

Roland Garros

Sunday, 28 May 2023

Paris, France

Constant Lestienne

Press Conference

K. KHACHANOV/C. Lestienne

3-6, 1-6, 6-2, 6-1, 6-3

THE MODERATOR: Constant, what do you think was the key difference today in your match?

CONSTANT LESTIENNE: Tough question. I think the match was -- at the end it was, like, just a little thing, which didn't go on my side, but I could win this match. I felt like I was close, but I would say maybe my physical performance was a bit disappointing.

My tennis was really good. So, yeah, next time I will get it.

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. We saw you play two sets at a very high level. Can you tell us what happened next and what feeling you had?

CONSTANT LESTIENNE: Well, I've come back from afar physically. I don't know if everyone is aware, but I was injured on the calf for a number of months. So it was my first match for a number of weeks or months.

And my calf hurt me a little bit, and it frightened me at the beginning of the third set. So I don't know if it was my scar that was pulling or whether something was tearing, and I was really hesitant about making a lot of efforts.

Q. You find a little more energy in the last set, and then the audience is starting to believe again. Did you think it was possible in the final set?

CONSTANT LESTIENNE: Yes, yes, of course, I did believe it was possible. I was not trying to kind of rest, but to gain some time so that I could really hit back hard in the fifth set.

Q. These physical problems are quite recurrent for you. So how do you approach this now mentally? It must be exhausting against Khachanov in the third set when you are leading 2-0. It's a perfect game.

CONSTANT LESTIENNE: Yes, it's frustrating, but that's part of me. That's part of my career. I've had a lot of



ROLAND-GARROS

physical problems. I'm not like all of these machines that manage to play one match after the other, but that's the way it's always been for me.

So, yes, it's difficult to deal with, but I stay positive. It was my first Roland Garros, and it was a wonderful time.

Q. Constant, at the beginning of the match maybe the playing conditions were a little slower, and maybe this was favorable to you. Is that your opinion?

CONSTANT LESTIENNE: Yes, it's true. I thought in the fifth set where I said the bounce is a little higher now because it was warmer and the clay was dryer, but I don't think that it had that much of a difference on the results.

Q. Your relationship with the audience was incredible.

CONSTANT LESTIENNE: Yes, absolutely. I've never experienced that. For a humble player such as myself, it's incredible watch to have this experience, and I'm delighted to have experienced this at least once in my career.

Q. To come back to your injury, in the third set you were playing less intensely, but what were you feeling? Were you not managing to run? Could you not hit the ball hard? What was the most handicapping for you?

CONSTANT LESTIENNE: Yes. Well, I was on my tip-toes. I had a pain similar to the one that took me off the courts, so it scared me. And I didn't want to force my calf because I didn't want to make the injury more serious.

But then the physios reassured me. I put on some compression socks, which protected the calf, and I went to dig down deep to get that strength for the fifth set.

Q. Yes, the physio came in several times before you went to the dressing room for the medical time-out. So what did they do to get you going?

CONSTANT LESTIENNE: Well, I just went to change, actually. I just had to remove my socks.

Q. With regard to the audience where they gave you a lot of support, you're from Amiens, not very far



from here. Did you manage to spot people that were from Amiens and who were there to support you, or was it the Roland Garros audience?

CONSTANT LESTIENNE: No, I didn't see anybody in particular from Amiens. I did have a few friends here, but there were just French people who were there to support me because I'm French.

Q. Regarding your injury, it's not the first time you've had problems with your calves. I think it's even deeper than that. Maybe there is a particular reason on the fact that this keeps coming back?

CONSTANT LESTIENNE: No, I'm trying to find what's wrong. I'm sorry. I'm kind of a bit distracted. So what's wrong with my calves?

Well, actually I had a tear in Bercy, and there's a scar, and each time when I don't do things perfectly, things go wrong.

So I took more time and did things differently to try and make things better so I could end the season. It would be great for me to be able to finish the season, even if I'm down in the ranking. But to be able to tennis, that's my objective.

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