

# Roland Garros

Sunday, 28 May 2023

Paris, France

## Lucas Pouille

### Press Conference

L. POUILLE/J. Rodionov

6-2, 6-4, 6-3

THE MODERATOR: Questions in English.

**Q. Lucas, a unique situation there I guess three days apart. How were the emotions coming through the qualifier to then face the same guy again?**

LUCAS POUILLE: Well, it was special. It was the first time for me that I was playing against the same opponent in three days in the same tournament.

I was quite stressed when I saw the draw, but then I realized also that it was a good draw. Good first round in Roland Garros when you see like Alcaraz playing a qualifier or Medvedev or some other player.

I say, okay, you beat him in the qualifiers, so he is afraid of you, and just take this advantage for you and just give 100 percent, and you'll see.

**Q. You've been quite open about what you've been through. Can you describe what it feels like for you, what it means to you when the crowd goes crazy like it does for you today.**

LUCAS POUILLE: Well, I have a feeling that every day it's more and more. So it's really special. That's why also I think I took another 30 minutes on court to sign all the autographs, take all the pictures, because we finished pretty late, and the court was still packed, and they were cheering me up from the first point to the last one.

The energy was just incredible. It was so many good emotions.

THE MODERATOR: Questions in French.

**Q. Just to build up on the last question, do you have the feeling that your popularity has never been that high, as high as today because we've seen that people went crazy for you on Court 14? Do you think it's related to the difficulties you've been through?**

LUCAS POUILLE: Well, I don't really know. I think that a



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lot of people are supporting me since the first round of the qualifiers, and people are really supporting me and want me to win. They've never pushed me so hard, as hard as they've done.

The fact that we played on that court, because people are really close to you, and they can really feel the emotions with you, not like on bigger courts. So I do think it created something incredible, whether it be in real life or on the internet.

So I've got a lot of things just for me to get qualified for the first round of this Grand Slam, but it really means a lot to me.

As I said on the first day or the second day, I've hardly ever received so much support, so many messages three days after I got qualified. Every time I came across somebody on the street or here inside the premises, everyone was supporting me and cheering me up.

**Q. Do you want to stay on Court 14?**

LUCAS POUILLE: Yeah, of course, I do. Nobody would like to change.

**Q. During your match, Lucas, we've had the feeling that you were playing like someone who had never been through what you've been through. The fact that you hadn't won a singles match since 2019 in a Grand Slam, do you have the feeling that you had things under control?**

LUCAS POUILLE: Well, I think that in terms of game, I think it was probably the best match I've produced so far here. But of course, you know, you get tense every now and then. But when you look at the score, it didn't feel like it. But everything I've managed to produce today was probably the most accomplished match.

I didn't get broken, as in the other matches, the previous matches. I managed to maintain the intensity. He started to hit harder, and I think I had things under control all throughout the match, and I think that it really felt well.

**Q. The National Anthems were sung. Many, many people sang. 23,000 people in Lille a few years ago. There were way less people tonight, but did it feel the same?**

LUCAS POUILLE: During the Davis Cup, you play for



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your country, so it's really different. Of course, everyone sings the National Anthem the last few years. It's really the song you want to hear at the end of a match.

Tonight that was something I really wanted to share with them when people started to sing it at the end of the match, so I wanted to stay on court as much as possible in order to live these emotions with them and really make the most of every single minute with them on court.

**Q. So you're going to have two days to recover now, so that's probably going to be a good thing. You'll be able to calm down a little bit, get some rest. I think that physically it's something that you hadn't experienced in a long time.**

LUCAS POUILLE: Well, I can't remember when I played four matches in a row. I think it was in Cassis four years ago.

Of course, you know, there are a lot of emotions. There's the physical fatigue and also the mental fatigue, so tomorrow is going to feel good. I'm going to be able to watch some matches. I'm going to be able to stay with my family and enjoy being with them.

Then when I know my next opponent, then I have to focus again and get prepared and try to go to reach the third round. I didn't especially want to play on a Sunday also because I felt a little bit sore after the qualies, but now I've got two full days to recover.

**Q. A lot of emotions around you when you see your team and your family. Thierry Ascione hid himself a little bit because he didn't want you to see him. How do you react when you see that?**

LUCAS POUILLE: I don't look at anyone. I don't look at anybody because every time I see someone being moved, that's something that really affects me because I'm a sensitive person.

So when there was Enzo, and Eric and my wife in my box, and also Pierre, my physical coach, but after the match is over, then I try to enjoy every moment and try to look at everybody in the eyes. You know, these people have been with me on a day-to-day basis for more than two years now and during these last six to seven months.

I spoke to him on the phone very often when things got complicated, and he was really happy to come and watch me. He told me, All right, well, please go through that round because I really want to see you play. So I was happy to have all my family with me and my entourage with me and also the crowd because they were incredible.

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