

Roland Garros

Sunday, 28 May 2023

Paris, France

Sebastian Korda

Press Conference

S. KORDA/M. McDonald

6-4, 7-5, 6-4

THE MODERATOR: Congrats, Sebi. Very solid performance out there today. How did you feel?

SEBASTIAN KORDA: Yeah, good. It's been a while since I won a tennis match, so it was nice to win one. Definitely gives me confidence to keep going.

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

Q. Can you describe what the last few months have been like? Been a while since we sat here with you, just like you saying, a while since you won a tennis match.

SEBASTIAN KORDA: Yeah, a lot's gone on, new addition to my team, bringing Jez Green, put a lot of weight on, muscle. I put like 7 kilos of muscle on. Kind of getting back into it. Been a while since I played any tennis, really. Madrid, Rome, and now here, just kind of getting my feet comfortable again. Just one step at a time.

Q. I just want to be sure, it was your wrist that was the problem?

SEBASTIAN KORDA: Yeah.

Q. How long was it until you could even swing a racquet and get out on the practice courts after Australia?

SEBASTIAN KORDA: I'd say I went two, three months without touching a racquet, basically. Yeah, I even still had a little bit of pain kind of in Madrid, and then Rome was the first tournament where I kind of had nothing, which was a really big positive for me. Now I have zero pain in my wrist.

Just kind of learning how to play again a little bit (smiling).

Q. That was going to be my next question, which was maybe what is the hardest part about coming back after having that extended period without even



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picking up a racquet?

SEBASTIAN KORDA: At the beginning it was kind of couldn't relax my wrist, you know, it was just kind of mental pain at some point.

Then it was just kind of getting the reps in, was the most important, kind of getting my eyes adjusted again to the speed of the ball, getting my reactions right.

Yeah, leading up till basically after Rome was the first time I really had a practice over an hour. It was a long time for me. And kind of just practicing now, getting some matches, and building the confidence.

Q. I was just thinking back to your explosive start to the year in Adelaide, Australian Open, you beat Medvedev, Sinner, you went three sets with Djokovic. What did you learn about yourself in those matches and what did you learn about competing with those guys too?

SEBASTIAN KORDA: Yeah, just self-belief, you know, pretty dangerous when it comes to like a good hard court, even on clay I can be dangerous. A lot of self-belief, you know, knowing that I can close out these big matches against these big players, and really feeling that I'm one of the top players when it comes to Grand Slam levels.

Q. Roland Garros 2020 was such a breakout for you. Just wonder what your main memories are when I mention that. And also where did the signed Rafa shirt end up?

SEBASTIAN KORDA: The signed Rafa shirt is hanging in my room (smiling).

It was a really cool kind of period for me, and especially during the COVID year, then coming out, playing, luckily got a wildcard from the USTA, getting comfortable with everyone, two, three weeks in the bubble. Then just coming here, playing comfortable, playing one match at a time, got lucky enough to kind of make the fourth round, play against Rafa.

I think that's where it all kind of started for me, and once again starting to feel comfortable around everyone.

Q. Don't know if your cat is with you, but if not, then there is nobody by that name around here this year,

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unusually. With the association between Rafa and this tournament, is it a little weird not having him around? Does it seem different and strange to be at Roland Garros and no Nadal present?

SEBASTIAN KORDA: Yeah, I mean, ever since I started watching tennis he was always the guy. I think he didn't lose here too many times and he was always winning here, basically. I think that's one of the most impressive things in tennis history, maybe sports history, is how many times he's won here and how much he's dominated here.

It definitely opens up the draw, that's for sure. But there is still so many unbelievable players playing. Yeah, he's definitely missed, but I think next year he'll be back here and back to his old ways.

Q. Jez Green is so experienced. Apart from that kind of muscle mass, what are you looking to add with him?

SEBASTIAN KORDA: I think it was obviously a tough period for me, but, you know, a blessing in disguise. I had a lot of months, three, four months to really build the body and set a base that will basically be with me for the rest of my career.

I think that was one of the things I needed most was to kind of get the body right. The tennis I always had. It was just kind of getting the body right and getting ready for these long best-of-five matches to make deep runs.

Q. I was out watching you on 6, and I saw you here last year, as well. You're very comfortable moving forward, you're eager. How important is that do you think to propel yourself in the top 10, and how challenging is it with guys who can pass so well and who are so deep in the court?

SEBASTIAN KORDA: Yeah, it's definitely a challenge now with how good everyone is moving, basically even the really taller guys like Medvedev, Zverev. Everyone is moving so well.

But I think I'm one of the few guys who kind of really knows what they're doing. Kind of coming into the net, I have a great team around me, experienced players who would always have the same kind of game style that I had would go to the net. So just kind of learning the positioning, which ways I can position myself the best way, just to give myself the best chances when I go to the net.

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