

Roland Garros

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Paris, France

Andrey Rublev

Press Conference

A. RUBLEV/S. Kwon

6-7, 6-3, 6-2, 6-4

THE MODERATOR: Did you expect such a tough battle today?

ANDREY RUBLEV: Yeah, I expect tough battles, because I play Kwon already twice this year, and the second match in Dubai was really tough. Was three sets. He was killing the ball in the first set, and he didn't even give me chance. I think the score in Dubai was maybe 5-0 in less than 20 minutes.

So I knew that he can hit the ball hard. He can play really consistently. The first set he was playing really on the high level.

Myself, I didn't had really confidence, was first match since I lost also first round in Rome. So I was a bit tight. But little by little, also tried to find a way to play better and better. And in the end I was, yeah, from the beginning till the end I finished much better than I started.

THE MODERATOR: Questions in English.

Q. We know you always play with lots of passion, but can you just tell us from your point of view your emotions at the end of the first set? Were you aware of what happened to the ball after you hit it, and also, from your point of view, the conversation you had with the chair umpire.

ANDREY RUBLEV: I didn't have conversation with chair umpire.

Q. No?

ANDREY RUBLEV: No, with the chair umpire for sure nothing. Was not -- I mean, which one? Depends -- sometimes I was asking something him, but, no, like we, in a fight, no. With the chair umpire today, no. At least today (smiling).

But, yeah, the first set, like I said, I was quite tight, and I had a lot of emotions inside of me. And I tried to really control them. Tried to understand the situation. Be positive. And I was able do this, because there was so



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many games in the first set. I was Love-30, breakpoints, doing sometimes some stupid mistakes, and I was able to be quiet and just be positive. Basically till the end of the first set.

Then, yes, I lost my mind for a moment, and of course I'm regret for what I did. It's unacceptable to hit the way the ball I hit it. It's more, I don't know, better even if I just hit the racquet on the seat, because the ball can affect -- I mean, it's not about me. It can affect someone. That's when the problem comes.

This is unprofessional from my side, and hopefully I will never do it again.

Q. I know it's a few weeks ago, but the final against Djokovic in Belgrade was a brilliant final. Just wonder how much belief that gave you for here that you can mix it with the very best on clay.

ANDREY RUBLEV: Obviously of course it's a great feeling to beat No. 1 at home crowd. But as I said, Novak was on his way to come back, so he was not -- I don't even think he was even 80% of his level. Plus that week he was playing all the matches three sets, really tough, tough matches, and he arrive to the final really, really tired, which is normal.

And on top of that, he was playing on home. He had really, really huge pressure, because everybody expect from him only the win. Impossible, you know, the other result.

So obviously, of course, it's super tough when you didn't play for a while and you go straight to play at home and everybody expect you to win and you are playing really great guys, and you have really, really much pressure, a lot of pressure.

And he was able to manage it till after the final, and he was really close to beat me, but I was really lucky that he was just, from all the matches, he was really, really tired. He was not able to keep playing.

I mean, and then he raise his level. Even already in Madrid and then in Rome he start to play really, really fantastic. Already the first round he win, like always, only losing two or three games. I don't know.

Q. What is your opinion on the ATP withdrawing points from Wimbledon, please?

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ANDREY RUBLEV: I will be honest. I mean, Wimbledon, they break agreement between ATP. That's the first thing. When you have a deal, you cannot break it. And they did it.

I think it's more about to show the tournaments they cannot do whatever they want. It's more about teamwork. Tennis, in my opinion, is the only one sport that we need tournaments to work together, and tournaments need players to work together.

When we have toxic relationship like now, only the bad things can happen. And in the end -- or you let tournaments do what they want and in the end nothing good is going to happen, or you do a step and you show, Okay, guys, enough. From now on let's work together. Because if something happen with the tournament, players need to defend it, and if something happens with the players, tournaments need to also to defend. Only working together tennis can be much, much more success.

Even if, I don't know, Wimbledon, they go together with other slams and will try to create another tour, it will only destroy tennis. It will destroy glory of tennis for many, many hundreds of years that tennis was building, all the big names they were putting passion into the tennis, results, all the history.

So in the end, there is only one way, is to work together in a good way, to have not toxic relationship. And that's it.

Q. Do you think some of the top players will now skip Wimbledon because of the ranking points situation?

ANDREY RUBLEV: This, I don't know, because I haven't talked with any player about it, especially top ones. I guess, for sure, they will play, because like I said, the top players, especially Rafa, Novak, they are not playing now for points or for money. They are playing to be the first in history who achieve this amount of slams.

So they are playing for the different thing. That's why, my opinion, it's very important to work together, to keep this amazing glory that we are having now, because of these three players.

If we are not going to work together, we just destroy it. What Roger, what Rafa, what Novak is doing, they did all these years. There are other players from other generation, and we have to respect this, and that's why somehow we need finally to defend each other. Players need to defend the tournaments. Tournaments need to defend the players.

Like this, tennis will grow, grow, grow a lot, because now

all the success of tennis is only because of these three players, because of Roger, Rafa, and Novak.

They did all the promotion that now tennis arrive to I think the best years so far. Like live streaming, about prize money that people start to follow more and more in tennis, it's only because of these three players.

Should be also opposite. Should tennis also promote these players. Normally it's teamwork, in my opinion.

Q. Could I just get your thoughts and memories on Tsonga. He's just played his last match.

ANDREY RUBLEV: Yeah, I mean, it's really sad that he's finishing career. Hopefully he finishing because he feel it that he wants, not because he feel that maybe his body is not ready or the level is not ready. Hopefully it's not like that.

Hopefully he finish because he feel happy now because he have family and he want to spend more time with the family. Then it's a good moment. I think it's like that.

About myself, I mean, of course when I was growing, when I was a kid, I was watching some of his matches, especially because he have a really good forehand. When I was a kid, sometimes I liked to watch his matches just because the way he was playing with his forehand. So these kind of moments.

Q. How difficult has it been for you the last couple of months as a Russian to travel the world and play in front of these big crowds and stages and to be thrust into the middle of this controversy?

ANDREY RUBLEV: I mean, in my case, I think I'm really, really lucky compared -- not compare. Especially in this situation. Like you said, I'm super lucky that I'm able to travel, I'm able to play tennis.

Yeah, I'm really lucky that people or spectators there from the point of view they are still nice to me. You know, they are not doing something bad or something they understand, and this really nice feeling.

I'm really grateful, being in my position, and having still that people are supporting you and they are nice to you. I can be only grateful. That's why, in my position, why I'm super lucky.

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