

Rolex Monte-Carlo Masters

Principality of Monaco

Tuesday, 9 April 2024

Novak Djokovic

Press Conference



N. DJOKOVIC/R. Safiullin

6-1, 6-2

THE MODERATOR: Questions in English.

Q. Some people think that this match was the best of the season and one of your best in Monte-Carlo from several years. Do you feel it like that? What was your feeling on the court?

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: Yeah, my feeling was great. I think it's an accurate judgment from the people that it's been one of the best performances I had here in quite a few years.

Monte-Carlo is the first big tournament of the clay court season. You know, I haven't been really able the last six, seven years to start off strong and start off well. I've always kind of struggled in this tournament.

But again, it's just the beginning of the tournament. It's one match. I'm going to hope to work tomorrow to maintain that rhythm and focus, obviously try to perform as well as I did in the second match as well as I did today.

Matches are only going to get tougher. Obviously the opponents, I'm playing either Musetti or Fils, are completely different players than Safiullin. They love playing on clay, more spin on the balls so it's a different matchup.

But I like really the way I felt today on the court, the way I was striking the ball. I think the two, three weeks of training I had is paying off really, you know, good training block with Zimonjic and with the team.

We put in a lot of hours into thinking about the game, the movement, and things that haven't really worked for me in the first couple tournaments of this year that I played.

It's a great start. Let's not get ahead of ourselves and put the hopes too high. It's only one match, but the way I felt, I'm really pleased.

Q. You just mentioned it, considering that you could face Lorenzo Musetti in the third round, what do you remember about the match that you had with him here last year? And if you're kind of "scared" or facing another Italian, considering that you lost with Sinner in Australia and with Nardi in Indian Wells.

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: I'm not scared of anything and anybody, but I really hope that I can get the chance to play him again, get the matchup, another matchup here.

He obviously is, you know, one of the most talented players on clay, a beautiful one-handed backhand. He's very athletic. He can do a lot of great things. He's one of the most promising young players not only from Italy but generally for the world.

Yeah, let's see. Let's see how it works. I mean, Arthur Fils is also a tough opponent to beat. He's got to win that match.

I like the way I played my first match comparing to the first match last year. I feel much different, more ready, so whoever is across the net, I'm hoping I can deliver my best game.

Q. In case if it is not an Italian, it will be Fils, but what do you think of him?

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: Well, kind of a similar situation. Both of them very young, promising players. Probably both of them prefer clay as the best surface for both of them, so they play with a lot of spin comparing to Safiullin today was playing quite flat. It's a different matchup for me.

But Arthur Fils is, you know, he's building his game, his career, his rankings. He's only going upwards. He's very promising player. So for French tennis, he won his first title I think last year in Lyon, right, or Nice, whatever it was, so he's really strong guy physically. He puts a lot of weight on his shots, particularly from the forehand, and very athletic, as well.

Yeah, let's see. You know, obviously I know that when I'm playing at my best level, I can really hurt everybody on any

surface so I'm confident about myself.

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