

# Roland Garros

Sunday, 11 June 2023

Paris, France

## Goran Ivanisevic

### Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: Well done, Coach.

GORAN IVANISEVIC: Thank you.

THE MODERATOR: What do you think was the most difficult moment for Novak on the way to victory this fortnight?

GORAN IVANISEVIC: Generally...

THE MODERATOR: This tournament.

GORAN IVANISEVIC: Coming to this tournament, he didn't come with unbelievable confident and form. I was not worried. I said in Monte-Carlo, I don't count these tournaments. Monte-Carlo, Rome, anything. Only tournament that count is this one.

He has this software in his head that he can switch when a Grand Slam comes. Grand Slam is a different sport comparing to other tournaments. He switch his software. The day we arrived here, he was better, he was more motivated, he was more hungry.

Every day he played better and better. I thought against Alcaraz one-and-a-half hour he played unbelievable smart and unbelievable tennis. And today he just finish what we started actually in Monte-Carlo, to practice, and now it's payday. We cash the check (smiling).

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

**Q. In Novak's speech he said he's been quite torturous to you and his team. Can you give us a bit of an insight what he's been like during this tournament.**

GORAN IVANISEVIC: He chain us with handcuffs for three days (smiling). He's not easy guy, let's put it this way. He is not easy guy. Especially when something's not going his way.

But we are here to put our back and to get beaten, you know. That's what the team is for. We are here for him to feel better, for him to perform better. Sometimes not easy. Sometimes it's very complicated.

But overall, this is for what you live, you know, the



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tournaments like this, the finishing like this. Was not easy. Was not easy journey. You know how we start in Monte-Carlo, Banja Luka. Rome was a little better but still away from his real form.

He was torturing us, taking our nails off. A lot of more things but I cannot tell you that. But we are still here, we're alive. My heart is still okay. I'm old man, I need to be careful of my heart. So he's okay (smiling).

**Q. Obviously there's a lot of goals that Novak has had to try to reach, and he's reached another one today. He's gone ahead of Nadal and Federer for the first time. Two questions for you. One, how many more can he win, in your opinion? The second one is, two years ago he was one match away from the calendar Grand Slam. He's got two. Is that a goal now?**

GORAN IVANISEVIC: I don't know is a goal with him, you know. You need to ask him. It's incredible, you know. If I go back last year in Australia where all this, I say how I call it, shit started, and then slowly we didn't know what to do. And now he's with 23 Grand Slams, and it's no end.

I'm really sorry that Rafa is not here, but I say a long time ago before even I became member of his team that him and Rafa, they're going to go over 22. I am hoping Rafa coming back winning one more, and Novak is only player who can win calendar Grand Slam. He was one match away two years ago, so he has a chance this year.

But it's still, you know, long way. But, you know, Grand Slams are the goal. I don't know how many, but yeah, I think he has in his body a lot more.

**Q. I mean, he's shown that he's kind of a perfect player. What do you work on with him the last few months? I mean, he wins Australia and then you go back onto the practice court. What do you try and improve with him?**

GORAN IVANISEVIC: Yeah, we entered the new sado-maso training (smiling). It's new way of practicing. Start 2:00 in the morning till 6:00 in the morning.

I mean, I don't know what you can do with him. It's always something. He's the guy who always wants something. He wakes up and he says, My backhand wasn't working yesterday, so we have to work on

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backhand. But backhand was perfect for us. We fix the backhand. Ah, but serve is not... It's every day something. Every day something. He's a perfectionist. You know, this genius mind, there always something missing. He's just always putting...

But I'm very proud of him, especially last two matches. We told him if you want to win this tournament, you need to stop talking to us too much.

If you noticed against Alcaraz, and especially today in difficult things, he didn't look. He didn't complain. He didn't yell. Which I was surprised, you know. But happy. Very focused, especially against Carlos in the semifinals, that's when he plays the best tennis. That's when he's not wasting energy on unnecessary things.

And against those guys, you know, if you let them a little bit, you know, it's not easy to come back.

