

# National Bank Open

Friday, August 8, 2025

Toronto, Ontario, Canada

## Karen Khachanov

### Press Conference



B. SHELTON/K. Khachanov

6-7, 6-4, 7-6

THE MODERATOR: Karen, not the result you were looking for, but a very good run these two weeks in Toronto. How do you summarize your experience this year here?

KAREN KHACHANOV: Oh, yeah, definitely, look, I mean, once you're in the final, obviously not only in the final, but every match you play you want to win, you want to succeed, but especially in the last match of the tournament, obviously to lift the title, to lift the trophy. But at the same time, like you mentioned, yeah, definitely still it's a positive, great tournament, great run. I had some great battles, great wins against top guys. So that's why I give credit to myself for doing that, and that's it.

I mean, you can win, you can lose, so you just try to regroup and be ready for the next tournament, it's another Masters 1000, and then it's a Grand Slam. So this is tennis, so sometimes you have to regroup quickly and be fit, be ready for the next match.

**Q. Curious, you mentioned on the court that you had been on the court for six hours in two days. Curious when that started to impact you at all today and how you were able to manage through just a lot of tennis in the last 24 hours.**

KAREN KHACHANOV: Yeah, okay, we can philosophically speak, I mean, if it's affected or not. I mean, definitely as much time as you spend on the court, obviously it affects your energy, maybe your reaction a little bit. Especially with Ben, with his serve I had to be really, really sharp and fast to react, otherwise you just let the ball pass and that's it, you know.

But look, I think it shows also that I'm in a good physical condition, I'm fit. It means also we are doing great work with the team, with the fitness coach and everything. Look, it's a really positive sign, and I think especially coming up to another Grand Slam where you need to play best-of five

sets, that's the best preparation to have those matches here.

**Q. Second time you played Ben, curious how does his serve compare to other big servers you played?**

KAREN KHACHANOV: It's different because he's lefty. Obviously it's a huge serve, big serve, I mean, not only in terms of kilometers, but in terms of the placement and the variety, I would say. So that's why it makes it very unique and different, and you need a lot of time to not only adjust, but even adjusting sometimes is not enough.

So saying that, you know, I would say, yeah, because I played against lefties, big servers, but it's different because you know if you come forward and he serves, let's say slice or kick body. Then you go back, he serves open wide. Then sometimes he goes full. So you really don't know what to expect. And then you have to not only make the return in play, but then he comes with a big game after that. So it's not just to push the ball back, you need to really return properly, so that makes it tough, all of him.

**Q. With two back-to-back three-set matches, both going the distance with tiebreakers, what do you feel was the difference or turning point maybe in your play or your opponent's play? Obviously, I understand the outcome was different the last two nights, but what do you feel, was there a different tone how you attacked the tiebreaker tonight as opposed to last night?**

KAREN KHACHANOV: You know, it's two different players. Two different players, two different matches. It's true that Sascha is also a big server, but in the tiebreaker he didn't put too many first serves in. So that was already different, because the balls were more in play, so it was more about the rallies. I would say the same about today, that if there would be rallies, maybe I was dominating and getting more the rallies in my hand, that's the feeling at least I had. But then he served it out like crazy. I mean, he put all the serves in, made aces. So I give all the credit to him to kind of step up and, let's say, get this win, in the tiebreaker I mean especially, you know. It's not about only my offense. Let's say, I didn't have chance to be in the offense, you know, first you need to return. So he really served it out, I would say that was the difference in the tiebreaker.



**Q. Have you ever experienced anything like that random cheer at the half-hour mark when the fans realized that Mboko won the women's final in Montreal? Ever experienced anything like that?**

KAREN KHACHANOV: I think in Canada it's happening, but, yeah, if I remember, I think every year it happens, you know, from city to city they cheer for a local player, yeah. I remember I think in long time ago it was with Shapovalov, when he reached also like first time semifinals I think when he beat Rafa. I was playing I guess in Toronto, and then I remember something like this was happening, yeah.

**Q. It's been five years since you have been working with Pepo Clavet. What's the part of your game that you have improved the most since you have him as a coach?**

KAREN KHACHANOV: You know, I was not only having him as a coach, that's why it's a combination of the things. So it's not only what he exactly puts inside my game, that's why the coaches have to be on the same side. Because otherwise, I don't know, if Pepo is telling me to slice all the time backhand, and my other coach tells me to hit with two hands, so that's already different, right? I would say in general it's the whole package to understand the game better. So I would say the main thing, when he was working, let's say with Feliciano in the last seven years before me, so basically offensive game and more coming forward, more the net game, I would say that was the main addition and the main approach. Because of course we were doing a lot of drills, a lot of practices on the baseline, but this is like a core, you know. But then additionally to come forward, especially the short balls, practicing like stepping in, I would say that's the biggest addition, yeah.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports....