

Roland Garros

Sunday, 29 May 2022

Paris, France

Felix Auger-Aliassime

Press Conference

R. NADAL/F. Auger-Aliassime

3-6, 6-3, 6-2, 3-6, 6-3

THE MODERATOR: Felix, tough loss out there tonight, very tight match. What do you think made the difference, especially in the end of the match?

FELIX AUGER-ALIASSIME: Yeah. He raised his level when he needed to. We were, he was serving well in the fifth set, playing well behind the serve, being very aggressive, and I think he took it even higher, one step further, from 4-3.

Honestly, I didn't play a bad game. I did what I had to do. He was dictating, aggressive when he needed to and also defending really well on two points where I came to the net.

So, no, just a great game from him and then, again, he showed great composure at the end to serve for the match. I was still there trying to win, but he played really well.

Q. You really battled hard out there today. You just mentioned levels to us there. What do you think you learned from the experience of playing Rafa today and what do you think you need to do to take your game to that next level?

FELIX AUGER-ALIASSIME: Well, it's always, I think, a constant work of progress trying to be a better player all the time. I know I have great shots, but they can be always more, more precise, more powerful, and more consistent.

So that's like the main line. That's the work of every day. But it's good to spend time in these matches on these courts and battle four hours, test yourself mentally, physically, and at the end, that's how you learn. You just try to put yourself in these difficult situations and try to find a way.

Q. A bit of a random question. Were you watching the Champions League Final yesterday, and if yes, who you supported?

FELIX AUGER-ALIASSIME: Well, I watched a little bit. I



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enjoy it. But I'm not supporting any club, but it's nice to watch other sports also and especially at this level.

Q. In terms of your experience, particularly this week of playing at a Grand Slam, what do you think the differences are between the rest of the tour and playing at a Grand Slam, both in terms of the physical demands and also the emotional and mental demands as well?

FELIX AUGER-ALIASSIME: Well, there's a lot of matches. You need to win seven matches in order to win the tournament. It's a long time, on a span of two weeks, so it's not only a few days where you need to be good. You need to be able to rest when you need to and then come to the match and play well and be consistent with what you do.

And I think the goal for me is, yeah, to be able to play at a very high intensity for five sets or three winning sets in a row and that's difficult to do for that many matches, but I think I'm in the right direction, working in the right way. It's my first time here going in the second week, so it was a nice showing, a good experience, so hopefully next year I can go even further.

Q. Was it difficult to keep this intensity, to remain focused on the entire match, because to keep this level against Nadal, I think it required a great deal of effort.

FELIX AUGER-ALIASSIME: Yes, a lot of effort, a lot of concentration. At one point even though he raised the level of his game, there were a few dips, physically, mentally, and I kind of lost the order of the game. I lost my intentions at one point.

But despite everything, I managed to come back when necessary, to serve well again. No, at the end of the day, I showed some positive things, and I managed to last the whole run and it's positive for what comes next.

Q. We know that Nadal has a problem with his foot. Did you feel anything different? Did you feel that he was affected?

FELIX AUGER-ALIASSIME: No, not really. Visually, not really. But then I'm not really sure. I think that at a high level we all, we never feel on top of the world. I was not fresh throughout the match, but we try to hide what we're feeling. We try to hide fatigue or discomfort, physical



discomfort.

If his foot was hurting, he didn't show it. But over the years it's difficult for him. He's not 22 anymore, so he obviously can't feel totally fresh, but he likes to move.

Q. A question about his next opponent. It's a draw that you've no doubt seen many times in your youth. It will no doubt be a great match. Do you have a favorite? How do you think this match between Novak and Rafa will go?

FELIX AUGER-ALIASSIME: Well, I wish Rafa the very best, I admire him greatly in everything that he's done. He's somebody who I really like, and so I wish him the very best for the next match.

But then I think that he also knows that it's going to be difficult. We played for a long time today and it's still the quarterfinals and afterwards there's still two more matches to win to win the tournament. Rafa is coming here to win the tournament. So as I said, I really wish him the very best, but it will be a monumental effort for him, I think, to win.

But as he and Novak have always done, they will give it their all right through to the end and it will be a great battle.

Q. Anything that you regret in this match and despite everything do you feel proud that you really managed to get to Rafa in the match?

FELIX AUGER-ALIASSIME: Yes, I'm proud about the effort I produced, the game I played, and like most of my matches I try to leave the match without any regrets.

I tried things, I changed my tactics, my position and I think I tried everything with regard to what I did today.

I think my service is very good, but there are things in my game that I can improve to be more comfortable in certain moments or maybe win not just by the skin of my teeth, you have to have a comfortable win. So there are things that I can improve, but I'm proud and I have no regrets.

Q. Despite everything, despite the defeat you've had your first victories at Roland Garros, it's a wonderful tournament, you had to come up against Nadal for him to oust you.

FELIX AUGER-ALIASSIME: Yes, I love this tournament, I've always loved it and it was difficult in the past two years not to be successful here as I love playing here, I love playing in France. I love playing on clay courts as well. Even though it's not where I have my best results, I love playing on clay courts.

It does me good to prove it to myself and to others that I deserve my place in the last players of a tournament like this one and I hope that in the coming years I will have the opportunity to win. But, yeah, it makes me very happy to have won a few matches here this year.

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