

Roland Garros

Friday, 26 May 2023

Paris, France

Ons Jabeur

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: Welcome back to Roland Garros. Talk us through how you're feeling and how your preparation has been here the past week or so.

ONS JABEUR: Well, injury-wise I'm feeling much better, and I had a very nice week of training here at the French Open. I'm going to do my best and hopefully do better than last year.

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

Q. Welcome back. Just in terms of you saying that the injury is better, are you 100%? Is it a confidence issue in the body? Can you kind of give us a bit more detail there.

ONS JABEUR: Yeah, definitely 100%. I was training with a lot of players, moving normally.

But, you know, you always have it in your mind like what if something could happen? But I try not to focus on. That. But yeah, definitely finding, you know, my rhythm. The way I move on the court I feel like is much better. If you have the time to come and watch my practice, I think you'll see (smiling).

Q. I'm also from Africa, South Africa, to be precise, so it's just a bit more south. A lot south. As you know, tennis is a very popular in many African countries, and we have many talented youngsters, but as you know, there is not the financial ability coaching or the necessary exposure for them to make it to this level. What is your general comment on that? What would be your message to these children?

ONS JABEUR: Well, I know how tough it is, you know, to come, you know, from certain countries where you don't have the resources to do so. Actually, my favorite tournament before was the African Championships. I was very close to South Africa. I was in Botswana before. I really enjoyed playing there.

One thing for sure, I know we have a lot of talents and a lot of fighters. I saw so many amazing young players from Africa. They want to win and everything.

I know it's a different path and it's a tough one. I'm trying



ROLAND-GARROS

personally to change that hopefully by creating more opportunities. Maybe, you know, one day when I have my own academy I want to invite, you know, all the African talented players to train and to give them the opportunity and definitely share my experience now will help more. One of my dreams is also to see a lot more African players on tour.

Q. Correct me if I'm wrong, I don't think you're on the list of players due to play on Sunday this year. Is that a relief to you? Just wonder looking back 12 months on having to play sort of first match on the Sunday what your reflections on that are. I know you're relieved not to be having to do that again.

ONS JABEUR: I hate playing on Sundays here. Definitely not my best timing. But yes, definitely I'm very happy that I don't play that day.

I let the other people enjoy playing matches. I remember I played two times on Sunday, last year and another time and both I lost. It was at 11:00. So no, I'm good (smiling).

Q. Bethanie shared a picture of you and Novak and Paula at the PTPA dinner last night. She teased some big things are to come. Wonder what some of those big things might be that you can share.

ONS JABEUR: You know, we're trying to unite players and we were trying to have our own association to be heard. You know how there is a lot of things going on with the two-weeks format, with the prize money, with a lot of things going on that I believe that players are not entirely taking what they deserve.

I feel like it's time that so many players get educated in so many ways, because I feel like so many things they don't know about. It's a great thing.

We talked about a lot of other things, so hopefully we can move forward coming on. I cannot say much about what's going on. But for me, the whole point is really to get tennis players united at least once, you know.

Q. It sometimes seems like the men and women's players don't always agree on things. Given that you're a mix of both, do you feel like there's consensus on what to move forward on and how to do it?



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ONS JABEUR: Yeah, and I believe the issue is not man or woman agreeing on things. I think it's bigger than that. I think it's for tennis in general. I think we need to be really united to have what we deserve as tennis players and as a sport. For the love of this sport I believe that we deserve more, you know, for us, for the fans, for the media, for everyone.

Q. You, Iga, Aryna, Elena, all won the four biggest clay events. Yours was in Charleston. How confident are you that you can, in this format of two weeks, having a day off between, play yourself into form?

ONS JABEUR: Yeah, for me, definitely I will try to get some matches in, match by match. You know, they have played a lot, but experience-wise, playing a lot or not, it's the same thing. So for me, is to be in a good shape, to be in a good, you know, relationship with the clay court these two weeks and see what could happen.

But, you know, I'm just gonna take it one match at a time and see what's gonna happen.

Q. In this tournament FFT introduced some apps or technology which protect players from cyber attacks or hate messages. I don't know if you have very bad experience of being attacked by these kind of messages or something, but can you share your thoughts on that.

