completely different than the previous years.

I just going to try to keep working hard. I think I had a good couple of practices. Knowing that today we are at 9 degrees here in Paris, so that's extreme to play outdoor tournament. But I am not having bad feelings. I am just trying to be focus on what I have to do to be ready. That's my goal, just be ready for Monday, then let's say.

**Q. How long have you been in Paris? In that time, do you feel you've had at least the ability to improve how you're playing? Can you work yourself into form where you're as comfortable as you usually are here at Roland Garros?**

RAFAEL NADAL: As I said, no, is about adapt your game to the conditions. Of course, you have to take care because with these conditions you can't practice that much because the ball is super heavy. Different brand

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than last year, a new ball. The ball is much slower than the previous years. If we add these conditions of cold and humidity, then is super heavy, no?

You need time, yes. At the same time what you need is the right energy to accept every single thing, no? That's what I am doing. Just stay positive knowing that the conditions are not perfect for me, maybe not perfect for others either, and accept that I going to need my best version to have chances.

I am just relaxed knowing that it's a very special year. I am here just to give myself a chance to enjoy another Roland Garros and, of course, to try my best to be competitive and fight for the final goal.

**Q. I wanted to ask about the balls. You said they're heavy. A lot of people have said that. Did you practice with them before you arrived in Roland Garros? Were you aware of what they'd be like or was this a surprise for you?**

RAFAEL NADAL: No, I practiced with the balls in Mallorca before the comeback. In Mallorca with warm conditions, the ball was very slow, I think not a good ball to play on clay, honestly. That is my personal opinion. Is not the right ball to play on clay court.

Even with these conditions makes the things tougher, no? But I knew before arrived here. No problem at all. Just accept the challenge. I really believe that the organization need to take a look on that for the next couple of years, for the health of the players, too, because the ball super heavy becomes dangerous for the elbow and for the shoulders, I think.

But this year is what we have. Just staying positive with this. I know we going to have to play with this ball, so I need to find the best feelings possible with these conditions. That's what I am looking forward, just practicing with the right motivation, right ambition, and then let's see what I can do or what I can't do.

**Q. Your thoughts on the news that there will be 1,000 fans allowed, spectators allowed, each day? When you played in Rome, there were no spectators. Do you think it's okay to have any fans at all? What do you think it will be like playing in that atmosphere in Roland Garros with so few fans in the stadium?**

RAFAEL NADAL: Of course, is not the ideal situation. Nobody likes to play with these conditions, no? That's the thing.

The only thing that we can say is say thanks to the US Open, to Roland Garros, to Rome, because they are trying hard to organize events, even probably knowing they going to lose money. That's the beautiful things that our tour have.

Is a moment to stay together, I think, to fight for the comeback of our tour. That's what's happening. Of course, everybody wants to come back to the normal situation. But before that, we need to fix the most important thing, and that is the worldwide health that today still under big problems.

At least only thing we can say is thanks that we can play tennis again.

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