

Rolex Monte-Carlo Masters

Principality of Monaco

Sunday, 14 April 2024

David Massey

Press Conference



(Through French Translation.)

DAVID MASSEY: Hi, everybody. Welcome this morning. Welcome here today. I hope you had a good week. I know there is still the final to happen still from now on, but I hope you had a good time in the press room and around.

This year we will break the record of 2023 again. We don't have the exact figures yet, but we know we broke the record from last year in spite of two days' rain. It didn't affect us too much, because the people came all the same. If we had a choice, we would agree with those two days' rain, because we also had seven days with sunshine, and this is important for an outdoor tournament.

We do have a project for a roof that would be resistant to wind, but it's not quite ready yet. Anyway, we had good weather for the last four days, and we think we were lucky with that. Normally we should have pretty good weather because we are on the French Riviera and it's spring, of course, but we have been lucky so far over the years for an outdoor tournament.

A more technical point, about the train, you know there is a train stop here at the Monte-Carlo Country Club, and we normally had 25,000 people over the week, nine days, coming from that train station. We know that this year we even have more and we broke again this record from last year with the train, which is important for us too, because we are trying to limit the number of people coming by road, by car.

So thank you to the SNCF, the French railways, and the Town Hall of Roquebrune-Cap-Martin for helping us with the train. Same thing also for Monaco. Thank you for their help to come to the club and to get out of the club.

We only had a difficult evening on the Wednesday, because it was raining and everybody came out at the same time as everybody was coming out of offices, so this was a bit of more heavy traffic, but more or less we were very grateful that the Mayor of Roquebrune-Cap-Martin opened up the road above the club here just before the tournament, because it was an important way to help

people get out of the club without having the roundabout here totally blocked in the evenings.

Now we have the finals, the doubles first and at 3:00 the singles. This tournament this year was very competitive. You can see that by the length of the matches. Yesterday in particular, but during the week also.

And now we'll see if Tsitsipas will be able to win the title for the third time. He likes playing here. He likes the conditions. It's almost as if he is at home. He lives here. And Ruud is trying to win his first final here. We know he's in good shape.

A year ago I already said I was totally unable to say who was going to win, and the match was very tight, so I believe this year will be the same. I think maybe we'll have three sets, but I have absolutely no opinion about which one will be able to win.

I would like also to thank all our sponsors. Without them it would be impossible to have the tournament. I would like to thank really all of them. They are all important.

We have a new partner that became visible on the Wednesday during this tournament for the first time, Yokohama. Otherwise we have the same sponsors that we had for many years.

In February we announced we would be able to have Lancaster too, and we were happy to have them as official supplier of sunscreen.

I also really want to thank all of you here as stakeholders for the tournament. You are really key. I thank you for being in person present at the tournament. I know it's not always easy. It means that you have to travel, and most of you are not local, so thank you for really being here.

I hope you have some value in being in person here. We are trying of course to give you, as much as we can, access to the players and good conditions for you to do your work. So thank you for your support. Again, without you either the tournament can't exist.



Any questions?

Q. Can you explain what the keys for success of this tournament are? Also, do you have a figure to trace the presence of Italians here in the tournament? It seems almost the tournament is an Italian tournament.

DAVID MASSEY: Well, we are just 11 kilometers away from Italy, and we always had a strong presence of Italians here. The figure is around 33% every year, but this year we know it's going to be more than that, because during all the calls we had during the past six months it was always, most of the time, from Italians. We will have the exact figure at the end of the tournament and we will give it to you by e-mail if you wish.

Also, the draw is very important. We always expect to have a strong draw. And this year we had even 10 out of the top-10 players, except that of course Alcaraz, who stayed here for five days, wasn't, in the end, able to play because he had an injury that was not that bad, but he didn't want to take the risk of jeopardizing his whole season after that. So it's too bad for him, but in the end we had at least 9 out of 10 top players, which was a very good draw.

I was also sad for Nadal, because he tried everything he could to be able to play here. Now he's in Barcelona. I saw him in Indian Wells, and I know he had trouble serving, so I really hope he can play a good tournament in Barcelona. It would be good for him. He really deserves to stop his career on the court whenever he chooses, so I hope he will be able to do that.

But as far as our product is concerned here, we have a beautiful draw to offer. We have a historical tournament. It's the oldest tournament in the world, I think, on clay. So as I said, we had a good draw, and also matches were very interesting and everything, and the weather is an important factor for us.

It's good that we had only two days' rain, because the weather can have a great impact on the tournament.

Q. Can you tell us a bit more about the roof project? How would it be and when?

DAVID MASSEY: Well, it will take at least two years or maybe more. We know the roof will not be on the Rainier III court, because around the court, the stands are not permanent. So it will be on court No. 2, as there is already a roof now, but we want to have more stands and also a bigger roof than the one we have that would be able to resist to wind, because for the time, the existing one, if there is wind we can't open it up.

So we need a roof that will be wind-resistant and that will protect a bit more the spectators sitting also in the stands, so a bigger roof. We will also try to increase the surface of the court.

We will of course keep wanting to avoid playing matches over there under the roof because the Rainier III court is a lot bigger, and it's difficult to change a match from there to a smaller court.

So we only will use that court with the roof if we really desperately need to make progress in the matches. It will be as a reserve. But it will be good to have the option, and also to be able to provide a TV product if necessary.

Q. You said you were preparing 2025 already. Can you tell us what will change for next year?

DAVID MASSEY: Good question. In fact, we have a project for the space dedicated to the players. It's too early to really talk about it right now, but we want to have more space for them. The conditions for the player that we have to welcome them are very important, and we have some solutions, but we will announce them later.

Whatever we do, it has to be done before July. For example, we added boxes on the main court, and we always try to do things even better year after year, and we want people to see that there is progress made in the tournament every year.

We want to make conditions better for the spectators, of course, for the players, and for you.

Q. About the umpires and the line calls, we read here and there that the ATP was going to choose to have electronic line judgments in the future for all tournaments, including this one, so what about the line judges here?

DAVID MASSEY: Well, yes, indeed this decision has been confirmed, and unless ATP changes their mind, there will be no longer linesmen next year here anymore.

Q. What do you think about the incident that happened yesterday with a line call?

DAVID MASSEY: Well, it's difficult, and this is why the ATP wants really to have the best system for line decisions, but I believe the linesmen that are here globally are of a very high quality. There is a tough selection for them, and they are coming from everywhere in the world.

So of course when something happens on a key point like yesterday, it's tough, but it's also, according to me, part of



the history of tennis, but anyway, next year it's going to be electronic.

Q. The calendar, we see tournaments adding days. Is Monte-Carlo going to stay from Sunday to Sunday? And second part of the question, we would like the roundtables to be back. Can you do that?

DAVID MASSEY: For your first question, we already have the dates for next year that are 5th to 13th of April, 2025. So it's going to be the same format next year too.

Could we imagine adding some days? Why not? But, you know, there is a fixed number of weeks on the calendar. We can't extend that, especially in between Grand Slams. So we'll see.

We are, for the time being, very happy with our format. It makes it very intense, very competitive. All the players are there starting on the first round, and even the qualifying matches are very interesting and competitive.

Even if it's a shorter tournament, it stays very competitive. The advantage of this format is that the cutoff, the last player in is highly ranked, and the last four days they are all playing, and it's an exceptional product for TV and our fans.

So I'm not saying the other formats are not good. It's a good format, because it protects also the players. What I'm saying is that both formats can co-exist.

We have a 56-player draw, and we are happy with it for the time being. We believe it's a great product we are offering to our fans.

As to the roundtable, this is something we have to discuss with the ATP, but I did hear the request for having those roundtables again. It's a different format without the transcripts and it's more a discussion.

We believe also it is an advantage for the journalists who come onsite to be able to see the players like this. But this has to be done with the ATP. I trust the ATP to choose the best format.

There are many requests from televisions, also, and we have to discuss with the ATP, but we hope we'll be able to find a solution.

Q. (In English.) I wanted to ask, since the tournament has been positioned in such a prestigious way, and this whole area is a hotspot for tourism, would you ever consider doing something of an exhibitional nature before the tournament in order to attract even

more attention, media following, things like that? It probably is a natural fit; am I correct?

DAVID MASSEY: (In English.) Can you expand your question, sir? I did not understand it.

Q. (In English.) Just wondering whether the tournament has ever considered doing something of an exhibitional nature, like an exhibitional match before the beginning, things that we have been seeing, for example, at the Australian Open?

DAVID MASSEY: (In English.) Right. Certainly from an angle of charity, which would be if we can raise money for good causes, that would be something that would be of interest to us.

So it isn't off the table, but I can say right now it's not something that is planned for 2025 either. So a charity element, we do focus on that.

You may notice that we have a collaboration with Jean-Luc in support with BNP Paribas, our second-biggest partner. It's called Points For Change. That provides a donation for every point played. Today it's 50 Euros per point for both finals.

Our commitment is to give a donation at least at the same level as 2023, which I think was in the region of 37,000 Euros. But we do certainly have our mindset on supporting charities. There is actually another charity event planned in June. I'll let the Federation announce that in due course.

But I think to answer your question, if we can do things that add value and also for a good cause, I think it would be great. So, yes, to do that before the tournament begins is something that we are interested in.

The only thing that I would just flag is that when this sort of thing happens, obviously you rely on good weather. With our program, we can always sort of go a next day, but when you plan a particular charity event and it's that day or not at all, it's weather-dependent here.

So it's not as easy as the tournament because you can adjust the schedule, but you can't really do that with a charity match, because once you go into the tournament, you have lost a window.

But again, anything we can do to raise money for charities, we certainly would like to do.

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