

Roland Garros

Friday, 28 May 2021

Paris, France

Rafael Nadal

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. I was wondering how are you finding the life with the bubble in the hotel and the confinement that the players are experiencing so far this year? Obviously it's different now than Australia, but from tournament to tournament, how are you finding it?

RAFAEL NADAL: Well, is part of the world that we are living today, so we are used to it. Of course is not the best situation possible, but at least we are able to keep going, no. We really hope in the near future with the vaccine we will be able to come back to our normal life on tour, no?

But still, the moment to be a little bit more patient. That's it, of course. Is not perfect, no. I would love to go out and have dinner and to enjoy the normal life, but not possible today, so just wait for it.

Q. Your achievements at Roland Garros have been celebrated with a statue that you unveiled. What does the statue mean to you? Do you think it looks like you? What have your friends and family said to you about the statue?

RAFAEL NADAL: Well, I received plenty of messages of congrats. Of course is something amazing for me to have recognition like this in the most important place in my tennis career, something probably unprecedented.

Is true that I did something very special here in this event. But at the same time, I can't thank enough Roland Garros, the French Federation, everybody, all the employees, for that recognition, no? Have been very special for me and to have a memory like this forever in Roland Garros is something, yeah, that makes me feel very proud and very satisfied.

Q. You've got a very tough first-round draw against a young Aussie that you played the other week and beat. How much of a challenge do you think that is going to provide to you? How good do you think Popyrin is?

RAFAEL NADAL: Well, he's young, as I said all the time. He's young, he has the power. He has big shots. As always, no, I need to be ready for it. I need to keep



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practicing the next couple of days, try to be in the best shape possible for the beginning. But I know every round is tough, I respect every opponent always. I respected everyone since the beginning of my career. And Popyrin is a dangerous one, no?

So I need to play well and I'm looking forward to trying to make that happen.

Q. What do you think about Naomi Osaka's decision not to do press conferences during the tournament? Have you ever found it difficult to do a press conference after a painful defeat?

RAFAEL NADAL: No, I respect it. I respect her, of course, as an athlete and her personality. I respect her decision.

I don't know. I mean, we as sports people, I mean, we need to be ready to accept the questions and to try to produce an answer, no?

I understand her, but in the other hand, for me, I mean, without the press, without the people who normally is traveling who are writing the news and achievements that we are having around the world probably we will not be the athletes that we are today. We don't gonna have the recognition that we have around the world, and we will not be that popular, no?

So I understand her. In the other hand, I have my point of view that the media is a very important part of our sport, too.

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