

Roland Garros

Monday, 5 June 2023

Paris, France

Casper Ruud

Press Conference

C. RUUD/N. Jarry

7-6, 7-5, 7-5

THE MODERATOR: Well done, Casper. That was a tight match. What do you think worked better today compared to your final in Geneva against Nicolas?

CASPER RUUD: Yeah, obviously the conditions here are a bit slower so I guess that helps me a little bit. He's playing really aggressive. He's probably gained even more confidence after Geneva and here winning matches.

The goal was to sort of stop this wave that he's currently on, and I was able to do so. Very happy to get through in straight sets. There were three very, very close and tough sets. Happy that all of them went in my favor.

Yeah, the margins were a bit on my side today, here and there and in the most important points I was able to dig deep and fight back. In the second and third I was down a break in both sets but very fortunate to pull through those sets.

Yeah, I'm very happy to have sort of stopped his wave of wins.

THE MODERATOR: Questions in English.

Q. This question might be a little off-pieced, but I know that your brother is a champion freestyle skier. I wanted to know, is navigating your way here through the draw here at Roland Garros a bit like a skier where you have to slalom your way through the opposition? Before each match, do you have a set game plan or can you freestyle it a bit?

CASPER RUUD: You know, I think you have been misinformed, because Birk is actually not my brother and we are not in family at all. I know that this was other people got it wrong as well and asked me about it. We are not even in the same family, even though we have the same name. It's a bit weird. We are actually born in the same area in Norway.

Anyway, I would think things went quite well according to plan today. I started well. Sort of stumbled a bit and got



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broken back. But in the most important moments I think I stuck to my game plan, and honestly maybe didn't need a second plan.

But, yeah, it was, like I said, very tough. He plays very aggressive. At some times you have to sort of mix and tricks a bit with my game. In the most important points, the heavy clay court game is what I think gave me the win today.

There were some interesting rallies. Some slice, some dice, and with the wind it can be pretty tricky. At some point I had to find a little freestyle in me.

Q. You spoke the other day about how last year the two slam finals changed your life a little bit in terms of being recognized. You said especially around tournaments. Was wondering if away from tournaments in a place like this or New York or whatever city, you can take a walk and be unrecognized at this point still.

CASPER RUUD: Some evenings, yes; some evenings, no. Yeah, I mean, I'm not any -- I don't consider myself like a world superstar or anything. But some evenings people who are here to watch tennis, they ask for a picture, and some evenings I can go unbothered. So I guess both yes and no.

After the final last year and in New York, I was asked more, obviously to have a picture than others. Nothing crazy. I think that's nice. I think people are pretty respectful this way.

Like I said, I'm not any big-time superstar as, you know, movie star, rock star or anything. I think it's, yeah, comfortable. I can walk around very comfortably.

Q. You had some troubles at the beginning of the season. You had good moments on clay, almost great moments maybe in Rome. But now you're in Roland Garros. It seems that you are very close to your best level. How would you compare your level of tennis now comparing to last year in the French Open where you reached the final against Rafa?

CASPER RUUD: Well, I think last year I was playing every match like freely and quite pressureless, because I came from semis in Rome and finals in Geneva so my mentality was sort of like I have done really well anyway so whatever happens here happens. If I lose early I'm



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still gonna go home and I won the tournament the week before.

But this year I felt a little more pressure obviously because I needed to try to sort of defend my final spot. That's been on my mind. And I haven't done as well in other tournaments, so I know like every match, every match that I can win and points on the rankings that I can sort of try to gain can be important for the rest of the year.

So I felt a little more pressure this year, especially in the earliest matches. So I don't feel like I have played my best maybe tennis yet, but at the same time, I'm playing many opponents who play very aggressively and they play fast and sort of give me no rhythm.

Today was just about trying to stay there and try to serve well when you could yourself. If there was a chance to break, try to get it. I think I was able to break him many times when I really had to, which was great, and a confidence sort of booster.

I think my next match is going to be a little more playable from the baseline and I think the game will be a little bit different from this match. I'm going to try to prepare for that and hopefully bring my A game, because whoever I play is going to be a tough one.

Q. You mean whether it's Cerundolo or Rune?

CASPER RUUD: Yeah, both of them are great clay court players, and I played them quite recently, both of them in Rome. I beat one and I lost to the other.

Whoever it's gonna be, it's gonna be a tough one.

Q. I come from Chile and we are very surprised about the Jarry level. Are you guys in the tour surprised with his level now?

CASPER RUUD: Honestly, not really. I always found Nico very, very nice guy, a hard worker. It was very unfortunate what happened to him couple years ago with being banned and all this stuff. To me, in my eyes, he was never a cheater or didn't seem to me like he did it on purpose. Was a very unfortunate time for him. I always felt sorry for him. It's great to see him back playing some of the best tennis of his maybe career, I don't know, you have to ask him.

But he has always been a dangerous player. Big weapons from all corners of the court, and I'm just very happy for him.

I told him at the net, you know, I'm sorry for you, because your streak had to end today, but he was playing great and, yeah, I'm very happy to get this win.

Q. You were just saying about pressure, and you're feeling it more this year compared to last year. What sort of form does that take? Is it a case like it's constantly in your mind, there's nerves? What happens when you feel that pressure aspect?

CASPER RUUD: Honestly to me it's tough to sort of -- I can be just a little defensive with all my shots really, because I don't want to make mistakes. I don't want to, you know, hand my opponent victory when I know the importance of every point, every match. But sometimes you just have to sort of go for it and be a little bit more aggressive than what I have been this year.

At the French or here in Roland Garros and in best-of-five sets it's a little easier because you know, okay, you might lose the first set but you have more, many more games to be played compared to best-of-three sets, because if you lose the first set and maybe you get broken in the second, you have your knife on your throat, to put it this way. You know that it can be very, very important.

But here you feel like you have more time so you can maybe allow yourself to go for some bigger shots because you can allow yourself to do even more mistakes, in a way. I have always been the player who wins matches on doing few unforced errors, but at some times, you know, the balls that I hit is not sort of hurting my opponents enough. I'm not doing mistakes but I'm not doing winners either. So the idea is to try to find a right balance and sometimes just there to go for a little bit more.

I think that has cost me in some matches today that I haven't been able to sort of hit through the ball enough, but here at Roland Garros, I feel like it's working better.

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