ONS JABEUR: Technology or is it...

Q. It's like some apps...

ONS JABEUR: Is it available?

THE MODERATOR: For social media and things like that, FFT.

(Comments off mic.)

ONS JABEUR: Nice. I love that.

Honestly I wasn't aware of this. But can they do that with the account I have? Because I receive a lot.

(Comments off mic.)

ONS JABEUR: It's definitely a great start, because one of also the things that we talked about is that we are not allowed, you know, to have betting sponsors but people are betting on us, but we get the hate messages and all the people that threaten us and everything.

So that's definitely one thing that great to get rid of, and we always want positive energy around, for sure.

Q. You made no secret of how badly you wanted to

win a Grand Slam. You had that Wimbledon trophy last year on your phone. Is it possible and do you reflect on maybe you can want something too badly?

ONS JABEUR: I wasn't like dreaming of it every day, for sure. It's just I believe in manifesting things. I don't overdo it, but I believe that it's there and I'm gonna get it one day. It wasn't meant to be last year.

But yeah, I mean, I tried everything possible to want it, not overdo it, but to want it and see what's gonna happen.

But we both could blame Elena last year. We know that (smiling). But I think if it's meant to be, I will get there one day. If it's not, then I will go have a daughter and make her win the Wimbledon. (Laughter.)

You always have options. Or my niece. She's ready.

Q. A lot of really great food options in Paris. Is there a favorite dish you have in the city or favorite cuisine when you're here?

ONS JABEUR: Well, the French cuisine is very particular, very chic. He's French. He's laughing.

I told you... Potato gratin. Gratin. It's at least consistent, you know. No offense, guys.

THE MODERATOR: Questions in French.

Q. What does Paris stand for for you in terms of the city and the tournament? What has changed in your life in 2022?

ONS JABEUR: I love Paris. I love being here. I keep wonderful memories, especially after having won the junior Roland Garros. And Tunisia is very close to Paris, so there is a lot of Tunisians that live in Paris or come over here to support me.

2022 has been a game changer for me. I feel like I'm under -- I have more fans cheering for me. I have more support from Tunisia. People love more tennis than before. Maybe they started watching more tennis than football, which is great for me.

Things have changed. People are cheering for me much more than they used to.

Q. You're very popular in Paris, as I could see in the alleys where you were taking a lot of selfies and discussing with a lot of fans. Does it help you to be so popular? Do you feel more at ease on the court, especially when you're about to play this tournament and the Olympic Games coming up?

ONS JABEUR: It's true that I actually have a lot of



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energy from the crowd. I'm taking pictures or I give autographs to my fans. This is part and parcel of the things I would do for them. I have a wonderful relationship with them.

They support me a lot when I play. During the COVID period it wasn't the same. I'm lucky that I have such a crowd to cheer for me, especially Tunisians are actually very much present.

Q. What is your mindset coming here after what happened last year, you had the favorite status, and maybe it had an impact on your game. How do you feel this year? Did you change your mindset?

ONS JABEUR: Well, I'm not playing on Sunday. It's a good start. I will play one match at a time, step by step, as we say.

The first match will be hard, because she's actually on the rise right now. There is no easy first round. I will do my best. The most important thing for me is to be in good health, because it was hard lately with all these injuries that I had sustained. I will try to play with the same mindset as for Charleston, because I think it was the best tournament that I played this season. I will try to keep up and enjoy playing on court.

Q. Have you found your serenity again after this injury?

ONS JABEUR: Well, I don't feel bad with this injury anymore. My footwork is better. I found my groove on court.

If you manage to see me practice, you will see that. I think I'm going the right directions. I feel confident. I feel ready for this tournament. We will see what happens.

Q. Roland Garros is the only Grand Slam tournament where you haven't reached the quarters. Is it on your mind?

ONS JABEUR: Well, it wasn't so far, but it will be. Maybe it will change, and I will have it on my bucket list.

Of course it is hard to play on clay because it's more physical. I will try to go slowly but surely. We'll see if I will do better than Hicham and reach the quarters. We will actually have a small fight with Hicham on that point.

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