

Roland Garros

Monday, 29 May 2023

Paris, France

Stan Wawrinka

Press Conference

S. WAWRINKA/A. Ramos-Vinolàs

7-6, 6-4, 6-7, 1-6, 6-4

THE MODERATOR: Congratulations, Stan. This was the eighth time you faced Albert. You won all eight matches against him. But was this maybe the toughest one?

STAN WAWRINKA: Yeah, it was probably the toughest one I played against him, that's for sure. It was a tough battle today. Long one, for sure.

Yeah, I had some opportunity in the third set to maybe find a way to finish. I couldn't. I think he's always been a tough player to play, especially when he's in his good rhythm. For me, it was important to stay focused on what I wanted to do.

THE MODERATOR: Questions in English.

Q. My first question is about an article I'm writing for the juniors. This is the 20th anniversary of your title here at Roland Garros, more than half your life has passed. I just asked Novak about it, as well. He was in the draw. I wonder if you could maybe look back and reflect a little bit on what that tournament meant to you. Was it an important experience for you? Some of the other incredible players that were also in that draw; Andy Murray, Tsonga, Monfils, many.

STAN WAWRINKA: Yeah, it was a long time ago, that's for sure, but it was amazing experience for me. Was my first and only Grand Slam as a junior, and I won it here.

But for me the whole experience was amazing also to see all the main draw men's matches. I was watching a lot of players playing and was always special to be here as a junior.

Q. Stan, last year in the first round, Ramos-Vinolàs beat Thanasi Kokkinakis in four sets, you've just beaten him, and now you're going to play Thanasi. What are your thoughts going into the match against Thanasi?

STAN WAWRINKA: Yeah, it's going to be an interesting match, for sure. I think it's the first time we are going to



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play each other. I know him, I saw him play many, many times. When he's healthy, like he's been this year, he's always a dangerous player.

He's been a tough player to -- he's been playing well I think this year again. Yeah, it's going to be an interesting match, for sure. I think in general I'm feeling quite good with my game. Hopefully I will be fit and ready for that match.

Q. You have spoken often about what keeps you motivated. You live for these special moments, and I just wonder if you can reflect a little bit on how sweet it was out there on Court 15 [sic]. How special of a moment was that for you?

STAN WAWRINKA: Yeah, it is one of the main reasons why I keep playing. It's to play those big tournaments like here, to have such amazing atmosphere. On Court 14 over there is always going to be special for me to play here at the French Open. I have so many support and give me a lot of emotion to win those matches.

Q. Someone said that watching you today on the court you were orchestrating the crowd like a conductor. I wanted to know, do you have any other hidden talents and special skills that we should know about? How much did that support from the crowd keep you motivated and playing well? Finally, you are one of only two players in the men's draw to have won here at Roland Garros, so what does it take to win here?

STAN WAWRINKA: That was many questions in one (smiling).

No, of course it's one of the big reasons why I keep playing is to relive those emotions. I think was special today again to be here, a lot of support, a lot of fans here. It's help me a lot today to stay in the match and to keep fighting for it.

I always try to make it special, try to have a connection with the people, with the fans, because as I say, it's one of the main reasons why I keep playing and I want to enjoy as much as possible. So if I can stay five more minutes on court, I will do it (smiling).

That was, yeah, no, I won here many years ago, but as I say, it just was a long time ago. I was much younger and playing different tennis, but always going to be special to



be back here and always have that memory about 2015.

THE MODERATOR: Questions in French.

Q. A special question: How do you, who have been close to perfection, and you beat twice Djokovic in finals, once Nadal, you won the Olympic title with Roger, Davis Cup, many other tournaments, how can you manage the fact that you cannot succeed to be as strong instinctively on every point and to sometimes have a decrease in rhythm like today against Ramos-Vinolas? How can you survive with this?

STAN WAWRINKA: Well, first of all, this beautiful career I have had, I don't focus on the past. I'm always focusing on the present, so I'm not always thinking about what I have accomplished, about what I have done in each tournament.

