

Roland Garros

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Paris, France

Ons Jabeur

Press Conference

O. JABEUR/B. Pera

6-3, 6-1

THE MODERATOR: Ons, pretty good performance today. Just talk us through what you're most happy with out there.

ONS JABEUR: Yeah, I mean, great match. I was expecting her to play better, but I played great tennis. I mean, thank God I was able to hold my serve at the end. Yeah, hopefully the game will be better for the next matches.

THE MODERATOR: Questions in English.

Q. You reached at least quarterfinals in all the Grand Slams. What does that mean to you?

ONS JABEUR: I mean, yeah, it was the only Grand Slam missing. I'm very happy with the performance, with the way I was, you know, playing, especially coming back after an injury.

I was just taking it one match at a time, trying to make it to the second week. Now I'm gonna push more for the next few matches. Yeah, hopefully better than a quarterfinal final here, looking for a semifinal.

Q. You've said that you think Paris at night is a very romantic city. Is it a romantic notion for us to think that you could actually win Roland Garros here this year, or does true romance only exist in books?

ONS JABEUR: I mean, Paris is always romantic, day or night (smiling). Winning here will definitely be an amazing memory for me. For now, I just want to take it one match at a time.

I will have a very difficult quarterfinal, and from that we will take it and let's see what's gonna happen.

Q. Was there a time when you never would have thought you would have reached the quarterfinals of all four Grand Slams?

ONS JABEUR: To be honest, I never thought about like something was missing or I didn't reach all four of them.



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I guess I never really thought about it. You know, maybe it's a good thing. It came, and hopefully we'll set it to all semifinals and then all finals.

Q. You're obviously a positive person in general. Curious how you have managed obvious frustrations with physical stuff this year and remain kind of on a positive or with your eye on the goal?

ONS JABEUR: You know, I have learned a lot how to accept things, either good or bad. For me, being injured was part of my path, how the season would have started here this year. You know, I worked a lot on my mental health and worked a lot on how to manage all this, because I believe there is a lot of injuries are connected to our, you know, emotional part. I'm trying to manage that.

You know, the season is still long, so hopefully no more injuries and I can continue in a great path (smiling).

Q. I can still remember your expression when you walked off the court in Australia. What's that night like and the next day after a loss like that? I mean, do you review the whole thing? How do you process it over the next like 24 hours after that?

ONS JABEUR: Are you talking about the Australian Open 2020?

Q. Yes.

THE MODERATOR: This year?

Q. Yeah.

ONS JABEUR: Oh, yeah, this year. Yeah, that was a very difficult night. You know, maybe I'm not ready to talk what happened there, but you will see it very soon. It was an emotional one. It was a very difficult one.

But hopefully, I mean, after I took the time away, I took care of my health. You know, just these things happen. Tennis is a very tough sport. But I'm glad that I'm healthy now, I mean, trying to get there hopefully and be ready to win my first Grand Slam.

Q. Could you just talk a little bit more, go into a bit more of a reflection on how the mind and the body are connected in our sport and in general.

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ONS JABEUR: Well, I have done a little bit of research. I believe that our body and our mind is connected. If there is an issue, for example, like when you go and train hard, you know, you have a sore muscle, and for me, the diseases or injuries are the same. Your body is trying to give you a message and you have to listen to it.

So, yeah, for me, for example, if the knee, you know, is hurting, there is a certain, you know, explanation for that. Maybe I'm trying to take control over things or not trying, you know, to be open-minded about some stuff.

So I always try to look at the, you know, the explanation of what my mind is trying to tell me. You know, of course looking at the physical injury as well.

But yeah, I mean, everything is connected. Everything is connected with everything, either your past, your present right now. It's probably a long conversation, but yeah, briefly it's that.

THE MODERATOR: Questions in French.

Q. We saw this morning there were a lot of Tunisian flags in the stands. We know what you stand for, for your country, for tennis, in your country but also in the African country at large. Do you feel that it's more important here than in other Grand Slams? How does it help you? How does it help you in general?

