

# Rolex Monte-Carlo Masters

Principality of Monaco

Friday, 12 April 2024

## Novak Djokovic

Press Conference



N. DJOKOVIC/A. de Minaur

7-5, 6-4

THE MODERATOR: Questions in English.

**Q. Novak, 77th semifinal. You broke another record. But at the end of the match, you didn't seem to me that happy, that is looking like you're concerned about something. Can you share us your thoughts with us?**

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: Yeah, it was just a sign of relief, I think. It was more just that it was finished, you know, rather than to celebrate. I didn't really feel like celebrating too much.

Sometimes I do the Medvedev celebration like today, and sometimes I do actually celebrate (smiling). By the way, that's a compliment. I think it's really interesting. I think it's very funny. He's very authentic. Today I went Medvedev style. I just... (smiling).

**Q. You used the word "ugly" at the end of the match.**

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: That's de Minaur's word, that I said he mentioned at the net.

**Q. About the match?**

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: Yeah, about the match, about the tennis, and I agree with him. I think in particularly the second set, you know, a lot of unforced errors and just dropped service games back to back to back, many breaks of serve, which obviously on the clay court you can expect more breaks than normal, than comparing to other surfaces, but this was a little bit extraordinary, I think.

So yeah, so I don't think we maybe played such beautiful tennis in the second set, let's say. Maybe the last few games, but, you know, most of the second set was quite ugly, as he said.

**Q. Sometime for a young player we say it's good to learn how to win ugly, because you can't play your**

**best tennis every day. At this stage of your career, is it still satisfying sometimes to win without good feelings about your game, your level?**

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: "Winning Ugly" is the headline of whose book? I think it's Brad Gilbert?

So that's what it was. You know, sometimes you just have to find a way to win. Today that was the case. You know, in the end maybe you're not feeling your best or playing your best.

I think I had some really good moments, some brilliant moments, and I had some moments where I was struggling to hit the ball clean.

But at the end of the day, quite similar, I would say, matchup like yesterday, even though two different opponents, but, you know, in the important moments I managed to break serve and clinch the victory.

**Q. Novak, you were friends with Kobe Bryant. I remember 10 years ago where he talked about what he loved the most about basketball. The little thing that drive the love for his sport, he express something very funny, saying that he was addicted to the sound of the bucket on every shot. For you, at this stage of your career, what are those details that make you love this sport, that make you get up in the morning and bring you the joy of the tennis?**

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: There is more than one thing to add to what Kobe was saying about the sound of the bucket. You know, for me or for us it's the sound of the shot, you know, sound of the ball where of course in some tournaments where you have a better echo, you know, but it sounds even more loud when you strike the ball cleanly.

But it's interesting you say that, because I only enjoy that when I am watching the videos of my matches or I'm watching some other matches. I don't enjoy it while I play, because I really don't hear that, as strange as it sounds, but I'm completely in kind of a zone where I don't hear the ball sound, the ball strike because of the grunts, because of whatever.

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But then of course the energy of the crowd, of competition, just competition. You know, I also enjoy training and the process, maybe not as much as I used to, but I do enjoy competition. I enjoy the thrill of the butterflies before the match. Regardless of the fact that I played so many matches in my life, I still feel that nervous sensations but also the excitement of walking out on the court.

Also, there is some beauty in unpredictability of what's going to happen next. Nobody knows who's gonna win. Of course you might be favorite or not, but, you know, all the things that you have done coming into that moment to walk into the match, the more you have done, the better you have prepared yourself, the more confident you feel coming out on the court.

Of course for everyone it's very individual and it's different, but you still can't know and guarantee for sure that you will play the way you play on the practice session. Actually happen actually a lot of times where I play incredible in practice session and then I walk out on the court and it's, like, wow, it's completely different, or the other way around, for that matter.

So it's the thrill of the unknown when you walk into the court to see what's going to happen, you know, the anticipation of, you know, of course you dream and visualize of you winning the match, winning the tournament, making your dreams come true, which is incredible, there is incredible power in that, but still, when you're on the court, a lot of things, factors, elements can play around with you and your mind and your game that, you know, anything can happen.

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