

Roland Garros

Wednesday, 7 June 2023

Paris, France

Juan Carlos Ferrero

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: Juan Carlos, thanks for coming to talk to us about the highly-anticipated match on Friday between Carlos and Novak. We'll open to questions right away.

Q. Yesterday we were impressed about Alcaraz. Were you impressed, too? Do you think of the most incredible things he is doing is more physically or technically? I mean, for me he was so fast on court, which was incredible for a tennis player. What's your opinion about?

JUAN CARLOS FERRERO: Impressed obviously about his level, yes, but obviously as well that I'm with him now almost five years, so let's say I know the level he's able to play. So in that way I'm not impressed at all because I know that he can play like this.

The most impressed things that he shows on maybe the most important moments of the tournament, so it's on the way to the end. This is the most important thing and the most impressed for me that he is showing his best level against the best. So that's the most important thing.

About technically or physically, both. I think the way he is playing, that he is able to make any shots on the court.

If you ask him to go to the net in a match point, he is able to do it. Or if I ask to return and go to the net, he is able to do it and make the dropshot, or working a point like ten balls or maybe going for second one. So that's the most impressed thing about him that he is able to do every kind of shot.

Physically he is 100%. I think he is ready for the tournament, and he wanted to be like this. But, no, I'm not impressed because I know his skills, and it's like this.

Q. Are you surprised with what he achieves at times? I know you are saying you are impressed, but do you also get surprised with what Carlos does on the court and how he reacts off the court and behaves? When you played, you had the nickname of "Mosquito." What would be a good nickname for him?

JUAN CARLOS FERRERO: I don't know. Not the same obviously (laughing). I'm impressed. Yeah, obviously he is 20. He has a lot of things that it's very difficult to



ROLAND-GARROS

achieve. He grew so fast. I could see it even on challenge, on the challengers that he was playing.

I remember most of the times that he told me that he was ready to win something, it was on the futures, he was on challengers. He was then in the futures tournament.

So, yeah, I think he is ready to try to do big things on tennis. I don't know if it's going to be this tournament, but of course, I think he is ready.

He dreams very big about what he can do, so I think it's one of the most important things that he believes in himself and that he believes that he can go to the court and win against everybody.

So then you have to go and make it and make it true, but believing in yourself I think is one of the more important things, and he does it.

Q. It's a bit strange that Carlos and Novak haven't played each other for a year, and they've only played once. How relevant do you think it is that Carlos won that match? Does it give him any advantage, do you think, going into Friday?

JUAN CARLOS FERRERO: I don't think there is advantage. I think both players are maybe the best in the world right now.

Novak has the experience to play these kind of matches more than Carlos, of course, but at the same time Carlos really wants to play that match. He was really looking forward to that match since the beginning.

Of course, he had to play match by match, and we were very patient about it. But once we have it here, I think he is ready.

I think he practiced for these kind of matches. He practice for these kind of moments to be there and try to make history step by step.

He wants to do it, but of course, we really know that Novak is going to give absolutely his best. He is 22 Grand Slam champion. I think he is going to fight until the last ball, and he is going to prepare the match as well as we can do. So we expect really tough and close match.

As I said, Carlos believes a lot in himself, and he



... when all is said, we're done.®

believes that he can beat Novak. Then we'll see. I think they both have an amazing level.

Q. I just wanted to ask you about his non-match day routine. Does he not hit at all, or what is it?

JUAN CARLOS FERRERO: No, we are hitting today, yeah.

Q. Before the quarterfinals he did not hit; right?

JUAN CARLOS FERRERO: Let's say sometimes when we think that we need a day off to recover better or, yeah, like this, we do it. It's not a matter of injuries or other reasons.

We've been doing that for a long time. Maybe this tournament comes more often, but it's a coincidence. It's not a normal thing, but sometimes we think it's best for him to stay fresh and recover.

Q. If we could go back maybe five years or so to when Carlos was a junior, and you are watching great players like Djokovic, Nadal, Federer. Specifically Djokovic, were there some elements of his game that you looked at with Carlos maybe to model to --

JUAN CARLOS FERRERO: No, not in that moment. I think I saw Carlos, and of course, I study his game and try to make him learn about everything, to grow up on his technical, on his personal things, and everything.

Obviously the examples of Rafa, Novak, and Roger are there and are the best about attitude or try to be motivated every tournament that they go and fight. But about technical, it's impossible to copy someone and try to pass the example to Carlos. I think Carlos has his own skills, and I try to make them bigger every day and improve.

I think he is very natural, his kind of game and play and performance. So that's all I wanted to do and make him one of the best in the world.

Q. Juan Carlos, talking about your career for a minute, we took the same flight back from Shanghai to Europe after the ATP Finals. It's a long flight. What were you thinking about? Can you remember? Did you have ambitions to be a coach early on, or when did that kick in for you?

JUAN CARLOS FERRERO: Not at that time (laughing). No, I think it came to me after having a rest after retirement.

I remember I had been at my academy, got married. I had my first kid. You know, the natural things that I could live after tennis.

So after that, I was given a lot of tapes of the academy, players at academy and stayed there. Once I believe I was ready to travel again and try to be a coach, that was the moment I communicate to Albert that is here that helped me. The opportunities arrive, and we took it.

Q. What do you think is the optimal mindset to have when you are going to face Djokovic on that big of a court? Is there something that has to be completely avoided? What would be pep talk you give Carlos before the match?

JUAN CARLOS FERRERO: I cannot tell you everything. Be prepared. We know Novak a lot. We will try to prepare the match about the tactical situations about the match. Maybe the situations we're going to have during the match, tough ones, or maybe if you don't play as good as the other days, what the attitude has to be and these kind of details.

Yeah, but as I said, I think Carlos is absolutely ready. He wants to play the match, and the small details I cannot tell you (laughing).

FastScripts by ASAP Sports