

# Roland Garros

Thursday, 1 October 2020

Paris, France

## Ons Jabeur

### Press Conference

O. JABEUR/N. Hibino

7-6, 6-4

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

**Q. Your history with Paris goes back a bit, junior champ. Was it a case of love at first sight for you in Paris?**

ONS JABEUR: Well, I love Paris as a city first. Obviously I like to play here. Different conditions this year. To be honest, it's always nice to be in France in general.

I want to keep enjoying my ride here. Hopefully I can go, like, more than third round hopefully.

**Q. How pleased are you with the way you've played coming back from the pandemic?**

ONS JABEUR: I mean, like I said before, maybe it's a bad thing, but also it's a good thing at the same time that we stopped. It gave me more time to practice, to reflect on some good things.

Yeah, the mindset is the same. I always want to achieve the top-20 ranking. Obviously it's going to be different this year because there is not a lot of tournaments.

But it's the same goals. I'm still keeping my motivation on to really play good. To be honest, I'm loving it. I'm trying to enjoy on the court. Sometimes it's tough with the stress, all the conditions right now. Always try to be 100% on the court.

**Q. You mention the time off gave you a chance to practice more. What was the most difficult part of the pandemic for you? Where were you during the lockdown?**

ONS JABEUR: I mean, maybe not practice more, but reflect on some things. I was stuck for a while in U.S., then I went back home. I had to quarantine for two weeks. I had the chance to practice maybe before some countries.

The thing is it helped me work more on my mental. I had



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more time also to enjoy time with my family. I stayed home. Usually tennis players, we usually don't have that.

For me, I was really grateful maybe I had like two or three months, playing in Australia, playing in Dubai, then Doha. For me it was good to maybe take a small rest and come back stronger, even like more motivated to win matches.

**Q. Why do you think you have made such a big improvement this year?**

ONS JABEUR: I mean, the mindset. Like I said, just I put something in my head that I kind of got sick being all the time in 50 or top 100. I know that I was able to win against some players from top 10, top 20. I know I had my spot in there.

I pushed more. I was not afraid to push more or get injured. Usually I was kind of stuck in that side with my mind: If I want to push harder, I think that I will get injured. So I took that off my mind. It really helped me.

I have a great team with me now, 100% Tunisian team which helps with the language, with everything, with ambition. I'm really grateful for that.

**Q. When you first got to Paris and you saw the conditions, the weather, what was your initial thought? This will work for me? Oh, crap. What was your take?**

ONS JABEUR: I'm going to be honest here. I was like, Why are we playing? Obviously I was looking how Rafa was, like, taking this whole situation. To be honest, if he's a champion and he doesn't complain about it, I mean, who I am to complain about it right now?

I was, like, trying to always take the best out of everything. I have a very positive team behind me. They always, like, pushing me.

First round was really tough with the balls, a lot of heavy, the rain. For me playing here, I'm grateful. I'm trying to take every opportunity. There is no more tournament kind of left for this season. You have to give it all.

You can see, like, the motivation out of some players. Azarenka inspired me a lot, coming from US Open, going to Rome. For me, looking at these players, champions, inspires me, gives me motivation to go far.



**Q. Do you have to adjust your game much on this surface? Are you trying to eliminate as many variables, not overthink it?**

ONS JABEUR: As long as the dropshot is working, then I'm on the safe side (laughter).

I like it because I can see the difference between slicing and changing the rhythm here on clay than in the US Open or on hard. I kind of like it because you always have more time to go back. I honestly like sliding also. For me, I hope I can get my backhand, forehand better now. Hopefully the next round will be good.

**Q. What's the biggest difference between the 2011 girl's singles champion and Ons in 2020?**

ONS JABEUR: I'm old now. Let's start by that (smiling).

It's completely different. I mean, playing juniors, some younger coming with no experience, just playing for fun. Now it's my job, is to play tennis. I mean, the money, the ranking, everything.

But, I mean, I always wanted to be one of the players who compete in the professional, play with the great champions. I'm grateful for that. If I went through the juniors, it's to be a stronger player, prepare myself to play with professionals.

**Q. If you reflect a bit on the 2017 tournament you had in Paris, your first big success at a slam, your win over Domi was a milestone win, how do you reflect on it? How did that help you make the next step at the majors?**

ONS JABEUR: I mean, obviously it's much different now because everyone is expecting me to be in the third round or fourth round, the second week. It's different.

I mean, also I was thinking about it, just walking off the court I was like, Yeah, I'm back, third round. I was, like, reflecting the emotions I felt at that time.

I am glad that I'm back. I'm going to do everything and not do the same mistakes I did in 2017. I'm obviously a different person. I'm seeded, which is new for me. I want to go far in this tournament. I love Roland Garros, French Open, I love Paris. Why not put this love on the court?

**Q. How do you see the matchup with Sabalenka next?**

ONS JABEUR: I mean, Sabalenka hits really hard. I actually was watching her before going on the court. Tough match. I'm going to play my game. She doesn't like when I mix it up little bit. Let's see.

I saw her coming forward to the net, which is new. Let's see how it's going to work. Hibino today came to the net. Let's see, maybe I practice. I want to have a good match. She plays really good. She's such a fighter. I think it's going to be a great match.

**Q. What would you say you like the most about your game through the two rounds?**

ONS JABEUR: Sliding and changing the rhythm. I love slicing on clay. I know it really, like, bothers some players. I love when the dropshot goes good. I don't know, it gives me a good opportunity to be the master on the court. They don't know if I'm going to do a dropshot, if I'm going to slice long, if I'm going to hit.

I love to, like, really improve in this. I know, like, if I'm loose and I'm having pleasure on the court, I can really play my game. I know this game could really bother some players.

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