ONS JABEUR: There is a lot of Tunisians living in Paris because it's very close to Tunisia. But honestly, Tunisians are everywhere. I was lucky to see them everywhere. In the U.S. Even in Australia there were a few Tunisians in attendance in the crowd.

I was glad to have the energy, to have the support of Tunisians. But not only them, also the African continent at large. This is why I'm working so hard, and even more than before, to reach that level. Because I would like to give help. I would like to be present and representing that specific world.

Q. This question was asked to Djokovic, and I think Holger Rune also was asked this question, or Casper Ruud.

ONS JABEUR: He was saying that he was sleeping 13 hours.

Q. Yes. And Djokovic said that he was sleeping seven or eight hours but in a row. Is sleep important for you? Is it easy to sleep when you're in a hotel, even if you're in a hotel room? Do you actually take naps? Is that a secret, an important secret for you?

ONS JABEUR: I'm in a wonderful hotel. I sleep very well. My bed is very comfy, and I'm lucky. What I

learned, not only as regards sleep, but for everything, we're all different. So you can have someone sleeping 13 hours who would be as fresh as a daisy, but some others will actually be tired after so many hours of sleep.

I try to sleep between 8 and 10 hours of sleep. If I can manage that, that's wonderful. But depends on the day because some days I need to sleep longer; some days I don't. But Rune is young. He's incredible. So we're all different.

Q. How can you explain your performance on the return of serve of your opponent? Is that because you're used to playing on Chatrier?

ONS JABEUR: I was ready, and I had had actually a tough match with someone who was a lefty, so I was used to it. I actually put some pressure. I took my time. I was not too aggressive, I would say. But I managed to return in a slow way, and that actually disturbed her.

But there was pressure on my serve, as well. So I think that I put some pressure on my return as well to outplay her and to win, even though there was pressure on my own serve as well.

Q. We don't know your opponent yet. There is one set all. But that's someone who has never reached a quarters or even the round of 16. Do you feel that it helps you when you feel that you have actually had a lot of matches under your belt and a lot of victories in a row?

ONS JABEUR: Both players are very good players on clay in a different way. But as I did at the beginning of the tournament, 70% of my focus will be on myself, 30% on the player from a tactical point of view. I hope that they will play two more hours hopefully (smiling). I don't know.

You know, I'm expecting to have a quarterfinals, quarterfinals, quarterfinals. I will try to draw upon my experience to reach the semifinals and maybe to have the title.

Q. You were talking about the fact that you were an ambassador of the Tunisian and African tennis at large. Could it be a difficult burden for you to have this country on your shoulders? Did you have to do things to manage this? Because you talked about the mental aspect.

ONS JABEUR: I learned how to convert negative vibes into positive vibes, and negative energy and pressure into something positive. It is an honor and a pleasure to embody my country and to push my limits.

I see a lot of people coming here who actually paid a very expensive flight ticket or who are actually waking up

very early in the morning to watch a game, and I try to use that to draw upon this. At first it was not easy for me, but I try to learn how to manage this.

Pressure is a privilege, as Billie Jean King was saying, and I'm trying to use that in a good sense of the word.

Q. After matches, do you tend to look up social media to look for support? Are you trying to get connected with people from your country, or do you try to remain focused on yourself?

ONS JABEUR: Well, I try to look up a few messages, public ones, on Facebook, Instagram. There is a lot of positive messages. Obviously I'm not trying to read negative messages.

But beyond the match, once I've wrapped it up or when someone comes to me and say wonderful things to me, well, that gives me a lot of support. I feel good and supported by everyone, and I hope that everyone will come to support me for the quarterfinals, as well.

Q. As you're having your deep run, do you find the sensations again? Or do you adjust your game tactically as you're getting your body back in shape?

ONS JABEUR: Well, I'm getting much better than I used to, than the first matches. I don't change my game, because I try to be the same, tactically speaking. If I have to play five shots on the forehand, then I try to shoot a backhand, but I try to keep my identity on court, because that's very important for me.

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