

# Roland Garros

Sunday, 22 May 2022

Paris, France

## John Isner

### Press Conference

J. ISNER/Q. Halys

7-6, 4-6, 7-6, 7-6

THE MODERATOR: A tough match in the first round here. Can you talk us through the match, please.

JOHN ISNER: Yeah, it was a tough match, and pretty energetic crowd, cheering for my opponent, which made for a very cool atmosphere, I thought.

Definitely could have gone either way. I know that I was a little bit fortunate to win. I could be on a flight tomorrow, but I'm not. I have two days off to try and improve and see what I can do.

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

**Q. I'm curious, you have won your last 10 first-rounders here in Paris, pretty good streak. What do you think is the key to starting? What is the key do you think of getting off to good starts in these kind of events?**

JOHN ISNER: Well, yeah, I mean, I try to come into Roland Garros as fresh as possible, and I think I achieved that again this year. You know, after Rome I went to Spain for a little vacation, a little bit of practice, and so I came here and I felt pretty good. I like the conditions.

Today maybe they weren't exactly how I liked them, but it was a bit overcast, but the sun poked its head out eventually, and I think it's great conditions for big servers like myself.

I really enjoy playing on clay. I actually am more comfortable on clay than I guess I am on grass.

You know, but to answer your question, I think I have probably been seeded a lot here, so not playing anyone ranked ahead of me. That kind of helps too. Off to another good start.

**Q. You mentioned the conditions. Do you find that those tend to differ more day to day on clay or here specifically?**



**ROLAND-GARROS**

JOHN ISNER: Totally. Yeah, they do differ day to day. It's going to be pretty, could be Biblical tomorrow with a lot of rain. I'm glad I'm not on the schedule.

Sometimes it's hot and sunny and other times it's damp and cold, and that's not good for me. I have played some matches where it's been damp and cold. It feels like I can't string my racquet loose enough to get pop on the ball.

Other times the sun is out and the clay is dry, ball is flying all over the place. So the conditions do vary a lot here, depending on the weather.

**Q. You mentioned the crowd. With what's gone on the last two years, very limited numbers here. How is it different with full attendance? How does that affect the players?**

JOHN ISNER: Well, it's certainly a lot more fun. I mean, I played third round last year against Tsitsipas in a night match with the curfew in place on Chatrier. It was surreal out there, playing on center court at night with literally no one watching except his team and my team. That kind of stunk.

But of course happy to have the fans back. I think they showed up very well today. I mean, not just on my court. I could hear roars going around the grounds.

Fans are very passionate here, and the players appreciate that.

**Q. You get another French guy next. Does it help to sort of have a different player but still that experience of being up against the crowd?**

JOHN ISNER: Yeah, I think it might help a little bit. I could be in a very similar situation. I don't know if I will be on that court, but I might be on maybe a pretty big court and he will have the crowd on his side. So I've never played my opponent coming up but it will be much the same for me, and I'm looking forward to it.

**Q. You won the three tiebreaks today. Do you have any regrets about the Grand Slam rule of the super-tiebreak in the fifth set comes so late in your career because of all the matches you could have won with that rule?**

JOHN ISNER: What was the question? My opinion on

it?

**Q. If you have any regret about this rule comes so late in your career, the super-tiebreak rule in the Grand Slam, because of your strength in the tiebreaks.**

JOHN ISNER: I don't really understand the question.

**Q. Do you wish it had come earlier?**

JOHN ISNER: Sorry. Yeah, the mask. No, you're good, you're good.

No, I don't know. I don't really think about it too much. I mean, had I lost that fourth set I might have found myself in a fifth-set tiebreaker.

To answer your question, no, I don't think I would have wanted it to come earlier. I mean, obviously, yeah, in that semifinal I would have liked to have my chance at Wimbledon in a tiebreaker. But, you know, the sport has evolved in that sense, and I probably have a lot to do with it.