**Q. Just wondering what has surprised you most about Novak and working with Novak compared with what you knew about him before you started working with him.**

GORAN IVANISEVIC: I mean, he made me better coach, you know. I had success before with Marin Cilic, and I have been a lot of times on the court with him but opposite side. Every day is a new challenge, something new. He puts you motivated, you have to be motivated more and more every day.

For us, it's never, you know, it's always some kind of -- he keeps you stress, you know, stress level is always high. It never goes down.

But, you know, every day you learn something. Every day it's something new. A lot of times I disagree, but this is the job, you know. You can't agree with everything, and we are functioning very good as a team.

**Q. Do you see any decrease in his passion for the sport at all, any sense that he tires of life on tour and spending so much time away from the family?**

GORAN IVANISEVIC: Sometimes I see, and then he comes on the court and then you'll see how he much enjoys to practice, how much he enjoys to hit winners, how much he enjoys little details, to work on little details.

You know, winning, you know, in front of this unbelievable crowd, unbelievable stadium. So I don't know how far along, that's why his body is unbelievable, he's keeping his body great, he's in great shape. Thanks God not too many injuries. Little here and there but not major injuries.

So he's unbelievable, and he's still moving like a cat on the court, you know. He's there. Like Ninja, he's

everywhere.

So it's fascinating to see, because sometimes you think, okay, now you have 23. But he's gonna find, again, some kind of motivation to win 24, maybe 25, who knows where is the end.

**Q. You mentioned that Novak has an ability to just switch something in his brain. Is he unique in that aspect?**

GORAN IVANISEVIC: Champions like him probably, you know, probably the same, I have to say for Rafa and Roger. But, you know, that's why I was not worried. As a coach, I was ex-tennis player, you know, people, they were worried, people were saying he doesn't have any chance against Carlos in the semifinals. But, you know, this is Novak. You know, when you tell him you don't have a chance, then he's like triple time more hungry.

So I was not worried after Rome, because this is, you know, two different sports. We're talking about Grand Slams is two weeks, seven matches, you need to stay focused, you cannot play seven great matches.

What makes him the best, last two matches, especially that one before, he played the best. He showed himself. He came. Today from second and third set again, tiebreak in the first, he started to play unbelievable tennis.

So it's, you know, this when it counts. Big moments like this then he shows up and plays unbelievable tennis.

**Q. I wanted to ask, so the difference between Novak and the younger generation especially, would you say that it's basically the five-set format? Grand Slams been three sets, would that have made a difference? What sets him apart?**

GORAN IVANISEVIC: Definitely would make difference if you play, is still five sets, you play three sets, best-of-three in Grand Slam.

All this for me was little strange. Even I read a lot of paper, a lot of people saying that Alcaraz is a favorite against Novak. You cannot say that. The guy played 33 Grand Slam finals. He won 22 Grand Slams.

Alcaraz is the next unbelievable, he's amazing, I love Carlos, and he's going to win I don't know how many Grand Slams, but you cannot say that he's a favorite. Yeah, he played better coming here. But this is Grand Slam. This is nerves. You see what happened in the third set to him. And Novak knows. Novak knows. Novak waits.

Like Roddick said, I read, he takes the legs, then he takes your soul, then he dig your grave and you have a

funeral and you're dead. Bye-bye. Thank you for coming (smiling).

**Q. I wanted to ask you about Carlos from what you saw on Friday, from what you have seen over the last year or so. Do you feel like he's going to be kind of the biggest obstacle to Novak winning more slams?**

GORAN IVANISEVIC: I love Carlos. First of all, he's a great kid. He's still kid. And he's such a well-educated, nice, always laughing, great tennis player, already won a Grand Slam.

He's gonna be extremely dangerous. There are few more guys, always Medvedev, but Carlos, I love that guy. He's a fresh air for tennis, how he plays, how he smiles, how he's happy, how he plays tennis on the court, the ideas, is just amazing.

For sure he's gonna be threat. He's going to be threat on grass, he's gonna be threat on hard court, he's gonna be threat everywhere.

But, it's always this "but," he's still young. You know, you have Novak and you can't ever bet against Novak.

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