

Roland Garros

Saturday, 28 May 2022

Paris, France

Daniil Medvedev

Press Conference

D. MEDVEDEV/M. Kecmanovic

6-2, 6-4, 6-2

THE MODERATOR: Do you feel this is the best tennis you have played at this tournament so far?

DANIIL MEDVEDEV: Yeah, would be tough to compare to last year, but this year so far, yes. Was a great match against a tough opponent. To be honest, before the match, I would never thought I could make this score happen on clay courts.

Everything I wanted to do today worked. I was serving great. I feel like I was almost putting all the returns in.

Yeah, and I made his life tough. I don't know. Maybe he didn't play his best level. It's always tough to feel how your opponent played. It's better question to him. I managed from my side to make his life as tough as possible, and it was enough to win today.

THE MODERATOR: Questions in English.

Q. What would it take for us to be able to say "Daniil Medvedev, dirt baller"?

DANIIL MEDVEDEV: What is "dirt baller"?

Q. Dirt baller is clay courter.

DANIIL MEDVEDEV: Okay. That's what I thought. You never know. I might answer something I don't know (smiling).

Yeah, I don't know. I'll have to do better in Roland Garros than last year. That's for sure. Again, last year I felt like I was playing great tennis, and yet I lost in quarters. Yeah, even in Australian Open -- less than US Open, US Open I feel like I always play great, but Australian Open some matches I didn't feel I played great, but I made final two times.

That's what I didn't manage to do in Roland Garros, playing great. The further I can go during this tournaments -- this year I didn't happen to play in the other Masters 1000, maybe one day I can win one -- the more I will maybe start thinking, okay, that's better and



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better.

So far, so for example, after today, you ask me about today's match, yeah, that was great clay court player. But some matches, it's not like this.

So I'm going to try to work and maybe try to become one.

Q. Sascha a couple days ago said this whole Netflix idea, he loves it, and it's very useful for tennis. Is it true that the cameras weren't allowed to follow you in Australia from Netflix? What do you think of the idea?

DANIIL MEDVEDEV: I think the idea is great. I always supported it. I'm sure it's going to be a great series.

I personally love Netflix. I'm not contracted with them or anything. I love Netflix. I love to watch it.

But, yeah, you need to dedicate yourself. If you say yes to them, like, for example, I saw Aryna on the courts the other day, on Jean Bouin, and yeah, you have two cameras behind you, a microphone the top of your head. Sometimes it's not easy.

So far I decided not to do it, but it's not like -- I think they still have some footage, like they came for practice one or two times. But, yeah, let's say like this, I didn't allow them to like follow me 24 hours on seven days.

Again, I think one day I'm gonna do it, and I love the idea. I'm definitely going to be watching the series, because there are many things we, as tennis players, don't know about each other. You know, I go dinner with my, let's say, best friends on tour, but with 95 other players, I haven't been to their apartment or haven't gone dinner with them.

So it's going to be funny to see what we can look, what we can take from this series.

Q. I just wanted to pick up on something you said in your last press conference when you were asked about your fears, you said you're not afraid of what people might say about the fact that you were only at No. 1 for two weeks. So you're not afraid of it. Is it something that's on your mind that you are conscious of?

DANIIL MEDVEDEV: In a good way, because I for sure



... when all is said, we're done.®

want to be there more than two weeks. I want to try to do it. We don't know how, this Wimbledon thing, but I want to try to make the best results possible, starting from here actually when I made interview to Tennis Channel, that was the first time somebody told me if I make finals here I think I'm going to become No. 1. Great to know. That's great motivation.

And, yeah, it's not something that pressures me, because I'm really happy I managed to do it. I think I had small -- I remember Indian Wells I lost, didn't like my match against Gael. Well, okay, it's tennis, I lost. That's when I knew I was going to lose the No. 1 spot. I was like, well, just two weeks.

I went on Internet and looked just like this on Google, who were the shortest like No. 1 players in the world, and the first I saw Pat Rafter being there for one week, and he's an absolute legend, and Carlos Moya was somewhere there.

Yeah, two weeks, if I would have been asked, I didn't know these stats, and somebody would ask me, How long were Rafter and Moya No. 1, I'd say, I don't know, six months, one year.

Yeah, it's something nobody can take away from me. Not that many players could take it while they play tennis. It's a great motivation to try to come back there.

Q. Just wondering, obviously you haven't had the best preparation with the surgery and Geneva. Have you surprised yourself with your level here? How did you feel about your tennis at the beginning of this tournament compared to how it is on the court?

DANIIL MEDVEDEV: I think a little bit surprised and also not, because I try to believe in myself a lot, so even going to Geneva, I knew it could be possible I'm not going to play my best level but going there I wanted to win the tournament, I wanted to win everybody in two sets, try to serve aces. Didn't manage, I didn't play the best match, not the worst though, against a great player, who is Richard.

Coming here, of course not easy after losing the first round, but I felt on practice that there is something that is working well. Just need to continue, you know, playing a lot of balls and working physically.

Because even the match with Richard, second set, I was starting to feel I'm getting a little bit tired, which is, well, not normal when you are going to play five sets. Here before the tournament I really felt good, great, made a lot of physical work, played a lot of sets on the high intensity.

So, yeah, I'm not that surprised, but to be honest, every time I play really good on clay I'm a little bit surprised, so

today I was surprised (smiling).