But we are where we are right now. And, you know, I actually had completely forgotten that rule until the umpire on the coin flip today. I completely forgot about it. I did know it, it didn't catch me by surprise, but I wasn't thinking about it.

You know, I guess here and Australia now play a 10-point tiebreaker.

**Q. All of them.**

JOHN ISNER: Oh, and the US Open?

**Q. And Wimbledon, 6-All now.**

JOHN ISNER: At 6-All? Not 12-All? Yeah, Wimbledon was weird because the first time it ever happened was the finals, you know, that epic match. That was kind of crazy. Okay. I didn't know that. So it's all uniform now. I get it.

**Q. You have tasted them all. Do you like the uniformity?**

JOHN ISNER: I can see both sides to it. I can see -- US Open has always had the fifth-set tiebreaker and Australia implemented the 10-point deal a couple years. Then Wimbledon started at 12-All. Yeah, I guess the uniformity is pretty cool.

**Q. Wimbledon, what are your thoughts on the decision to strip ranking points this year? How much do you think that will affect the tournament in terms of field and how players play?**

JOHN ISNER: I don't know how that's going to affect the field. It's going to have a different feel to it.

You know, I don't personally agree with the decision to ban the players from Russia and Belarusia. But the players, we would also prefer to be playing for points, so I -- but I get it. I'm not saying the ATP has made a wrong decision, but we would prefer to be playing with points.

But I definitely stand with the ATP in the sense that I believe these players should be playing. They don't have anything to do with the invasion going on. You know, we all just want this, the whole world just wants this to come to an end somehow. It stinks that it's interfered with sports, but that's the way of the world now. It's not just tennis. A lot of different sports have -- you know, the costs of this have been affected. You see Britney Griner, for instance, is still in detention right now in Russia. That's just crazy. Hopefully she can get back home.

Hopefully next year all could be maybe back to normal.

**Q. Just a follow-up on that. Do you have a problem with the idea of there being all the points then from '21 that anybody might have earned fall off...**

JOHN ISNER: Well, you can look at it both ways. The players that lost first round don't get an opportunity -- I lost first round. So it's never -- it's tough either way. It's a tough decision when the pandemic started like what to do with points. Kind of felt like I had the Miami final on my record for four years, which I was happy about. But, you know, yeah, it's different.

I mean, it's still Wimbledon, right? Someone is going to get crowned the champion. They are just not going to get 2000 points.

It's definitely a different feel. I don't know how I'm going to adjust to it. Right now, truthfully, I'm not that stoked about Wimbledon. I might just show up on Saturday and maybe I will play Monday and see what happens. Because, you know, our currency on tour is points. You know, we play for that to keep our ranking high, to move up our ranking. It puts a lot of pressure on you to try to build your ranking or maintain your ranking.

You're not going to have that this year. So I think in a sense some players will be playing pretty free out there, because we don't have that threat of, you know, of not improving your ranking going on.

**Q. Do you think sort of the people who don't like grass might just decide to opt out and there can be a meaningfully different sort of lineup if it's just the prize money on offer? Which is still a good amount of money but for a lot of people, maybe aren't going**

**to want to switch over to a whole new surface?**

JOHN ISNER: Yeah, exactly. No, for sure, I mean, my first instinct I think is most players are going to play. Maybe players that are a little bit nicked up won't.

For instance, I think players that don't prefer grass but also are really, really good, I do think they are going to play. I could be dead wrong about that. I think the field is going to be very, very strong, but I could understand someone not playing maybe to just take the rest and try to, you know, go forward from there.

Me personally, I slipped and fell on the grass last year and I'm still dealing with a knee issue from that. I think I'm going to play, but moving on the grass is tricky. It's actually pretty dangerous for big guys. That's one reason I don't play Queen's anymore. I think the courts are really slippery. We'll see.

But to answer your question, I do think the field is going to be very strong minus the players from Belarus and Russia.

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