

Roland Garros

Saturday, 3 June 2023

Paris, France

Ons Jabeur

Press Conference

O. JABEUR/O. Danilovic

4-6, 6-4, 6-2

THE MODERATOR: Ons, congratulations on the win. What did it take for you to kind of reset after dropping that first set?

ONS JABEUR: Oh, yeah, it was a tough match. I mean, obviously Olga plays really well. You know, I tried my best at the beginning, but it was a difficult day, for sure, for me. I'm glad that I did search very deep today and won the match.

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

Q. What made today difficult?

ONS JABEUR: You know, being a woman is tough (smiling). I guess that's something probably men will never understand.

But, yeah, it was very difficult thing to deal with, but hopefully the next few days will be better.

Q. Ons, congratulations. The pop star Kylie Minogue is currently storming up the chart with a French-inspired song.

ONS JABEUR: Who?

Q. Kylie Minogue. She's a pop star, and she's inspiring everyone with her new song called "Padam Padam," which is a French-inspired song meaning beating heart.

ONS JABEUR: Okay.

Q. From her "Tension" album. I would like to know how hard has your heart been beating over the last week? How will you cope with the tension here after Roland Garros?

ONS JABEUR: You know, tension, stress is part of the game, part of playing, you know, tennis. It's a hell of a life we chose for ourself.

But I accept it. I try to manage, you know. It's not easy



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most of the time, but I'm learning every day. Definitely learning from this match today.

You know, some things you can feel. Maybe today was tougher than other times. We will for sure continue to manage, and I will listen to the song and let you know how I like it (smiling).

Q. How would you rate your first week?

ONS JABEUR: Oh, yeah, I forgot that I'm in the second week.

Honestly, it's a good one. I think I finish it with a good transformation. For me today it's about a great transformation, great transformation of energy, of attitude on the court, of so many things.

So hopefully the next step will be even better, and I can approach the second week stronger and ready to play better against lefties.

Q. Congratulations. Tunisian people so proud of you. I wanted to know how you see your path to winning the title. You're gonna play Bernarda Pera next round.

ONS JABEUR: Don't tell me after. I'm not looking at the draw.

Q. After that, quarterfinal probably Iga, semifinal Coco Gauff.

ONS JABEUR: I don't look at the draw. Don't tell me.

Q. Oh, sorry. How do you see the path?

ONS JABEUR: Match by match for sure. And another lefty, so it's gonna be a tricky one. Pera has been playing very well. She's a tough opponent. We played before. I think I lost in China. I'm not sure if I played before or not, but will learn from it.

It's a different match. It's the fourth round of a Grand Slam, so I'm gonna do my best and improve my game for sure for the next match.

Q. Obviously trying to chase that first quarterfinal here in Paris. What is the key for you to kind of get past that barrier? Does the opponent matter? Is it just about you? Is it managing the nerves, the



pressure? What's the key for your next one?

ONS JABEUR: Well, the key is to beat Pera. That's one of the keys. I think I would like to say 70% focusing on myself and 30%, you know, dealing with tactics and what's gonna happen during the match.

But honestly I'm here, so I'm gonna give it 100%. We learn from the other fourth rounds that I lost here. Obviously have much more experience than the other times. Let the dream continue.

You know, it's Roland Garros -- I like to say it in French accent -- is very close to my heart, and a Grand Slam that I always dreamed of winning with the big girls.

Q. You have just told us that being a woman competing on the tour presents its own challenges to you, and I guess you need to understand your own body. When you go into a big Grand Slam which is over two weeks, do you have to carefully plan how you manage your training, your rest, your competitive edge, and how you will feel over the course of those two weeks?

ONS JABEUR: Well, I mean, it depends with the time of the month that you have, but sometimes you have to manage. Unfortunately I had few days where it's very tough. You manage the training, for sure, with that. Honestly, this thing you can never 100% manage, unfortunately, but I'm learning to know my body better. I'm learning to have, you know, the strength to compete for two weeks.

But, yeah, every time there is a difficulty, I try to manage like today, and hopefully, you know, will get through, you know, another week. Will get back my strength. That's how it is, you know. For me at least.

THE MODERATOR: Questions in French.

Q. It's been a tough match, but in the previous round after beating Oceane you were telling us you would like to have a bit more rallies, to enter better into the tournament. Here that was the case, but was it a good thing to have such a complicated match?

ONS JABEUR: Yes, indeed we had more rallies in this match. I played a lefty, and her rhythm was totally different. I found that on Suzanne Lenglen the court was more slippery than other courts. I tried to adapt to that court.

It's a bit difficult, especially to change and play against a lefty. But I was able to adapt. There were a lot of rallies, much more than in the previous round. I think that I'll have even more rallies in the next round.

Q. The match between Sabalenka and Stephens has

been scheduled in the night session tomorrow. I would like to have your opinion regarding the fact that it's the first female match in the tournament. Is it important to have regular night-session matches? Would you like to have a parity? Would you like to play in the night session with the TV exposure?

ONS JABEUR: It was high time to put a night session with a female match. It's a bit strange that we didn't have the two matches, man and woman. I don't know why, because all the other Grand Slams have put two matches in night sessions. I played very late in Australia, I played very late at the US Open. It's not necessarily a good thing, but it's just putting two matches. That's what they did.

Maybe they should start the night session a bit earlier to be able to put two matches. I understand with men playing five sets it can be difficult, but we did it in the other Grand Slams. So I don't know why they only scheduled one match with two men the first eight days.

Q. We noticed that today there were a lot of tickets that were resold by people who are disappointed that it was not going to be male players. Is it something that touches you, affects you, and shows that female sports has difficulties in being unanimously appreciated by the audience?

ONS JABEUR: It is time to change that vision, because I find that people don't watch many female matches, and they just judge that it's gonna be a crappy match. But it's not the case. There are a lot of extraordinary matches.

Women are training, making a lot of efforts, playing extraordinary matches. I met many people who say, Well, the female matches, blah, blah, blah, and I ask them, Did you watch a female match? They said no. How can you judge a female match without watching it?

I hope that is going to change the mentality of giving a chance for these women who fight on a daily basis. Because honestly, we do a lot of efforts. We make a lot of sacrifices that men don't have to do on the tour.

We must schedule everything in our professional life, and it is time to change that, to change that vision. I hope that the stadium will be full tomorrow, because there are two excellent and incredible players who will be playing and it's going to be an extraordinary match. So we have to give a chance to these women for all the female sports.

Q. Congratulations on this beautiful battle that you won. You said that on the court it was a bad day. You didn't have good feelings or physical problems. Can it bother you for the next round?

ONS JABEUR: No, I think for the next matches it's going



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to be okay. I will take the time to recover, to give time to my body, to be ready for the next round.

There are days with less success. It can be difficult, but I'll continue working hard, recovering correctly. I'm in the fourth round, so I'll try to continue to play better and better.

Q. With all the problems you have had over the last months, if you were to compare your current level with respect to the incredible months at Wimbledon and US Open, are you far from that level?

ONS JABEUR: Not so far. There are things that are going well. Others that are going less well. Mentally I'm present. The physical sensations will come back. Tennis sensations also.

These things take a lot of time. I have to accept my current condition now, because I was injured quite a lot of times this year. So this happens.

I'm not going to be impatient. I will give time to my body to adapt. And right now I'm winning matches without being at 100%, so I'm learning.

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