

Roland Garros

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Paris, France

Novak Djokovic

Press Conference



ROLAND-GARROS

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. There's a Chilean player called Alejandro Tabilo who was supposed to play a qualifying tournament this week. He had to pull out because he had to undergo emergency surgery having suffered from peritonitis. They said that the tournament wasn't of any help and he was hours away from dying. Were you aware of this case? Will the PTPA, which is founded for players by players, have a unit to help fellow players in case of medical emergencies like this in such big tournaments?

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: Well, first of all I was not aware of this case. This is the first time I hear it. I'm really sorry that he had to go through those kind of circumstances and the situation that was obviously very difficult for him. I hope that he's going to be fine.

The PTPA is at the very beginning. As I was saying in New York, ahead of us we have a process now of setting up the structure, understanding how we position ourselves in the tennis ecosystem with all the other governing bodies, all the other organizations.

Of course, number one with ATP because that's the governing body of men's tennis, but also with WTA, because I was mentioning in the States we are not just men's association, we are men's and women's. We are going to try to represent across the board all male and female players, both singles, doubles, all ranking, professional ranking, positions.

It's not a short process of setting up the structure and the bylaws, so to say the governance of this association. It takes time. Right now we are talking with several different interested sides and organizations that want to join us and partner with us and help us establish the management and the structure of this association. Which I think is very important obviously because Vasek and myself, obviously we are the cofounders of the player association, we have around 160 players on the men's side that join us, and very soon we will hopefully have that many or maybe even more on the female side.

But we can't do all the work ourselves. We also have the tournaments. We are focused on our professional careers. Once we are part of the tournament, it's very

difficult for us to divide our attention into, so to say, tennis politics and really go and talk to all the players, explain everything in person.

Obviously we are trying to do our best. But, as well, we have to prioritize our matches, training, and preparation for our main job.

As I said, it's going to take time. The case that you just mentioned is a very good example of where this players association will be able to contribute, I think will be able to protect players, and try to provide support of any kind.

Q. For years, like with many other players, we've seen you compete on court with a ton of emotion, sometimes positive, sometimes negative, all very natural and part of who you are. After what happened in New York, do you find yourself trying to rein things in at all or adjust how you express yourself on court? Do you need to change that, or is that too hard to do? Would worrying about something like that affect how you play?

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: Well, obviously I am going to be extra careful of hitting a tennis ball around the court. That's something that is obviously staying in my mind after what happened in New York. It's going to stay there for a long time. Of course, I will make sure I don't make the same mistake twice.

It happened. Whatever happened happened. I had to accept it and move on. Of course, it was a shock for me and a lot of people. But that's life, that's sport. These things can happen.

But I don't think that this will have any significant negative impact on how I feel on the tennis court. I mean, I won the tournament in Rome just a week later after what happened in New York. I did not feel any kind of emotional disturbance or difficulty to actually be able to play or still express my emotions in whatever way.

Of course, I try to keep my negative reactions on the court as less as possible. But I guess it happens as well. I'm not going to be down on myself because of that. I also try to kind of accept it and forgive myself for what happened and move on. I'm human being. I have flaws as everybody else. Regardless of the amount of years and experience that I have on the tour, these things can still happen.

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a player, as a human being on the court, and win a tennis match. Because of the care that I have for that, I sometimes express my emotions in good way or maybe less good way.

But it is what it is. As I said, I don't think significantly it does impact me that I'm unable now to show the fist pump or scream or something like that. It has happened in Rome already and everything is fine. I'm back to normal.

Q. It's a question on COVID testing. Am I right in thinking that you have been tested this week even though you've already had the virus? Are you concerned that there might still be some traces of the virus left in your system which could result in you possibly testing positive again at a later date?

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: Well, I have been tested, yes. I've tested couple times in Rome, then before I traveled to Paris I had to be tested again in order to enter France. Then I was tested upon arrival here, as well. Stayed in quarantine until the result arrived where I was released to be able to practice, as anybody else.

I'm going to follow the instructions that everybody else has. I guess I'll have to be tested, as everyone else, as I understand, every four, five days. That's the latest information I got. Regardless of the antibodies that are present.

In New York, actually because of the antibodies, I wasn't tested after the first test. When I arrived, I was tested. I was negative. I was free to go. I wasn't tested any more after that.

In Europe it was a different case. In Rome I had to be tested also every three, four days. Paris, same thing. It's really difficult to answer your question from a general standpoint because every country seems to have a different approach and different standard to the testing.

I am not concerned about the virus being present or not present in me. I'm actually not thinking about it at the moment. I've been tested negative many times ever since I was positive. So that's where I am.

Obviously I think the world is still not yet 100% clear on whether once you have the virus it is going to come back or not. Some countries are saying yes, some are not. There's quite a lot of confusion out there medically in the advices and in the statements that we've been hearing.

We have to follow the rules. The rules are as they are here in France. It's pretty strict. I guess it has to be that way. I am grateful as a tennis player that I have an opportunity to compete and just play in another Grand Slam. Hopefully we'll be able to finish this tournament with no big consequences.

Q. What were you thinking about the Wilson balls that are going to be used for this tournament? Rafa came in yesterday saying in no way they should be used on clay because they were too heavy.

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: Yes, this is the first time that we are using Wilson balls on the clay. I agree that the balls are heavy. But also it's probably because we are also almost in October, and it's very cold. The clay is also heavy and wet. Just overall conditions are also affecting the ball itself. It's very hard to say whether the ball is heavy in general or is it because we are playing under these kind of slow and heavy conditions.

Yeah, I mean, it is what it is I guess. We have to accept it. It's why we all came a bit earlier to try to get used to the new balls and conditions that are quite different from what we are used to, let's say, in Roland Garros.

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