

Roland Garros

Wednesday, 2 June 2021

Paris, France

Reilly Opelka

Press Conference

R. OPELKA/J. Munar

6-3, 6-2, 3-6, 7-5

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. The changes you've made to your forehand, wasn't sure what they were, and could you talk technically the changes you've made.

REILLY OPELKA: Just honestly some really simple, basic things. A lot of detail. Some things are kind of hard to put into words.

You can look at some of my matches, particularly in Madrid, versus now, you'll see some things. My body is a lot more quiet, my head is more quiet. Honestly, it's just some really basically things. Tennis 101, you know. We get away from them with different conditions, different courts.

There's one other thing we're still working on, but still a work in progress. Yeah, it kind of got back to owning the basics.

Q. In Rome when you walked off the court you said it was a fluke. I think you were joking. Your eyes must have really opened to your potential on clay after these last few weeks.

REILLY OPELKA: Yeah, I mean, I think John Isner has had a lot of success on it. We are similar in a lot of ways.

Like I said, my forehand is improving. At the rate I think it's going, I think there's still so much more room to grow, which is exciting for me, it really is. I go into each practice very excited to test it, to try to improve it. I'm thinking on new things.

My brain's kind of thinking in a different way now, especially when I'm constructing points from serving. I'm so much more calm because I have so much more confidence, so much more trust in my forehand. Like I said, I know there's still room for improvement, which is, like, exciting for me. I think about it all the time. I'm thinking about how I can get better.

In practice I'm really locked in now to make sure I'm not



ROLAND-GARROS

developing any bad habits on it and letting those old ways creep back in.

Q. I talked to Jim Courier earlier in the week. He said he hopes you don't think it's a fluke, but the difference between you becoming a top-10 player might just be a few unforced errors here or there. Do you agree with that? Do you think the changes to your forehand, is that one of the end results?

REILLY OPELKA: Yeah, 100%. I mean, like Jim said, he's not wrong. The quick answer is less unforced errors. That's what the stats show. If you look into the details of it, they were happening for a reason. Like, they crept in a little bit today. There's a reason why those extra unforced errors happen. It's kind of about addressing those.

If you look at the stat lines like that, it's marginal gains. It's one little thing, 1% improvement on one stat is all the difference. John Isner was holding serve 91% of the time for most of his career. The year he finished top 10, he held serve 93 or 94% of the time. I think his return stat stayed the exact same, he just started holding even more. It's like 1%, 2% increments, that's a ten-ranking spot difference, a \$3 million a year difference for John.

Q. Next round could be Tommy. In general, how excited are you to be in the third round of Roland Garros?

REILLY OPELKA: Yeah, I'm excited. I'm thrilled. I've only been in the third round once before in Wimbledon. My body was in much worse condition than it is now. It's just a testament to how hard I've been working in the gym. It just shows that I'm getting better. I think it will be a battle whoever it is.

Tommy's got my number. He knows me better than anyone. He returned my serve more than anyone. Medvedev, one of the best returners in the world.

They're going to be in for an unbelievable match tonight. I think it's pretty even. I see either guy can win that. I always root for Tommy, no matter what, just because I think the extra points, the extra win, what that does for him, I think that means more to him than let's say Daniil at this stage of his career.

I'll root for Tommy, not for any matchup reason, but because he's like family to me.

ASAP . . . when all is said, we're done.®
sports

Q. Your trip to the Borghese sounded pretty awesome. Seems like Caravaggio would be a guy you're into. Am I right about that?

REILLY OPELKA: Yeah, I mean, the art I'm kind of into now, I don't know... That was like such an unbelievable experience just because it's just from a time frame that's so long ago, so old.

I like more of the modern art because it's more my era, I can relate to things a little bit more. Seeing the old masters is incredible. Michelangelo, seeing these old masters is unbelievable just because you get to identify, like not the frauds, but the art that's in today's day and age that isn't going to last the test of time.

When you see the old masters, some of the greats, it allows me when I'm going to buy art for myself, more contemporary, emerging artists, it allows me to have a better understanding for what I'm buying, what I think has a better chance of aging really well. That's essentially what every artist struggles. Everyone for the most part has one point when they get hot. The great ones are the ones that last.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports