

Roland Garros

Monday, 29 May 2023

Paris, France

Benoit Paire

Press Conference

C. NORRIE/B. Paire

7-5, 4-6, 3-6, 6-1, 6-4

Q. I just wanted to ask you about what happened in the second set when Nico called a hindrance on Cam? I just wanted to ask if you heard Cam say anything or grunt or...

BENOIT PAIRE: No, it's not because someone talk. It's because Cameron said, Ah. It's not allowed, so that's why he lost the point. That's the rule.

Q. And you heard it?

BENOIT PAIRE: Of course. I get the ball, and it was like he made a winner, but it wasn't a winner, so he gives the points. Nothing. Even with Cameron, there is no problem.

THE MODERATOR: First question in French.

Q. So tell us about your frustration.

BENOIT PAIRE: No, I'm not frustrated. I'm very happy. I'm coming back little by little in Roland Garros. I'm 149 ranking, and I'm playing against Norrie, who is 13.

I lost the match in five sets, so I'm not frustrated. It was a great match on my behalf and on Cameron's behalf.

At the beginning of the year I was 250; now I'm 149. I played the challengers, and I'm coming back little by little.

I can feel that I have the right level. The head must now follow. This has been the case since the beginning of the year.

I'm happy. I'm happy with all the efforts that I've been making for some time. So today it was a great match. What can I say? I don't know.

It was amazing. I enjoyed myself. Suzanne-Lenglen was packed full. It was a great match for me in Roland Garros. I heard the announcements made by the speakers that it was my 15th match here. I enjoyed myself.



ROLAND-GARROS

Of course, it's a shame that I didn't win. I would have liked to go further, but it's a good Roland Garros, and it's positive for what comes next.

My objective has not changed. It's to be right up there in Australia in January. Of course, if I can play some great matches in the Grand Slam and in Roland, I would have loved to, because with the audience, the atmosphere is amazing.

So it's a shame, but I played a good match. I had an opportunity at the beginning of the fourth where I had a break, and I didn't make it, so I lost my concentration, but generally I remain concentrated right throughout the match. I didn't get annoyed, and I have no regrets today.

Q. A few players complained about the quality of the balls. Did you feel the same thing?

BENOIT PAIRE: That's ridiculous. You play with balls that get bigger after two seconds. The new balls don't even last a game. The balls are rubbish.

That's not the reason why I didn't win. You can't play tennis, though, with that type of balls. You can't attack. You can't move ahead. It's impossible to play an ace. It's another style of tennis, which is different. It requires physical qualities. It's a question of who can keep the ball in the court for the longest.

My game is based on service and aggressive hits back, but the ball is just not moving. It's terrible. My game is based on my serves. You have to hit every ball really hard because it's not moving. It's terrible. It's Roland Garros, one of the greatest tournaments in the world, and we're playing with these silly balls.

But, of course, that doesn't take anything away from the fact that I lost, and that's not why I lost today. If I lost, it's because Cameron was better than I was. But we played a great match. But, it is a shame to play with those balls.

Q. At 4-2 in the fifth set what happened?

BENOIT PAIRE: Well, this year 6-2 in the fifth set against Popyrin, 5-3 in the third set against Arnaldi, a lot of match balls. So today it's 4-2 in five. If I could have changed something today, I would have, but it's due to the stress, the fact that I wanted to do things well. That I was in Roland, I wanted to be in the second tour. That would be great in a Grand Slam. I would have been

happy.

There was something to do there. Maybe I think about it too much, but I can't help but think about it. Sometimes you have to be a little bit stupid when you are playing tennis, but for me it's difficult in those cases.

I ask questions. I change the way I serve. There are a lot of things that I do regret. It's a shame, but that's the way it is.

I'll get past it. It's a transition this year. I'm trying to give each match my best and to come back for a full season next year beginning in the top 100 and to play the tournaments I like. I hope that I'll get through next year.

For the time being it's a shame because there are lots of matches where I feel that I can get good results, but I kind of get stuck at the end.

As I said, it's 4-2 in the fifth set, Arnaldi in Madrid. There's also the match against Popyrin. Matches where things don't play my way.

That's life. You have to try and work a little bit and try to find some solutions, but for the time being I don't have them.

Q. You would have played against Luca if you would have won. What do you think about Luca's trajectory because he has come back from afar, and do you have any tips to give him before his next tour?

BENOIT PAIRE: Yeah, everybody has their own careers. I'm happy for Luca, but it's a very individual sport. Today I'm disappointed. Even if Luca wins, that's not going to make me any happier. What will make me happy is if I go onto the court and win the match.

I'm happy for him. What he is doing is great. For now I'm just disappointed with my performance. That's it.

But at the moment since center I've been playing every week, and I need a break. I need to take some time for myself. I've made a lot of sacrifices, a lot of efforts that are costing me a lot mentally. So maybe I need to have a two-week break so I can set off afresh on clay court.

For the time being Luca does have a good chance, but he is not me.

Q. The ATP has really upped the fines. Is it something you take into account when you go onto the court?

BENOIT PAIRE: It's ridiculous that Hugo Gaston has been fined 144,000. It was reduced 72,000, but challengers will just stop their career in that case.

Maybe he took 2,000 in the tournament, and in Madrid he took a bit more money. But he won \$16,000, and he has to pay \$142,000. I don't understand the system.

I think that you need to do things according to what you earn. You can't ask for more money than what the player is going to earn. Otherwise, why play tennis?

Everything that he has won in prize money since the beginning of the year is below his fine. So, yes, what he did is not good, but sometimes in matches you have bad reactions. I think that it's silly, and it's a shame to put such big fines.

So I'm lucky because this year I haven't had a lot of warnings. Normally I have more, and it would have cost me a lot. I have to be careful. I'm a challenger now, so I'm careful.

So it's a shame. I think that we need to find a system because even for challengers, the fines are really high. He took 20,000 at the beginning of the year as a challenger, and now he has 140,000 fine. It makes me laugh, but it's sad. It's a lot of money. That's an apartment, and that's what's crazy.

To say that for a ball that fell out of a pocket, okay, he dropped it on purpose and to have hit the umpire's chair, well, he shouldn't do it, but it shouldn't be fined that much.

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