

Roland Garros

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Alize Cornet

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: We start with French questions, please.

Q. How do you feel before this Roland Garros tournament, which is always so special for French players?

ALIZE CORNET: Normal. Nothing special. I feel quite content with being here. I had my first practice on the central court yesterday with Casiana Alamadine [ph]. I felt wonderful. I'm not saying that I'm used to it, but a little bit. There is still some joy and excitement. And there is another side. On the flip side it's also that I feel a bit nervous as well. But I'm used to having these emotions.

Q. Last year, and you said it again a few months ago, maybe the end of your career will come up soon. Do you think that this tournament will be the last or not?

ALIZE CORNET: I should not have talked about it last time. I haven't thought about it that much. This is why I'm still playing. I'll play as long as I want. I'm 33 years old this year, so the end is near obviously, but I have no deadline in my head. I want to think one match at a time, and to let it go.

Q. You have talked about haters messages in the past and said it was actually something that was awful. This year there was a fight, a campaign against it. What do you feel about that?

ALIZE CORNET: I totally rejoice in having this initiative by Amelie Mauresmo. So congratulations for the organizers. But we'll still receive haters' messages, but they will not be disseminated in the public, so they will not gain momentum. They will stop at one point. So we all are happy, very much happy with this initiative.

Q. Last year there were two new developments regarding you. The first one regarded Roland Garros and the second one was the fact that you actually published a book. How about this year? Do you consider yourself both as an author and as a tennis player or more as a tennis player?

ALIZE CORNET: Well, I work on my next book. The



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next novel will be published next year. It's not because I don't talk about it, that I don't work on it. And my first novel was published as a public book recently, as well.

So the first book worked well. I had a lot of positive feedback. So this year, more than last year, I consider to have two hats, two careers. I like it. I have managed to strike the right balance between both careers, because sometimes last year it would be confusing. I would spend too much time on writing, and that would actually have an impact on my tennis. This year I found the right work balance.

Q. Could you give some examples of messages that tennis players could receive that are full of hate and that could actually undermine a tennis player?

ALIZE CORNET: We have heard about this already in the past, because we have heard about this over the last two years. It's all about hatred, death threats for the tennis players and the family. A lot of insults. A lot of messages such as stop playing tennis. Once you have read one you have read them all. It actually comes from people that are unsatisfied, that are frustrated, and hide behind their screens.

What is quite reassuring is that we are actually all on the same footing. Talking about it in the media to others helps us to have some hindsight. Because there are some people who would send hatred messages to 10 or 20 players against whom they have bets, for instance.

I'm older, so I do not feel so emotional about it. But if we can be protected as much as we can and have a peaceful atmosphere, that would actually be very welcome.

Q. That's a service that is made available for up to 10 days after the tournament. After that, it's up to the tennis players to pursue or not. Would that be something that would be interesting for you? First question. Second question, you said you felt like kids on the court. So when you're 33 years old, do you still feel like a kid even if you're used to playing on Philippe Chatrier Court?

ALIZE CORNET: I don't know what I'm gonna do in terms of social media, because I'm less impacted. I do not check the social media anymore hardly.

Of course it will depend on my results this year, but I will



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certainly use this service if I need to. Even after the tournament, because sometimes it lasts longer than the tournament's duration.

And to answer your second question, at 33, you're still young, you know. Playing on the central court is a kids' dream come true. So we feel like children. Playing tennis, we look around us, and we think, okay, we made it. I have been living this 19 times already, and I still have the eyes of a child.

I'm always in awe every time I play at Roland Garros. Of course if that changes, then I should stop.

Q. What is your opinion on female tennis players? With Caroline, Oceane is ranked 100. So what do you feel about French female tennis players?

ALIZE CORNET: Diane, as well. There is Diane Parry.

Q. Yes, as well. How about Clara?

ALIZE CORNET: With five French female tennis players playing and ranked in the top 100, so all is well. There is Diane and Clara, who are actually gaining momentum. They have a lot of talent. Each in their own way, they have a different game style.

Elsa also is doing well in the qualifiers. Caro is doing well among the five top players. I'm a bit in between. I have been here for quite some time. So we have different generations overlapping, and it's very nice.

During the Clarins Trophée, I talked with Selena -- she will hate me -- Janicijevic and other players, because they showed that they were curious and they wanted to have my feedback. They wanted to listen to what I had to say, and they have everything to discover. I could speak with them and their coach. They already play very well. So it was a great experience for me to play the Lagardère tournament.

We have a lot of hard-working French tennis players, and I really am looking forward to see the next outcomes.

THE MODERATOR: Tell us about your season so far.

ALIZE CORNET: It's been good. I played some matches on clay courts, more than last year, and some tough battles. I think I'm ready physically and mentally.

I'm not a big fan of my draw, because I haven't played super well against Camila in the past and she's a very aggressive player. So I hope that the support of the crowd and maybe the magic of being here in Roland Garros will help me on the court.

THE MODERATOR: Questions in English.

Q. You tweeted after the Rome final that had to be played at 11:00 at night between the women that you felt this was a bad situation. I'm just wondering, do you feel in the locker room that there's a sense that the women at these joint events are not getting the same treatment as the men, more generally?

