

National Bank Open

Saturday, August 2, 2025

Toronto, Ontario, Canada

Alexei Popyrin

Press Conference



A. POPYRIN/H. Rune

4-6, 6-2, 6-3

THE MODERATOR: Alexei, congratulations on the match. How does it feel to get back into the quarterfinal in Canada?

ALEXEI POPYRIN: Yeah, it feels good. Feels like home. No, it's a great feeling. Obviously you are coming into the week with a lot of pressure, so you try and just forget about it.

The first match I was really, really nervous, but the last two matches the nerves just seemed to be dying down slowly, which is nice. My level is slowly coming back to me. Yeah, it's a good feeling.

Q. You've won now nine matches in a row in Canada. Curious what it is coming to Canada the last couple years that's allowed you to have so much success.

ALEXEI POPYRIN: No idea. I think it's just good vibes, good feelings from last year maybe. Yeah, leading up to Canada I felt a lot of pressure about defending the points and stuff like that. I didn't do a good enough 12 months to stay at my ranking if I don't make up the thousand points, basically.

But, yeah, I think it's nice to come in here and kind of accept the fact that if you lose you don't save the 1,000 points, but it's just a nice feeling to just play free, and that's what I feel I've been doing this week.

Q. You mentioned the pressure. Of course, before this tournament you hadn't won back-to-back hard court matches this year. Was there something between Washington and now that allowed you, that you felt like maybe a result like this could be possible?

ALEXEI POPYRIN: Yeah, look, in Washington I played well. That match, similar to the first set in today's match, I had my break-point opportunities in the third set, and he just played some ridiculous points in Washington. I felt like

my level was there, I felt like that was probably the most consistent I've played for a backhand win in my life. In Washington my forehand was a little bit off. But, considering that, I felt good in Washington.

Coming here, I felt quite good. To top that off with just telling myself to just relax, and if the points come off they come off, and that's what I did.

Q. What was your mentality down one set early and then having to push back?

ALEXEI POPYRIN: Yeah, I was pissed. I felt like I shouldn't have been down one set. 11 break points is a lot of break points to not convert. I was really, really angry. I was looking at my team, and I was pissed.

But look, I just told myself, I let myself be angry for the change of ends, and then when I came out there I just told myself that if I keep getting into these opportunities it's just pressure on him. I told myself, the next opportunity that I get I'm just going to go full and play aggressive, and that's what I did. The next break point I converted, and from there I felt quite comfortable.

Q. Just walk us through the match point, just your feelings, arms raised, staring at your team, pretty stoic.

ALEXEI POPYRIN: Yeah, it was more the way that last game played out. I didn't make my first five first serves, and that's not typical of me, and I don't know what happened there.

Yeah, I had to save a break point there in the clutch. Then a backhand lob, which typically I don't really hit well, it went in, so that was a nice feeling. So, yeah, it's just the way that game played out.

I felt really comfortable up until that game, but to not make five first serves in a row is a little bit, it gets on your nerves a little bit. So just to come through that game and to battle through that game was a good feeling, and then, you know, you won the match, so it's nice.

Q. You were referencing the backhand before. We talked about it along the journey this year, and the



change of grip. We know the serve and forehand is huge weapons for you, but in the heat of some of those rallies tonight where the backhand had to really stand up, to the naked eye some people wouldn't even notice maybe some of the adjustments you had to make. Can you tell us about the evolution of that and where you think it's at?

ALEXEI POPYRIN: I think it's at a really good spot. I think it's the most consistent it's been in a while. On the clay I kind of got away with looping the backhand and getting it high over the net and kind of baiting the players to kind of be aggressive.

But here on the hard courts I feel like it's just become more consistent. I feel like I'm getting a good strike on it more often than not. Then to mix that in with my slice, which I feel like I've got a pretty decent slice, it just gives variety off the backhand win, which is really nice to have.

Today I felt like I didn't miss too much off the backhand win, which was a bonus to me. And then off the forehand win I felt really, really comfortable also. When I play like that, when I feel like that I feel like it's tough to beat me, and I think that showed today.

Q. A lot of players this week have talked with about how difficult the conditions are here. The balls are flying, you guys obviously are switching from grass to hard court. What is your take on the difficulties and the challenges of playing here, for example, even though this court clearly suits your game, and what sort of adjustments did you make specifically on the return games throughout the week?

ALEXEI POPYRIN: Yeah, I think at the start of the tournament it was quite hard, because it was really warm and a lot of players were playing during the day. So the conditions obviously are really, really quick. The balls, they fly. It's tough to get the ball in, it's tough to control the ball.

At night or during the day now when the temperature's a little bit lower it's easier to control the ball. The ball's not flying as much, the courts aren't as quick.

But at the start of the week it was really tough. It was really tough to control the ball. I've been lucky the last two nights playing at night, it becomes a little bit easier to control the ball. The ball's not flying as much through the air or off the court.

So, yeah, look, it is an adjustment, but then again that's tennis for you. Conditions change every match, and you just have to find a way to battle through, and that's what I've been doing quite well.

Q. General question about your background. You spent 10 years in Spain. What is the impact that Spain had in the player that you are today?

ALEXEI POPYRIN: A lot. A lot. It taught me how to play on clay. It taught me how to move on clay, it taught me how to feel comfortable on clay. So, basically from this side of my career I've actually felt quite comfortable on the clay.

That's the main reason why my parents decided to move to Spain. They kind of sacrificed everything and decided we're going to try and get this guy's career, get my brother and my career off the ground. And to learn on clay, that was a big part of what they thought was right. I guess it turned out to be right, because I feel comfortable on the clay.

I remember one practice session, man, one coach was telling me to hit over this like fake net above the net, and it was like three meters above the net. And I was just not having it. I just didn't understand why we were doing this. But it turned out to be the right thing. Yeah, I think it's brought a lot of variety to my game practicing in Spain early on in my career, so I think it's been a positive.

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