

Rolex Paris Masters

Sunday, 6 November 2022

Paris, France

Novak Djokovic

Press Conference



H. RUNE/N. Djokovic

3-6, 6-3, 7-5

THE MODERATOR: Tough luck, Novak. You know Holger very well. What impressed you the most about him today?

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: His fighting spirit, I think. You know, he stayed composed also mentally all the way to the last shot. For somebody who is so young to show this composure and maturity in the big match like this is very impressive. He's had a week of his life, I mean, winning against four or five top-10 players, you know, it's quite impressive.

He deserved it. You know, I had so many chances. I mean, all sets. Early in the second again, like the last two matches. Love-40, didn't use that. Just missed by little the backhand down the line passing shot Love-40. 30-40, incredible get he had from my smash. Just like one of these moments where match goes one way or the other way.

I thought that if I would break his serve there, you know, I would keep the momentum going, but he managed to turn around. Again, the crowd got on his side. Lifted him up.

But very exciting match. You know, had my chances. Had a break in the third, 30-Love. He was brave. He went for some shots. I was not active enough I think with my feet. Some break chances. Just some uncharacteristic mistakes.

It is what it is. You win some; some you lose. Yesterday I could have easily lost the match against Tsitsipas but I won. Today I didn't. That's okay. It was a very good week.

THE MODERATOR: Questions in English.

Q. Novak, absolutely there were so many opportunities and chances in the match, but do you think the biggest opportunity for you was that 3-1...

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: 3-1, 30-Love, then he went for the huge return, caught the let, passed me, caught the net and then went over. That game again on deuce, net, over. Yeah, I mean, just is one of these things when it happens, it happens.

But, you know, I can't say he just won because he was lucky. He was brave. He went for the shots. I wasn't active enough and decisive enough in the important moments.

Unfortunately, bounced back against me.

Q. You have faced also this season Carlos Alcaraz. Between Holger and Carlos, which are the main difference as opponents?

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: Well, they are similar in terms of physicality. I think they are both really fit. They train very hard. They are very dedicated guys. They defend, both of them, extremely well.

Rune has better backhand. Alcaraz has better forehand. But they are both improving on those shots that maybe are not as good as maybe other shot. But they, you know, when I say, you know, is "not as good," meaning it's not huge difference. I mean, they have great shots. I mean, great forehand from Rune or great backhand from Alcaraz.

They are very complete players for 19-year-olds. It's quite impressive. Also their energy on the court, just wanting, motivating themselves and wanting to do well and staying mentally present, it's impressive.

Q. Just a question about the ATP Finals. You owned this tournament for many years. Won five times, four times in a row. Since 2015, no title and you won final, which is almost weird because we all know how good you are. But this year you are probably more fresh than you have been the last few years.

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: Yeah.

Q. I suppose you're very hungry. How important

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would it be for you to win ATP Finals?

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: Well, every tournament is important at this stage of my career. Anywhere I play, I try to win. That's not a secret.

That's kind of my mentality and approach coming into Torino. I feel very good on the court. You know, I think I'm playing very, very good tennis.

Of course I'm disappointed with the loss today, but I was very close. It was just very few points that decided a winner. But the level of tennis that I'm playing is high, and I like my chances. You know, of course every match is like finals there. You know, there is no easy matches.

You've got to be fit, fresh. Good thing is that you have a day between every match in the group stage, so you have time to recover between each match, which is good.

Let's see. You know, I played there last year. Played really good tennis. Played semis, tight match against Zverev, who was eventual champion. So I know that the conditions are different. The ball is flying more because it's altitude. It's quite fast. You've got to serve well. I'll be there some days before to train, and hopefully be at my best.

Q. You told Holger how happy you were for him and how much you liked his style of play. I was wondering, when you're playing against someone who's also clearly got so much power in his game, does he remind you of yourself perhaps just a few years ago? If so, what does it feel playing against someone like that?

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: Yeah, I said that yesterday. I think he does have a lot of elements that remind me of myself when I was his age. Just a very competitive spirit, very confident, going for the shots. Backhand, very solid backhand, great backhand. Dropshots, good return, mixing things up, coming to the net.

So, I mean, he has improved a lot. We played last year in US Open. Since then his level is higher. Two, three levels higher, for sure. So I'm sure that he's going to keep going. He's got, you know, big objectives and goals. Understandably so, because he's really a player that has potential to reach great heights.

Q. We saw you struggling physically a bit in the third set. We saw you stretching your leg and calling the physio. Just wanted to know how important was the physical part in the outcome of the match?

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: I mean, oh, I don't want to talk about that, because I know that you guys might take that as, you know, excuse or something like this why I lost. No, everything was okay. I mean, it's normal that when you play day after day and you have some tightness here and there, but I didn't have an injury. I fought till the last moment. So it wasn't to be for me today.

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