ALIZE CORNET: No, no, I don't feel it in the locker room. We don't talk about it so much among us.

It's just a general feeling that I had on this particular match, because I turned on my TV while I was about to go to sleep and I saw the final starting. I'm, like, something's wrong. Didn't feel right at that time. But I said it in the past, and I will say it again, I think we are on the right track to be equal with men, but sometimes there is some setback, and we just have to keep working on it.

Q. With that in mind, this is a tournament a year ago that had nighttime sessions, prime time sessions, and there was only one women's match scheduled. I just wonder if you would like to see this tournament take the lead this fortnight and equal that.

ALIZE CORNET: Yes, I hope there is going to be more women's matches in the night session this year, but then I understand what's at stake. When you plan to put a night session and there is a best-of-five sets or best-of-three sets, it's not exactly the same for the crowd on the crowd and the schedule of the TV.

I think there is a little bit of business issue that we still have to consider, but definitely I hope that at least this year we are going to have two (smiling). That will be a good improvement. Last year I was the only night session, so I was very flattered and honored, and I think I put on a good show on the court.

So I think that women's match in the night session would be a really good thing to do it again.

Q. I wanted to ask you whether there is a sense that Swiatek, Sabalenka, and Rybakina might be separating themselves at the top of women's tennis right now?

ALIZE CORNET: It's a question? Yeah. Yeah, they are definitely in a really good shape this year, these three players.

I think we still shouldn't underestimate some players like Sakkari and some players after that, like even the youngster coming up, I played Qinwen Zheng in Rome and I think she's playing really good tennis.

So we can have a good surprise here in Paris. Of course those three players are the favorite, but I think in a slam there is always some surprises in the draw, and, you know, it's still also this question of generation. I think

some young players are really coming up now, and there are some good things to show on the court and they are super motivated.

Women's tennis right now is becoming amazing. That's my thought. I can feel it when I'm on the court, that it's improving a lot. I think it's great for everybody, for the crowd, and for the players, and for the general level.

Can't wait to see what this tournament has in store for us.

Q. This will be your 19th Roland Garros. Curious if you thought when you played your first you'd play 18 more, and what do you make of all those years?

ALIZE CORNET: Probably not. I don't remember exactly what I was thinking when I was 15. But I didn't think that I would be in the top 100 for 17 years in a row, that I wouldn't miss a slam for 17 years in a row, that I would have all these memories, all these matches, all these challenges, and that I would still be there at 33.

But actually, when you're 15, you don't really picture yourself at 30. It seems so far away, you know, and then in a blink of an eye you're there.

But I think I made the best out of my career. I gave everything that I had to this sport, so I have no regrets, and I can be proud, I think, of my career.

Q. It's maybe too soon to see into the future but is there a big motivation to play 20? Where are you at right now?

ALIZE CORNET: No, I'm not thinking about this. I'm really trying to, I was saying it earlier in French, but I'm really trying to take it week by week, actually, to be honest. I play when I want to play, when I'm motivated. I'm not trying to push myself like I did for 15 years. I'm really trying to go on the tournament when I feel like I have something to give. That's why I withdrew from Miami this year because I had nothing left in my brain, in my belly to play. So I have no idea how I'm gonna feel by the end of the year, and even less by next year.

So let's try to enjoy this Roland Garros as if it was the last. We never know what the future holds.

Q. You were just talking about your experience the number of years that you have played here, and you also just said you don't like the way your draw has worked out. But over the years now, when you look back, does it get any easier, or is it just as tough to play your whole major and the pressure of that?

ALIZE CORNET: No, I think it's -- yeah, it's maybe a little easier to handle my emotions, because now I took a little bit more distance from the tennis in general, you know. I got to learn that it's not everything, that life is beautiful,

even when you play bad. Easy stuff like that that you don't really understand when you're 20 or 25, and tennis takes everything. Takes your whole life, your whole thinking.

So I guess now I'm a little bit more relaxed about all this, but I still want to do good. You know, I still want to win. I still want to be competitive. I want to have good emotions. I want to share my victory with the crowd, with the people I love.

So I'm not gonna say that I'm totally detached, but I think I live it better. You know, like the days before the event, I'm much more relaxed, and it helps me on the court.

But you never know. The moment I like the less is actually when the draw is made (smiling). It's a moment I don't like, you know. When I saw my draw, I was, like, hmm, it's going to be a good challenge this year, Giorgi. To play Collins or Pegula, I didn't even look at that. If I make the first two rounds it will be already a good tournament. It's always like that.

As my mom says, on a very right way, you never know if it's a good draw until you play it. So let's see how it goes.

Q. It sounds like you're not going to be playing much longer, but are you going to hang around the game? You have become an important voice in the sport.

ALIZE CORNET: Thank you.

Q. Do you want to hang around and be a badass?

ALIZE CORNET: I don't know. I think I want to stick around. First of all, because I love the sport, and I have been around for so long, but I don't think I can just walk away and forget about tennis.

Also because I think I have things to say and things to give also to other players. You know, I have always had this kind of dream that I wanted to be a Fed Cup captain -- Billie Jean King Cup captain, sorry. It's still something that I'm thinking of. I think I would be good at it.

Don't worry. You'll see me again even when I stop playing (smiling).

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