

# Roland Garros

Monday, 29 May 2023

Paris, France

## Denis Shapovalov

### Press Conference

D. SHAPOVALOV/B. Nakashima

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

THE MODERATOR: Congrats, Denis. Very tough battle out there today. What made the difference in the fifth set?

DENIS SHAPOVALOV: Yeah, I mean, felt like it was a match of, you know, few chances for both of us. I was just able to convert in the fifth set. I mean, I also had chances I think to break in the third and fourth, but just wasn't able to convert. Then he played some great tennis.

Yeah, I was happy I was able to kind of bounce back and win that fifth.

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

**Q. When you're scratching for wins, as you have been for the last little while, and go from two sets up to going into a fifth set, where do you find the confidence or whatever is needed? Where do you find that from and how do you go about trying to win the fifth?**

DENIS SHAPOVALOV: I mean, I don't know. I think every tournament, it's not like -- I don't really go into it thinking, Oh, I have won a lot, or I haven't won a lot. Every tournament for me is different, and it's new.

I mean, in general, I haven't had like the best success in Roland Garros. So for me, this week is, I mean, more than anything, it's to see how my knee is, to test it out, and to try to play pain-free. Everything else is a bonus.

So for me it was just fun to be out there. I was very happy that I was able to get the first set and then the second set and then obviously the fifth set, you know.

Yeah, everything is a bonus for me. The most important thing right now is to play pain-free. Yeah, like I said, it's not a tournament where I have done so well in the past, you know. So, yeah, I think, you know, for me, there is not really a goal of performance right now.

**Q. How have you advanced on clay, even though**



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**you didn't play for the last little while? Is there anything you've done to sort of advance and play a little bit better on this surface?**

DENIS SHAPOVALOV: I mean, I haven't been able to play because my knee has been hurting, so no, just rehab, I guess. Maybe less time on the court is better for me. I don't know (smiling).

**Q. How is the knee? Are you pain-free?**

DENIS SHAPOVALOV: We'll see. I mean, the problem is it's normally the day after that's the problem. I think this is the best possible test for it. Yeah, we'll see going forward.

It's been feeling good in the practices, much better. I have not been getting sore. Yeah, Madrid was brutal. I was getting more and more sore during doubles, which is not ideal.

You know, you're moving much more in singles. So that was the decision behind that. I obviously have been doing a lot of work to just try and make it as good as possible. Hopefully, you know, tomorrow I wake up pain-free and, yeah, we'll go from there.

**Q. You often talk about having to stick to your game. I just wonder if you have to convince people around you that, yes, you need to stick to it or even convince yourself sometimes when it's not doing that well that at the end it's the only game that is going to pay off for you?**

DENIS SHAPOVALOV: For sure, I think for me it's a little bit tricky because I feel like I can play different styles and I can play differently.

That's a little bit -- you know, when you have players that are just, I don't want to say one-dimensional, but they have their strengths, it's like, yeah, I have a big serve, you know, forehand, it's easy. But for me I feel like sometimes I'm returning good, sometimes I'm serving good, sometimes the backhand is better.

So it's a little bit tricky. And, yeah, I need to always kind of find my way back into my identity and to the way that has been the best for me and playing well.

So it's not something I have mastered. Something I'm trying to get better at. For sure it's a little bit tricky.



Yeah, I mean, hopefully I can kind of figure myself out and really understand my game, also understand where in the end where I win matches and try to kind of make that, you know, solidify that so that it's easier for me (smiling).

**Q. You have a new coach with you. Has he affected your game in any way?**

DENIS SHAPOVALOV: I mean, it's been two weeks, so, I mean, I would like to say so. It's been tough. It's been more about, again, I barely have been on the court. Just started last week to hit.

It's been more about trying to kind of find my game and get as much practice as possible.

Yeah, I mean, I haven't trained so much. So, you know, today was by far the most I've been on court in the last three weeks maybe.

Yeah, I mean, I think he's helped a little bit mentally for sure. I think, you know, he's very smart, a smart person. He's got a lot of coaching experience. And like we spoke about, he's helping me figure myself out a little bit.

Those things have been great. For sure, I mean, hopefully we can have a great, you know, team membership going forward.