For me, thinking about all this is when I will stop playing. As long as I keep playing, it's always been important to be in the present, in the moment with the objectives for the future.

So today, as I said, I know that I'm not at the level of 2015, and I certainly will never be. It's not a problem for me. I try to enjoy. I'm 38 years old. I have accomplished much more than I could have imagined, but I know that I have a lot of things to do in tennis. I'm still capable of winning great matches and having great results.

But for that, I need to accept where I am every day. I fight to progress. I'm playing a very high level in tennis. Although I won in five sets with a decrease in rhythm physically and mentally in the fourth set, it's still a beautiful match.

He's a difficult player to beat, especially when you're hesitating, when you slow down your pace and make different choices, you give him the ball he loves.

So today I'm very happy to be here, to have won my first match. But again, I'm not thinking about what I have accomplished. I know where I am right now, and I'm satisfied with that.

Q. Owing to these circumstances of winning this match today, it was long ups-and-downs and an incredible crowd. You're more at home in France than in Switzerland, actually. What are your emotions? Could you describe these emotions after this first round?

STAN WAWRINKA: On the match point, a great relief and very happy. Relief after such a long battle.

As I said, I try to enjoy the crowd. I tried to enjoy Roland

Garros and the type of emotions I can have when playing tennis. So I try to thank the crowd to the best that I can.

But then I'm thinking about the next match now, so I will recover, rest, take time. So I'm a bit older. It takes a bit more time to come to the press room.

Well, the first round is over. I'm very happy. It's been a very hard match. A great battle. It's fantastic. But now I'm thinking about the next step.

Q. Since Basel, you have been working with Magnus once again. Can you tell us about this cooperation and what it gives you.

STAN WAWRINKA: We are very happy, both of us. We are highly motivated. We really want to finish our last chapter together, and it's the end of my career.

We have experienced beautiful emotions, both of us. He won his Grand Slams with me as a player, so it's very positive. We know each other well enough to know what we want to achieve, what we can still achieve, and I hope that good results will come.

Q. You often said that fatigue, physical fatigue helped liberating the spirit and the mind and the arm and better play. So with your great experience and age, are you tired earlier? Here you played more than 4 hours and 30 today. Can you still think that you can win a 5-hour match?

STAN WAWRINKA: I hadn't played such a long match for a while, so I didn't have that answer since my surgical operation. Today I demonstrated myself that despite ups and downs in the fifth set, I was feeling well and had everything to win the match.

Then I think that today I'm at another period of my career that makes so that obviously I live things, I see things, and on the court things are different than five or six years ago. I was saying when I'm tired, I'm more relaxed and all the rest.

But today I have the impression that in me I have not this margin, but I have the impression of holding my shots. Even mentally and hesitating a lot with what I do and being a bit too negative with what is happening.

I'm trying to work on that, to be more positive, to play simple tennis and to be able to have wins after wins.

Q. Stan, can you talk about this Court 14 where the communion between players and the crowd is more intense. Why is this court so special? Why do we have these images of communion?

STAN WAWRINKA: It's a new court. It's quite compact, quite small. The crowd is very close. Anyone can have



access to that court.

So when there are interesting matches, big matches, there is a lot of people and a lot of atmosphere, great atmosphere, because it's not a big court where you have to purchase a special ticket.

Then it's Roland Garros that makes so that I saw Lucas playing his matches there. It's like a chance that I have played huge matches with a big crowd.

Q. This match is over. This court is half sunk. Crowd is very close. Can you compare it to other courts on the circuit? Can you feel the breath sometimes of alcohol of the spectators?

STAN WAWRINKA: Yes, indeed, these spectators are very close, and I really like that, and we overhear everything. Not a lot of alcohol. A lot of youth and children. It's quite nice.

But I don't know. I think the fact of having the audience as close and of being half sunken and open to anyone when there are big matches, everyone comes to this court to watch these matches.

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