

Omnium Banque Nationale

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Nick Kyrgios

Press Conference

N. KYRGIOS/A. de Minaur

6-3, 6-4

THE MODERATOR: Nick, your ninth win in a row, 15 of the last 16, your first meeting with Alex. Talk about what it was like playing him for the first time.

NICK KYRGIOS: Yeah, it was extremely tough. Felt pretty sick all day, pretty nervous. Obviously it's not easy going up against one of your good friends and fellow countrymen. I mean, he's been flying the Australian flag for the last couple years, the No. 1 ranked spot.

I knew that he was super confident. Obviously he won Atlanta. He's been having so much success as well. I knew it was going to be an incredibly tough match.

I executed my game plan extremely well as well today. I think it was a dangerous match for me because if I didn't play the right way... I think the matchup for him is pretty good. He loves big servers. He returns really well. I'm pretty happy with the way I played today.

Obviously just a big weight off my shoulders, playing another fellow Australian. A lot of eyes are on that match, so...

THE MODERATOR: Let's open it up for questions.

Q. Many top-seeded players were out by the second round. In fact, it's the first time I think since '99 that all top three were out by second round in a Masters. How can you explain that?

NICK KYRGIOS: They lost. I don't know. The other person got to 6 or 7 before they did, then they won two sets before they won two sets. That happened three times in one day. They lost.

Q. You said you've been feeling tired or sick. When we see the results, it doesn't seem like that. Where do you keep finding the energy to have the great results, even in the past weeks as well?



NICK KYRGIOS: I guess I'm very confident and I'm just playing well. Even though I'm tired, I'm still hitting the ball very well. I'm still serving. I didn't think I served -- I didn't serve great today. Obviously very confident with my returns and the way I'm playing from the back.

Form is temporary. It's going to go up and down. Right now I feel like people are kind of a bit nervous to play me because I'm playing so well. I got to use that to my advantage.

I mean, I've just been through a lot. I've just got so much fuel and I know deep down, like, what I'm playing for. There's a lot of things that continue to fuel me and motivate me.

I mean, I'm tired, yeah, but I'm still going to go out there and play well.

Q. It's one thing to be motivated and get up for a match like yesterday against the No. 1 on center court. Today you dispatched not as highly ranked player on the No. 2 Court. It seems like tennis is the most important or one of the most important things in the world to you right now. Maybe in the past you talked about how it wasn't. Who is this new Nick and what are you trying to prove to the world?

NICK KYRGIOS: I've always been the same person. I just feel as if a part of me, I'm doing this for a lot of people. Want to prove to myself that I can still play some amazing tennis. I'm doing it for a lot of people just so I can have a bit of peace and quiet, I can actually rest at nighttime.

I feel like compared to other players, I deal with a lot of shit, negativity, bad media, bad articles, this, that, wasted talent, whatever. So I feel like when it's all said and done, if I continue to play like this for a little bit, prove people wrong, I can just relax a little bit. Like have a beer at a pub, not get bothered about it. You're wasting your talent. Do you know what I mean?

I just want to be like: I've done it, I've beaten pretty much everyone you put in front of me. Yeah, maybe I haven't been as consistent as other players, but I'm still trying to get there.



So I think when it's all said and done, I want to be able to just relax. I feel like there's a bit more to do before I can do that.

Q. I don't know if you've seen Felix Auger-Aliassime play recently. How would you assess his game and maybe his progression over the last few years?

NICK KYRGIOS: Great player. I think he's so important to the sport. I think you look at him, he's a very marketable person. He's got a great personality. The way he plays tennis is very exciting. Obviously he's a young man who's extremely confident in himself.

I think the sky's the limit for someone like him. He works extremely hard. I've been around him at Laver Cup. Just on a day-to-day basis, I look at his professionalism, the way he watches the game. He loves tennis. He's a student of the sport. He loves analyzing other players.

As long as he keeps his head down, maybe doesn't do dumb things like I did when I was young, he can achieve a lot more than what I've achieved and contend for Grand Slams.

He's an amazing player. I've played him twice. I got injured once. But he beat me one time as well. Hell of a player.

I just think he's very important to the sport. I think he's one of the special ones who can do some amazing things. He's larger than tennis. I think his impact can be more than just the tennis world.

