

# Rolex Monte-Carlo Masters

Principality of Monaco

Thursday, 11 April 2024

## Novak Djokovic

Press Conference



N. DJOKOVIC/L. Musetti

7-5, 6-3

THE MODERATOR: Questions in English.

**Q. So great performance. You went 30 times on the net. Is it an indication to what you can add on this surface?**

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: 30 times. Yeah, I didn't have a feeling that I went that many times to the net, but yeah, it was, I guess, necessary to try to be as aggressive as possible, take every shorter ball as an opportunity to come in against a player like Musetti, who is very good in defending.

He's very quick. He's very talented from both forehand and backhand corner. He can hurt you from inside a court but also as we have seen in some incredible points and passing shots he's made also from far in the court.

Yeah, it was I guess part of the plan is try to take away the time, be more aggressive, be more solid. I think he started better. He was the better player for eight games. Then at 4-3, new balls, match turned around. Really, I had this nice interaction with the crowd, and then from that moment on, you know, he maybe lost his focus a bit, you know, made some unforced errors, and the momentum shifted.

I feel like I, from that moment onwards, was playing better and kind of managed to, I guess, implement the kind of game that I really want tactically.

But it was very physical. Struggling a bit on the court as well today, myself. But I like the way I'm playing in terms of comparison to last year. You know, I think I'm playing better tennis.

It's a process. You know, hopefully I can keep on winning day after day, but I know what the big goal is and where I want to play my best tennis in terms of clay season. So, you know, still weeks to come. So far I'm enjoying the way I'm playing.

**Q. You have always been a good defensive player, but you looked very strong the way you moved today at some stage. Do you agree with that? Are you happy with that? Can you say a word about your next opponent, your next match?**

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: Yeah, as I said, I'm striking the ball very well. I also put in a lot of work the last two, three weeks with my team and the movement, really working on the positioning on the court.

So of course I need to be equally good in defending and also attacking on this surface. It's the most demanding surface in sport. Physically, mentally, and also game-wise, you have to expect an extra ball coming from across the net always comparing to other surfaces.

So I know, I mean, I have been through this process 25-plus years already, so I know what to do. Obviously with Nenad, a new addition to the team, brings a new look at the game and freshness and somehow a different observation of what the things that I should do on the court, so I think we have been implementing some of these things really efficiently so far.

Yeah, hopefully can keep going in the right direction.

**Q. You just mentioned that on court it happened, that interaction, you call it "interaction." We saw that, like, 1000 times. Let's say 999 Djokovic finish it and win it. Can you explain what's happening in your mind? It's like you feel the energy is opposite. How do you transform it? How does it work?**

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: Yeah, I think you would describe it well. I try to transform the energy into something that is constructive for me. I'm not looking for trouble with crowd. You know, I'm not there coming out, Okay, start whistling at me and I'll play better.

It's not the kind of mentality I have. But if people start to react in a certain way that I don't think I deserve, you know, I don't think it's fair, if I don't think it's anyhow explainable, then, you know, I'll react back.

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You know, I have grown up with that kind of mentality that if somebody is doing something wrong to you, you stand your ground.

**Q. You get more concentrated? I'm curious about that.**

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: Depends. You know, sometimes more concentrated, sometimes more relaxed, because there is a lot of tension on the court with you trying to play best tennis and feel your best, and opponent. Of course Musetti until that moment, that game, was the better player.

I didn't feel so comfortable playing, because I was, you know, dominated by Musetti at that point. And then, you know, I guess it came at the right moment. You know, it's one of these things that just, in a way, also relaxes you and it's just, I don't know, I had a little smile on my face and a little symphony conducting, and, you know, it worked (smiling).

**Q. You said you were struggling a bit physically. We see you shaking on the bench. Nothing too important?**

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: Well, I must say that at some moments of the game today I was really not feeling great physically. But that's also part of the first several matches on clay. You know, when you play somebody as strong as Musetti, you know, where you have to earn your victory, have to work physically very hard, it's kind of, yeah, very much possible that it will happen where you will somehow hit the wall physically and you have to kind of find a way up from that.

Yeah, but I managed to find a way. That's what matters the most. I keep going. I have to, as I said, believe that the process of training and everything that I'm doing with my team is going to give me rewards.

I'm already feeling some great things on the court these few days, and that's what matters the most for me, I mean, that I'm on the right path.

Now, you know, Paris is where I want to reach the summit in terms of the way I play and feel, so I'm feeling good right now.

**Q. Novak, you are 36 years old. Can you talk a little bit about your training, your recovery, your nutrition plan?**

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: Well, I cannot talk too much about it, because I want to save something for myself (smiling).

There is going to be different ways that I'm going to share that with everyone in the near future.

But all I can say is that I have dedicated more than 15 years, a lot of attention to taking care of my body and my mind and it's paying off. Still, at almost 37 years of age, I'm able to be No. 1 in the world and play at the highest level.

So that's a kind of a benefit of really the care that I have put in myself primarily but also with my team for 15, 20 years. I'm very grateful that I have managed to realize the importance of that quite early in my career.

I always kind of strategically had a long-term plan in my head to, you know, play as long as possible so I can give my career a better chance to win more, you know, titles and break records and the things that I have been doing actually the last four, five years. You know, I have arguably had the better part of my career post-30 than before 30 (smiling).

So yeah, that's definitely due to and thanks to the care and the amount of time that I put in the wellness.

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