

National Bank Open

Wednesday, August 11, 2021

Toronto, Ontario, Canada

Dusan Lajovic

Press Conference



D. LAJOVIC/F. Auger-Aliassime

7-5, 6-4

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. You were the more experienced player than your opponent today. It appeared that you adjusted better to the conditions. So I wanted to know at what point in your career did you feel that you are able to adjust to the conditions or see what was happening on the other side of the court and adjust to that, as well? Is it something that came younger or it took a while to get there?

DUSAN LAJOVIC: I believe that when I started with my current coach, Jose Perlas, for five years ago, is when I really started to think differently on the court where it's not about -- it is the shots you make, but it's not if the shots are really good. It's where the shots go and what they do to your opponent.

So sometimes it's even more important to have the placement of the shot where you want and to have some kind of tactic in your mind obviously, but today, especially today, I felt that with the conditions, with the wind and being so hard to control the ball, and him having really good first serve in most of the match, I felt like any time I have a chance, I should be able to put the ball in the court, make him play, because I felt that he was not really confident enough, especially on the forehand side.

You know, if you start off the match and you shank a couple of balls and you don't really feel that timing on the ball and the forehand, then it's hard to find that midmatch or whatever. So I felt that important points, I told myself, The ball has to go to that side and just don't worry about, like, don't worry where he's positioned himself. Just make it uncomfortable for him. Because I played the match yesterday, and I know how hard was to play in the wind and with the wind changing directions all the time, which is even harder than being all the time in one direction.

So I had this feeling from yesterday from the match, and

going into today, I felt that he's gonna feel all these things on the court. Luckily I was able today to convert that to my advantage. But sometimes I felt that, at one point in the second set he let go a little bit, and he had a good returning game on 4-3, and I was lucky that he missed a shot on Love-30, because would be probably different story if he made that one because it was almost a winner.

But as I said, I was sticking to my plan no matter what, and today it worked.

Q. I know that you're not in the business of giving that advice to younger players, but you have been through many, many ups and downs in your career. Is there some sort of wisdom you can offer to a 21-year-old who is starting to go through some of those things now?

DUSAN LAJOVIC: Yeah. Well, first of all, I think he's much better than I was at his age, so that's completely different perspective. But for me, I feel that he has really powerful game, that sometimes it feels like maybe he's just feeling this power too much and don't think what to do on the court as where to just hit the ball really hard and making it tough that way for the opponents.

But I feel that once he finds his tennis in a way that, you know, when you think of him, you can say, Okay, he's having great first serve. He's really solid with the backhand, with the forehand he can attack, he can make this, but, you know, to find what are his things that he does it on the court no matter what's happening, like now I felt today that he's a little bit all over the court and he didn't really have anything what he wants to do precisely.

I mean, obviously playing in front of the home crowd is a pressure itself, and playing the first match here, so all this, it would be probably different if we played somewhere else, maybe in Europe or whatever, but today I felt like this on the court.

I followed his results, and I know that when he is playing with confidence, it's really tough to play against him. So he needs to probably make himself play to be a tough opponent even when he doesn't feel confident. Once he's able to do that, he's going to be just up from that.



He's got great potential ahead of him, and I don't think that these minor setbacks will at the end influence him in 10 years when he's had a good career ahead of him. I feel like he's still so young that these setbacks would not even matter in five, six, seven years.

Q. In other words, learn how to win without playing his best tennis? Find other solutions?

DUSAN LAJOVIC: Yeah. I guess this is the most important thing in tennis, because, you know, we wake up every day and you don't feel the best or there are certain times when you really feel good, but this is only 10% of the time.

So 90% of the time you have to play with what you have that day. So you need to find a way to play even if you don't feel the best on the court.

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