Q. Kecmanovic told us he started playing the match midway in the second set. Going back to this notion of surprise, he was obviously surprised by your level. Do you appreciate this aspect of your game this deep into the tournament and with people still knowing what a great champion you are?

DANIIL MEDVEDEV: Say it again, the question?

Q. Do you appreciate this aspect of surprise that is surrounding your game now, you know, and everybody knowing what a great champion you are nevertheless?

DANIIL MEDVEDEV: Yeah, I think on clay it's always going to be a little bit like this, because knowing that I can have, let's put it this way, worst matches than I usually have on hard courts, like even my worst match on hard courts I can lose the match, but I'm going to try to do something, put some balls on the court. On clay sometimes it just doesn't work and it's when I can have tough losses in terms of score, in terms of the game, let's say, where I don't have any solutions.

I think every time somebody comes up to me playing on clay, they're gonna be like, we have the chance. Maybe on hard courts they are still gonna believe but maybe they are going to be a little bit scared or whatever. Here I think everybody believe they can beat me.

Like today, again, I played a really great match and I'm sure Miomir during the match was like, Does this guy doesn't love clay or what's happening? It's true, yeah, second set, I mean, it's also normal, he's a great player so he tried to mix up his game. I saw it, I tried to adapt.

Yeah, it's great to hear from somebody like him. He had some tough matches against tough opponents lately, that he was a little bit surprised by my level. It's great.

Q. So much chat about Russian tennis players recently but on the court today, four Russians in singles, four wins. So I wonder, do you keep an eye on each other's results? Do you send messages? Was there any extra support that you give each other when maybe you feel like the world is being a bit tough on you right now?

DANIIL MEDVEDEV: So Kudermetova won also?

Q. Yes. By retirement in second set but she still won.

DANIIL MEDVEDEV: Okay. I didn't know. That's a great win. I didn't know that Paula retired. She was playing just behind me, so I couldn't follow the score. I saw it was 2-All in the first set.

Well, I like to follow tennis, so to be honest, I'm not going to be able to say by memory every result of a match today, yesterday. But like, let's put it this way, if you give me the match, even doubles or mixed, I'm probably going to say who won it because I like to follow results.

Yeah, you know, we are friends between us Russians, we are all friends. So it's usually I see in the locker room anybody who did win today from men's side, well, Andrej did. I saw Hubert, he didn't play yet, but we congratulated each other. It's the same between Russians or Russians and other tennis players.

I feel like that's why we tennis players love tennis because it connects well. And I don't think, really, I don't think so nationality is important for us, but it's more a question that other players should answer. But me, I feel it this way.

Being in the locker room, I mean, let's put it this way: I love being in the locker room with other tennis players and it's a great atmosphere.

Q. As we often say, you are less good on clay than on hard court where you are maybe the best player in the world. Do you sense something in your opponent's eye? Do you feel that when they play you on clay maybe they think more than on hard courts, Maybe I can make a big strike today, beating the No. 1 or No. 2 in the world? How do they sense how they see you on clay?

DANIIL MEDVEDEV: Well, I think, yeah, it's close to what Vuk asked, that it's more before the match that I'm sure people are really thinking, okay, this is Medvedev on clay, we can get maybe our best win of our career, because it's not often that you beat a Top 5 in the world.

Gasquet, by beating me, he got this crazy achievement where he beat every top 100 player in the world. When I saw it, I was like, I'm happy for him, but, damn, why did we play on clay (smiling)? It had to be me losing on clay to get him his achievement.

I think during the match it's great, because that's where they can get surprised and, yeah, during the match, let's be honest, I don't look in the eye of the opponent. I try to more feel the game, feel the physicality of the game than what my opponent does.

THE MODERATOR: Questions in French.

Q. How come this year you're playing more carefree during Roland Garros? Is it because Rafa says that he's not the favorite this year? Is it because Novak is the least prepared he's always been? It is possible you might have to face Gilles Simon. If that's the case, will that be a bad piece of news? Because you

do not like to play French players.

DANIIL MEDVEDEV: From last year onwards, when I started to practice well on Roland Garros and to find the right keys, I managed to reach quarterfinals against someone who is very tough on clay, Tsitsipas. I'm sure he can win Grand Slams and Masters on clay. So it wasn't a huge loss.

This year I thought the preparation was more difficult. I had less time because it was after the surgery, and I thought if last year I managed to play like this, this year I'm sure I can do the same. I could do it. This is what I did.

Here the balls are a bit heavier. The rebound is less high, but Rafa managed to win so many times nonetheless. So this is not what's going to be a hurdle for me.

As for your second question, it's not easy, but it will not be impossible. It's always difficult to play a player who is playing at home, because of course they will play better. They will have more support.

Then again, I'm afraid of nothing in tennis. If it's Gilles Simon, I know that the public will not be cheering for me, but I will focus on my tennis no matter what.

Q. You underwent a surgery recently. Do you think that you found your best level already? Can you claim for the title in final?

DANIIL MEDVEDEV: It's early to say, but I'm progressing in that direction. Today was a tough match. I don't think I can play better than that on clay. I served well. There were only two breakpoints where I could do better, could avoid breakpoints, but we are talking about perfection here.

So it was a very good match. Physically I felt well. I did not play a four- or five-setter. We should see this if that happens. Should I have a five-setter on the first round, I don't know I could actually bear it. But I haven't had any five-setter in the first and second round, so it should be good.

I do not feel any pain. I do not have any problem with my body. I just focus on tennis, and I think I'm 100% fit.

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