

Roland Garros

Thursday, 1 June 2023

Paris, France

Casper Ruud

Press Conference

C. RUUD/G. Zeppieri

6-3, 6-2, 4-6, 7-5

THE MODERATOR: How happy were you with your performance today?

CASPER RUUD: Overall pretty happy. Of course, very happy to be through.

Third and fourth set was a bit tougher. I started really well the first two sets, was in control. Then Giulio, he started to play better, more aggressive, more freely probably.

When you are down 2-0, it's not easier, but it's sort of easier to go for a little bit more. You have almost nothing to lose because you are close to sort of losing anyways. I think he started playing really aggressive with both the serve and the forehand.

So it was tough to try to finish the match, and it was two tough sets, but happy to win one of them in the last one and be through for the third round.

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. Casper, you got off to a flying start. You looked very relaxed and comfortable. At one point I thought it almost looked like a day out on the beach for you. So I just wanted to ask, during a Grand Slam, how do you find the balance between relaxing and then staying focused and in the zone? And just following up on the beach theme, if you were stranded on a desert island, which players on the tour would you most and least like to be with and why?

CASPER RUUD: I wouldn't say that it's too much time to relax during a Grand Slam, but the days off we try to use it well, obviously. But at the same time you would like to hit a little bit and train. Also depends how your body feels, if you have some pains or something bothering you, you usually take care of that. The most important thing is to be physically ready for every match.

You know, most players like to maybe hit for about an hour on their day off and then have some treatment, massage, whatever, and get ready for the next day. But



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it's always something to do. You know, the job is not just done whenever you're done on court. There's a lot of other things to do.

But days off are nice, obviously, you try to relax as much as you can, especially in nighttime. To me, I like to disconnect with a movie during the evening. Yeah, I spend some hours in bed watching movies during Grand Slams. I think it's nice and fun just to disconnect from everything.

Whenever I get to the site and on the court, it's all business.

But, yeah, I think on your second question, you know, that's a good one. Obviously last year during the Laver Cup I had one of the most enjoyable weeks of my life being around four great champions, legends in my eyes, with Roger, Rafa, Novak, and Andy. They had a really good, fun sort of connection, all of them, and they were joking all the time.

Roger was in a very good mood even though the last match and after was, of course, very sad. But during, before and after as well, he was always just joking around. It was very fun. So I think one of those guys for sure.

I don't know. It's tough to point out someone who is your least favorite to join, but I don't know. Maybe someone that -- I don't know. All players can speak well English anyway, so that's not an issue. I don't know. I don't have a good answer for you there on the least one.

Q. A question about your dad. You said most of the time in the past the importance that he has, of course, in your career. Can you explain it again with some details. And about his character, from your childhood do you maybe discover some things about his character as a coach that you can't imagine as a dad?

CASPER RUUD: Well, honestly, he is obviously my dad, but he's a pretty young dad, young father. He was only 26 when I was born. So I would consider that pretty young. Still now he's only 51 years old.

We have a very fun, good relationship. My friends in my age, they also get along with him really well because he's young in his mindset. He's also a very good friend with all of my friends because I think all of my friends think it's



cool that he's pretty young.

So we get along very well. I think he just realized, obviously as he has been a professional himself, he knew what it took to sort of break into the top 100 and become a good player. Ever since I told him when I was around 11, 12 years old that I wanted to go all in for tennis, he has sort of been my role model, my coach, my father, and at the same time someone who sort of watches over me all the time.

Especially those years when you are a teenager, I think it's some of the most important years in your life and in your career, especially as a tennis player, because that's where you build your physique, that's where you build your technical aspects on the court, and what sort of player you want to become.

If you are taller, obviously you should maybe work on your serve. If you're not as tall, you have to put in a lot of work running around on court. In those years he was very strict with me and said, you know, Hey, if you want to do this, I'm going to be strict with you. The weekends are days not to relax and enjoy. It's to practice even more.

I think it's been really good for me to have someone around me that has really pushed me because as a 15-, 16-year-old, there are a lot of other things in life that are exciting and fun to explore, but I never did it because he was always watching me and kept me in the right mood.

So I think that's where I sort of felt the biggest difference to my fellow Norwegian competitors back home, that whenever they went out for trying to party for the first times or whatever, I stayed home, and I watched a movie with my parents. The day after I was ready to practice for four hours while my friends, they came home at 4 a.m. and they skipped the next day. Those are four hours that went in my favor and against the other ones.

I think that has been very, very important for me. Yeah, I think those things are always -- that's why I think it's great to have your father as your coach in this case because if you just have a coach that is not living with you all the time, it's very tough for him to sort of control what you do in your spare time, which I think can be quite crucial in these years.

Q. Casper, over the last year in particular the attention on you has been full-on, and you've had to accept that, but do you like it? Do you mind it? Has there been one particular incident where you have thought, oh, there's been that moment where that attention has been interesting?

CASPER RUUD: I think getting some recognition and attention is nice in a way. It does sort of change your daily routine and life a little bit because, you know, in

some cases if you go somewhere, public or especially here in a Grand Slam or in tournaments, typically before I would finish practice, and I would just go to the locker room and cool down or whatever, but here I have to sort of set off 10 to 15 minutes with fans that want autographs and pictures and stuff.

There are just some small adjustments that have sort of happened in my life recently that didn't happen before, but that's not like a really tough thing. It's just a little different.

When I'm back home in Norway, it's very easy, honestly. It's mostly on tournaments. It's actually more when I'm away from home because Norwegians are pretty calm and shy, so they don't really bother me too much in Norway.

If there's anything, maybe in the grocery store someone tells me, you know, You're doing great, keep going, but it's not like people are crazy whenever I go out.

Obviously here in tournaments people are here to watch players, and when I'm there or other top players are there, they would like a picture and stuff. It's more things to deal with here, but I think it's fine.

It's a sort of luxury problem to have. It means that you're doing well. So you'd rather have it like this than, I guess, maybe no attention at all. It means you're doing well in my eyes.

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