Q. Did the change in schedule, change in court, did that affect you in any way?

NICK KYRGIOS: Maybe gave me a little bit more time to prepare and think about it, which in a way I didn't like. I almost wanted to get out on the court quicker and just get it done. Whether I won or lost, I just wanted to get off the court, to be honest.

I didn't really enjoy myself out there today, to be honest. It was a tough match for me. It was more just when the match finished, it was more of a relief.

The court, I've only played on that court once I think and I lost. That was the one thing, as soon as I saw the court change, I was like, Oh, no.

I like that court, though. It played well. I like it.

Q. You talked about bad press sometimes, the sort of love-hate relationship, people love you, people hate

you. You always seem to have a lot of fan support that doesn't seem to be connected with your results or what they say in the press. Do you have a sense for what fans are connecting with?

NICK KYRGIOS: Look, I don't care if people, like, don't like me and don't like the style of tennis I play. I understand there are different personalities that may not agree with some of the things that I do or how I dress or how I go about it. I understand that.

It's more just, like, the beginning of my career, almost painting an image that completely wasn't me at all, like based on what I was doing on the tennis court, which was so hard to disconnect from in real life.

None of you people understand what that's like, when people would just literally paint an image of how you are as a general human 95% of the time, but you're only seeing me on the tennis court for 2% of my life.

That's now how I am off the court. That's not my values off the court. That's not who I am. I'm a strong believer you have to be two completely different people to be a successful athlete. You can't be a super nice guy, a generous guy all the time on the court, otherwise I'd be terrible at the game.

Tennis players have to be selfish. You have to walk around like you're the best player in the world. You have to have that mentality.

When I was getting angry or smashing racquets, it was like, This guy must be like this off the court.

Where is that connection exactly? Do you know what I mean?

That was hard for me to shake. People just assumed that's how I was when I walked into a restaurant or when I walked into a supermarket. That was my image all the time which you guys created, which was so hard for me to grasp and deal with as an 18-, 19-year-old kid.

It's been a bit easier for me to navigate through that now. I just stopped really caring, to be honest. People around me that know me, my friends, people who spend time with me, know how I am. That's all that really matters to me.

That's what I mean. When I go out on court, I don't care. I know there are going to be people cheering for the other players. I love that. That's the great thing about sport, too. But there's a line there, like when people start yelling out racial slurs. When they cross that line, then that's when I start to get -- like that's when I'll probably talk back a little



...quand tout est dit, nous avons terminé.

bit.

I love the fact that I'm playing Roger or Rafa and 95% of the fans are going for them. I love that. I actually really love that.

That's what I mean about the media. You guys kind of painted me to be this, like, horrific person for like five years. But now I feel like it just kind of washed away. The true colors came through.

Look, I'm playing for a lot more than myself. Hopefully I'm inspiring millions of people to just go about their life or their sport or their career as they want to and be comfortable in their own skin. That's a strong message.

Q. I want to know, with all your success since Wimbledon, do you think you have some edge on your opponents when you go on the court?

NICK KYRGIOS: Yeah, I think, like, you look at someone like Serena or Roger, before opponents take the court, they may not sleep that well at night because I'm playing this player. It's more the aura or their results or their accolades that you're trying to versus rather than them.

Now when people versus me, He's on a massive winning streak, he must be playing well, done this, done that. That can cloud your ability to just go out there and perform.

I think some of the opponents I faced may have been feeling that a little bit over the last couple weeks. I feel like I've been a good player for the majority of my career. I've earned that respect in the locker room. People know what I'm capable of if I'm motivated.

Now I feel like I'm just playing good tennis. I'm just competing. I feel good physically, mentally. So I just need to keep it going.

Q. How do you address your match tomorrow?

NICK KYRGIOS: A lot of good serving. He's got an amazing serve. I played him in Halle earlier this year and I lost 7-6 in the third. It's going to be an incredibly tough match.

Yeah, he's a great player. He's one of the best that we have. I'm excited. Obviously a very different matchup from today.

Look, I'm excited. I just want to eat some food and go to bed (smiling). But, yeah, whatever happens tomorrow happens.



...quand tout est dit, nous avons terminé.