

Roland Garros

Wednesday, 25 May 2022

Paris, France

Gilles Simon

Press Conference

G. SIMON/P. Carreno Busta

6-4, 6-4, 4-6, 1-6, 6-4

THE MODERATOR: Questions in English.

Q. Quite a win here in France. We know the context. How do you feel after that?

GILLES SIMON: It was a crazy match, an unexpected win. I was more scared to be ridiculous today than hoping I would win this match. I have a routine directly going on court. I started to play very good tennis in the first set, second set.

When you're on clay, it's super long, and Pablo is a super solid player. You know until the end it's going to be difficult, and unfortunately I was dropping a bit physically.

He was still playing good, even better, touching everything. It was just logical that at one point he was 6-4, 6-1, break up in the fifth. I needed to put everything I had really left. To stay I was not making contact because I had a break, but still it was better, it was better every game. I was coming closer to him. And in the end I managed to turn this one and it was really unexpected.

Q. Again, you like to play long matches. We will miss you, for sure. But here in France, winning straightaway, is it really satisfaction? You play really free, I would say.

GILLES SIMON: Well, I was really satisfied when I was already able to play the match. You play your last French Open, and then you will have a nice match with the crowd and a nice atmosphere. And to be able to have this kind of atmosphere you need to play a very good level.

When you play someone as good as Pablo, you're always scared, but just 1, 2, 3, and 2 and nothing will happen and you will not have these feelings.

That's why for me when I was already in the first set playing good, we played some very, very good points, the atmosphere was fantastic, it was already a win. I was not expecting to win this match. I was really not sure I would be able to do it. It's a big surprise.



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At one point I had the chance and when I broke back in the fifth, then it's two games left. You put everything you have, a bit of luck here and there. Yeah, very unexpected.

Q. Was it one of the craziest match you played at Roland Garros?

GILLES SIMON: Yes. French Open, I had a few very good memories. I played a few five-set match and very different. This one is also different than the other one.

It's the most unexpected win I could have. It was really hard for me to see myself as a winner today when I was just warming up and everything. I knew it would be really hard.

Yeah, I was just focusing on the nice feeling I had on court. I had nice sensation from the start. I was playing very, very good tennis, much better than anything I played in the last two years or three years, I would say.

Yeah, I was in the match. I was able to win the first set. Second set was difficult but I still managed to do it also. Then I feel like, okay, maybe I can win. It's hard physically.

Pablo is going to play even better and put everything he has. He's better than me physically, more fit, and he's younger. I think he was even better tonight anyway.

You have one set to win, I gave everything I had in the fifth. I felt I was cramping on every shot, but just didn't listen to my body. I said I had a very, very small chance to win. I just really tried to take it, and I was lucky enough today.

Q. Was it mental at the end, the public, the physical? What makes the difference?

GILLES SIMON: It's a bit of everything. In the end I wish I could say you control everything, but no, you don't know. It's a ball this off on the side for him and my ball is in and he plays a double fault.

I mean, you know, when you play a match and you are four games all in the fifth, it's not like you control anything. If you are better than your opponent you win in three sets, maybe four, but that's it.

When the match starts to turn crazy like this, it means you just have two players on the same level trying to give everything to win. Sometimes you win it and sometimes you lose it.

I played a lot of match like this, and in the beginning of my career I was winning most of these match, and the last stage of my career I was losing most of these match. I was really unsure I could make it and I'm very happy about this one.

THE MODERATOR: Questions in French.

Q. (Question about the match.)

GILLES SIMON: So it's an incredible victory and unexpected victory. I didn't expect to play at such a high level right from the start. I had a difficult day, very long day. Emotionally watching Jo playing, it was tough.

When you have to play like Pablo, you know that in the games there are not many solutions because he's solid, he does everything well. It's not easy.

You don't have something to cling onto tactically. Physically you know that he's going to be fitter than you. And that he's going to last longer.

So when I entered on the court, I didn't say, Oh, I'm going to win in five sets at 1:30 a.m. But I did it. So that means that you never know what can happen. Just here to do our best, and sometimes it works.

Q. What about this atmosphere, these genies, as you said on the court?

GILLES SIMON: At 1:00 a.m., 1:30 a.m., you only have genies left in the audience and just have the true people. It was really an incredible atmosphere.

And right from the start, actually, we started playing late in the evening, and it was very important because at some point during the match Pablo crushed me in the third and fourth set and at the beginning of the fifth. They were there, and each point I won, they supported me, they chanted, they never stopped from the first to the last point. So obviously it helped me.

When you win one game, two games, you feel they are fired up and it gives you a bit of energy, a bit of energy here, there, a bit of tension for him, and he feels that if he misses, he's going to be shouted at, and it's not pleasant for him. That's life, and that's the advantage when we play at home.

So the double fault at the end at 30-All is not by chance. So the crowd was very important, and I thank them again.

Q. Physically, what is your condition at the end of the match? You were talking about blisters on each finger on the court.

GILLES SIMON: Well, it's hard. I have my body is aching everywhere. But I'm happy that I won. I will assess the situation tomorrow. I will try to have a good night's sleep. That's the most important. Tomorrow I have a training doubles with Ugo. But I will try to manage things well. I want to try to play my next match in the best shape possible, and it's going to be very difficult to recover from this match.

But I'm just happy to have won, and it was a huge performance that was unexpected. I didn't think I would be able to do it.

Q. What Jo has shown earlier, did it inspire you? Did it motivate you?

GILLES SIMON: It's not that it inspired or motivated me, but it's just that it's the end of a career. And it's difficult because you no longer win many matches, you are going downhill. You try to look at a challenger and you'll say, it's got to be better, but then you lose very easily and against all the opponents, because the level is very high and players are very good.

So if he would have played Varillas in a challenger, he would have lost 2 and 2, Jo, but here in five sets he was able to win. That was Felix Auger-Aliassime. It's very hard so you feel you're going downhill, no longer at the right level, doing your best efforts. But one day it's okay and the other day it's not.

Jo, it's the same thing. Two, three years he's been not playing so much. He's injured. When he comes back, it's difficult. He plays three match and he gets injured again.

I had a great fear of coming back to Roland and against such a player I could have easily lost 6-2, 6-1, 6-1. If it's a day where I'm tense and you say, Okay, I will do last Roland Garros but I won't enjoy it. Of course that's the atmosphere, but then I have to be in a good position to play a good match.

Jo, what struck me is that we saw Jo, the true Jo one last time. We saw the last match of Jo, and Jo who is serving at 220, who is explosive, who is hitting shots everywhere. We saw Jo a last time, and that's what everyone wanted. That's why we vibrated so much during his match. It was exhausting, actually. But that's what happened, and I said to myself, Oh, well, what a chance, he succeeded in playing so well for his last match.

For me, it's not my last match, but it will be my last Roland Garros, for my last five-setter, because it's my last Grand Slam. I said to myself, Well, it would be great

if we could see the true Gilles Simon one more time and not the one that lost 2 and 1 against Krutykh in Hellbronn. But the one who could be on the court, play three, four hours, and who is going to be brave and try to find solutions to fight back.

That was my state of mind when I entered on the court. I said to myself, Well, Jo was really strong, and I want to do the same thing. Sometimes you really want something and you don't succeed, but here I wanted it very hard, and I succeeded.

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