

Roland Garros

Tuesday, 30 May 2023

Paris, France

Holger Rune

Press Conference

H. RUNE/C. Eubanks

6-4, 3-6, 7-6, 6-2

THE MODERATOR: Well done. Were you surprised by Chris's level today? It was maybe tougher than you expected.

HOLGER RUNE: Yeah, Chris, he played well. He was serving good, hitting his spots, playing freely. Obviously had nothing to lose. I guess that makes him extra free today. But yeah, I never played him before, so yeah, I had to adjust a little bit.

But I'm happy with the level I find in the fourth set. I start to play some of my better tennis. Yeah, but just happy to be through.

THE MODERATOR: Questions in English.

Q. Holger, you are a big character in the sport right now. Some people love you; some people don't love you. How do you manage to use the energy within the crowd whether they are for you or against you to your advantage every time? And are you ever personally affected by other people's thoughts towards you?

HOLGER RUNE: I mean, I think it's normal in life that some people love you and some people don't. I think so, no?

But yeah, everybody has different preference of characters and players, and I respect that. That's fine. But yeah, it's all right. I mean, you know, if they are for me, it's great.

You know, I just try to put on a fight every time I step out there on the court. Do my best to win the match. Stay focused. I feel like to do everything I can to win the match is more important on what's happening outside the court.

Q. Holger, you said Chris had nothing to lose. Do you feel that you have something to lose because you have so high expectations coming here to Paris?

HOLGER RUNE: Honestly, not so much. I feel like I



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have done a really good clay court season so far, and I feel like I'm starting to play some of my better tennis in general.

Today didn't find my best level, but again, Chris, he made it super difficult for me. I had to adjust, as I said, and had to find a solution to beat him. That's the most important.

Sometimes it's not how you want to play, but it's how it's necessary to play in order to win. That was the case today. And, you know, credit to Chris. He made it super difficult. He was hitting his spots well and serve, mixing up the game a lot. Yeah, played a great match.

Q. After the absence of Rafael Nadal, do you look at this tournament like a unique chance to win Roland Garros? How do you feel about it?

HOLGER RUNE: I think for sure it's more open as Rafa is not here, but again, we still have Novak, we have Alcaraz. I think still Novak must be the favorite as he has 22 Grand Slam, and so much experience in these tournaments.

So for sure it's open, because Rafa, it's more open because Rafa has won here 14 times, I think. So he would be the main favorite if he was here.

But yeah, of course the draw is more open than it would be if Rafa was here. Now I saw Daniil, he lost today. Yeah, anything can happen.

Q. There is some criticism about the ball during the tournament, that they are slow, getting bigger early after a few games. What's your thought about that?

HOLGER RUNE: Yeah, it's getting very, very slow, the ball. It's getting very fluffy and big. It's making the game very slow.

It's not my favorite ball, to be honest, but, you know, it is what it is. I really like the conditions here in general. The courts are great. The atmosphere, the fans, unbelievable. So there are so many good things and great things about this tournament, so I'm not gonna complain about the ball.

But for sure the ball is slower and it feels different compared to last year.

Q. I'd like to ask you about your Twitter account, you

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seem pretty active on it and you respond a lot to fans directly. What do you make of it and that ability to interact with fans like that?

HOLGER RUNE: Yeah, I think when I have the time to do it, for sure, I will do it. I have many great fans that support me every day. You know, I want to show I really appreciate it, so I feel like it's fair to show it and answer them as much as I can, because it means a lot.

Q. At the end of the third set, we were a little scared for you, because you seemed to have something on the left knee. What happened exactly? How do you feel?

HOLGER RUNE: Yeah, I feel good now. I just hit a return and I slipped a little bit and I slammed my left knee in the ground.

It was a bit painful when it happened, but now it's okay. It was nothing dangerous. Then I would have called the trainer. It was not painful. It was just a hit. So all good.

Q. Can you tell us about your physical work with Lapo Becherini, please.

HOLGER RUNE: Yeah, it's great. Me and Lapo have been working together for three, four years now at the academy. He's a great fitness coach. He's keeping me in shape, improving me every day.

He's really experienced and he's very dedicated in his work, which I really admire. I like to work with dedicated people. He's a great fitness coach, and I'm happy that he's here with me.

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