

# Roland Garros

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Paris, France

## Novak Djokovic

Press Conference

R. NADAL/N. Djokovic

6-0, 6-2, 7-5

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

**Q. Novak, what would you have done differently in hindsight against Rafa?**

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: Well, I don't have much to say but that I was completely overplayed by Rafa, by better player on the court. I mean, he was not missing at all and getting every ball back, just playing tactically great.

I mean, I felt well throughout the entire tournament. I thought I was in a great form. Certainly I could have played better, especially in the first two sets. But, you know, just he did surprise me with the way he was playing, the quality of tennis he was producing, the level. I mean, he's phenomenal. He played a perfect match, especially in the first two sets.

Yeah, I mean, the third set I managed to come back. I kind of found my groove on the court. Then, yeah, couple of close games. Had my chance, didn't use them. He closed out the match. That's it.

He was the far better player on the court today and absolutely deserved to win.

**Q. As someone who has created quite an aura on other courts across tennis, specifically Rod Laver Arena, could you comment on what Rafa has been able to do on Chatrier, how absurd it is he's done this the 13th time.**

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: He keeps going. No holding him back it seems like. It's amazing. I mean, I admire all his achievements, I mean, especially the one here. It's stunning score and results and records that he's got on this court.

I mean, he lost two times in his entire career. Winning 13 times, yeah, there's not much you can say. All the superlatives you can use, he deserves them.

**Q. You are one of the greatest players to have played the game. How much are you defined as a**



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**person by what you do on the court and how much are you defined by what you do off the court?**

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: Well, the way I see myself obviously is different the way maybe other people see me. I mean, I try to be true to my core values, what I kind of grew up with.

But I was always saying that the only constant in my life is the change. I am someone that has that kind of approach to life, to really have an open mind, open heart, learn and grow and develop my character, be as best of a human being I can possibly be.

I mean, I have my flaws, as anybody else. I try to remind myself of how blessed I am really to be in this position. Especially in the big moments, in the big tournaments like this, when the history is written, so to say, I try to reflect on the early days of my career, where I grew up, how I grew up.

I'm just, yeah, very blessed and grateful to have the life that I have right now, without a doubt. I have to constantly repeat that to myself, that nothing should be taken for granted. I keep on working, keep on enjoying this sport, I truly do. Of course, defeats like this are never really enjoyable, but in the greatest of defeats you learn the greatest lessons as a tennis player, but as a person as well.

I'm trying really to nurture, so to say, that kind of a mindset. Yeah, I mean, I understand that there are people that don't like maybe what I do on the court or off the court. I understand that I can't be liked by everyone. That's fine. I think it's important to have an understanding of who you are and your position in this life, be grateful and move on.

**Q. You made such a lot of success with the dropshot during this tournament. He played it pretty well. Did that give you more to think about and sort of affect your game plan? Was it not that relevant?**

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: I mean, yeah, it didn't work great today, let's say. He was winning a lot of those dropshot points that were played by my side. I mean, I didn't play so many in the end of the day. I did try tactically different things, but not much worked in the first two sets.

Yeah, I wanted to kind of disrupt his rhythm, obviously. But he was ready. He was there, he was prepared. He was playing all the right shots today. It's just one of



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these days where you have to just say, Chapeau, and well done.

**Q. It wasn't a good day for you, for sure. Do you think to play all those dropshots sometimes helped you to in a way lose control on the groundstrokes? Sometimes you have to find the rhythm to play the groundstrokes. Sometimes you were, in my opinion, maybe I'm wrong, a little too in a hurry to do those dropshots at the beginning. The second thing, on his slice backhands, he was creating you a lot of problems. What we all said before the tournament, before the match, that this court was slow, heavy balls, so on, was in your favor. Then at the end didn't seem to be. Of course we talk after the match, so it's much easier. Do you have this impression, too, that this court was not so better for you as you expected?**

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: I'll answer the second question first.

Yeah, look, I was also thinking that these conditions are more favorable to me. I was feeling great throughout the tournament playing, playing great tennis, winning in Rome, being very confident about my game.

But, yeah, I mean, Rafa has proven everybody wrong. That's why he's a great champion. He just played a fantastic match today. That's all.

Tactically, you're right. I was probably rushing a bit much, trying to play shorter points, probably go for winners. I probably wasn't constructing the points well. That reflected on the result. But that was also caused by him, by his amazing defense. He was getting a lot of balls back. Normally all the shots that I play after two, three quick exchanges from the back of the court, forehand or backhand, when I hit it against nine out of ten guys, it's a winner, the point is done. But not against him, in these conditions especially.

So, yeah, that's what happened. I mean, he was not missing a lot at all first two sets. Yeah, I kind of had to do something. Yeah, I just didn't find a solution.

**Q. We know your record in Grand Slam finals is so good. You don't lose many in straight sets. You said Rafa played well. After what happened last week, how are you feeling physically? Were you 100% out there? How were you feeling physically?**

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: No, no, I was fine. Everything was okay. I was ready for this match. It's just that I was overplayed. I mean, I was beaten by a guy who was just perfect today. Especially the first two sets, as I said. That's all there is to it.

I will not absolutely find any other justification for this

loss. I mean, he was just better. Straight-sets victory, yeah, I mean, it's Grand Slam final, but playing Rafa on clay, you play Rafa, who is playing the way he's playing, I mean, it's tough to get a set off him.

I thought third set was a chance, but I just didn't use it.

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