**Q. What do you know about Arnaldi?**

DENIS SHAPOVALOV: Nothing. Absolutely nothing. I'll do some scouting tonight, tomorrow. Yeah, I'll get my information.

**Q. With regard to the knee, how long have you had the issue? Have you thought about, hey, better to stop, think about grass a bit, or is it just about let's test it out with the future in mind?**

DENIS SHAPOVALOV: Yeah, I mean, I've thought about it a lot. Started in Vienna last year during the finals against Daniil. Started to get really sore in the knee and pain.

Paris was like a write-off for me. I played a couple matches there, but it was really painful. Yeah, wasn't able to recover. It was brutal.

Then I was hoping, you know, just it was a lot of matches so I figured maybe it's gonna go away. Maybe hopefully I get a little bit stronger in the offseason and it just kind of disappears.

Unfortunately wasn't the case. Australia was okay, but then after that I was struggling a lot with it. I could play a good match, maybe one, two matches. But like I said, it's

the after, you know, would be brutal and the further I'd go, it would just be unplayable.

I mean, I tried to rehab it after Miami, and it was okay for three weeks maybe. Barcelona was good. Again in Madrid. I mean, at the end of the match it was getting, the last two points -- I mean, it didn't do anything to the match but the last two points was very tough on the knee.

The doubles we had to come back the next day and play, it was very sore. It's very up and down. Then the following day was okay. Then again during the doubles it was getting worse.

I just made the decision, like, I need to take care of it, because it's tough to -- also, I think I can play one good match but then I don't know how it is the next day.

Yeah, it's been a little bit of a struggle, a little bit different for me, you know, haven't dealt with too many injuries. Hopefully it's something that we have figured out and we're on top of now.

**Q. If I could ask just a general question, I'd appreciate it. In tennis there are so many customs, rules, traditions. If you were in charge of things and could change one thing, what aspect of tennis would you change?**

DENIS SHAPOVALOV: I think the scheduling. I think sometimes the scheduling is brutal. You have some matches where you finish really late, and then you have to play the next day or, you know, even two days from then, but then you're playing early.

Then it's just super tough to kind of get used to the different conditions and everything. So for me, I don't know how, it's tough to fit everything in in two weeks. But I think with the Masters having a day off now, there's some benefits with that. So you do have time to recover.

Before it was brutal. I mean, I remember finishing matches at midnight and then having to play early the next day. It's like you're pretty much already 50% out of it.

Yeah, I mean, to me the scheduling. I think tennis has to be the most brutal sport when it comes to that. You know, like today I have to play four hours or whatever it was, and then two days after come back again and play.

Just figuring out how to maximize the rest for players or keep it consistent. You know, if you start late, maybe play late the whole tournament. Just to try to keep it a bit more consistent.

Like I said, I don't have the answer. You know, it's super tough to squeeze everything in in such a short time.

Yeah.

**Q. You know what it takes to get to the top and how hard it is and all the sacrifices you have to make. I just wondered, along the way when you were a junior, are there any juniors that were outstanding that you trained with, you grew up, who didn't make it?**

DENIS SHAPOVALOV: Oh, trying to think. Actually, I think, to be honest, we have like an unbelievable group, like most of the guys that we played juniors with all made it, which is more rare, I'd say. Because we have obviously me, Felix, Tsitsipas, de Minaur, Kecmanovic. We have a handful of guys, they're all good. Yibing Wu the same, now he's made it as well.

To be honest, no, I feel like the ones that did have something, we've all been able to make it out, you know. But of course, you know, we have Canadian Filip Peliwo, who's an outstanding junior and was a great player and never made it out, yeah, past a certain level. Which is, yeah, to us it's quite shocking. He was a very good player.

Yeah, I guess sometimes, you know, it's also a little bit about luck. I mean, also you need to understand it's kind of your own road. Like, Yibing Wu, for example, struggled a little bit with injuries. Now he's playing much better and pain-free. Then for example, for me, I shot up very quick, you know, and then now there's other guys, you know, that are coming up. It changes a lot.

To be honest, it's tough for me to think of one, because I feel like a lot of the players that we grew up with, they're all really good players now.

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