

US OPEN

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Casper Ruud

Press Conference

C. RUUD/E. Nava

7-6, 3-6, 6-4, 7-6

THE MODERATOR: Tough, hard-fought four-set win. Your thoughts.

CASPER RUUD: Yeah, it was tough, like you said. I think both of us, we fought hard. There were some great rallies and I think Emilio played great. I was happy with my level. He came out firing from both the forehand and the backhand, was serving well, and playing very aggressive.

Obviously it's tough in the first rounds of a slam when you're high-seeded and whoever you play kind of can play freely with their shoulders down and nothing to lose really.

The pressure is obviously on the seeded one. As a seeded player, you feel a little more pressure and you have everything to lose against someone who is younger, can play freely and can play aggressive.

Yeah, I'm very happy that I was able to win those two tiebreaks and hold him back and not go into a fifth set.

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

Q. You probably would have wanted a few more matches this summer. Curious what your preparation was like coming into the tournament?

CASPER RUUD: Yeah, for sure, summer and whole year really except for a couple of tournaments really have been earlier exits than I have hoped many times.

But I think Grand Slam confidence-wise I think I am maybe one of the players with, you know, higher confidence or belief in myself due to the fact that the last year I have been in the finals a couple of times. I won some tough matches, some tough four-setters, five-setters.

I think I have proven myself, and maybe others, that, you know, I won't play perfect every match but I can be somewhat of a tough player to beat, in a way, if I'm



physically ready and mentally also prepared for battle, which I think every five-setter is. I think the mindset is more kind of to try to make it tough for the opponent to beat me in the best-of-five-set match other than playing flawless for three perfect sets. It's not always how it goes.

I think that was my mindset in the previous slams where I did well. Same this year. It's a long tournament, a long journey if you want to do well. Just got the first win, and that's nice. You get into this mood where it's match, day off, match, day off if you do well. I like it.

Q. The lob at 6-5 in the fourth set breaker, you apologized for it but it looked like you wanted to do it and you hit it pretty clean. Was it a mishit?

CASPER RUUD: Kind of. It wasn't honestly what I aimed for. I was a bit surprised he came to the net. In a way I maybe wanted to try to do something as somewhat of a passing.

I was a little fortunate that it was somewhat of a mishit and it kind of dipped down just inside the line to set up match point. He just answered with another great forehand cross just in the corner on the line. So I think we were both kind of back and forth, had margins there. But it was really nice just to see last forehand just stay long from his side and know that I'm on to the next match.

Like I said, it was a hard-fought match and battle, and I'm happy with the level that I played. I think I can build on this performance.

Q. That final was historic in a lot of ways last year for both you and Carlos. Just being a year away from it now and looking back, what was that experience like for you?

CASPER RUUD: It was amazing at the time, and then coming back here, this year was a little more emotional than I thought, because when I came back to Roland Garros this year, I more felt like nerves and I didn't have that many days on-site before the tournament started. Here I was here for a week now and first day I arrived I was just kind of felt like yesterday in the way we were here last year.

Walking into the locker room, I wish I could have seen my



name on the champions wall except for his, obviously. Since it was the final at least feel like I was closest to win out of the three finals that I reach. It stings a little more but you can also use it as motivation to one day lift the trophy. That's high words of course and high goals. That's still my dream, still my biggest goal in my career to win a Grand Slam.

I think I proved to myself yesterday that I can do better than I expect of myself sometimes. Every year I come back here at the US Open I will know that I reached a final, I was close at some point or before, and that will always be motivating in a way.

Q. Can you talk about that confidence you alluded to. You're a guy who has three Grand Slam finals out of the last six. How much does that help you, especially against a player like Emilio? Seems like you were just waiting and knew you were going to have your chances in that match if you just hung around.

CASPER RUUD: Yeah, it's sort of like I said earlier that it's hard to play perfect tennis for three sets and win three sets with perfect tennis. A match is going to go up and down, you will face breakpoints, you might get broken, you might break back and so on. The most important is obviously to get through the first rounds and be physically fit, and mentally I was ready because it's a long match. Every match, maybe you don't play five hours every match but every match out there is longer than typical or usual for us.

It's a whole kind of different vibe in a way in five-sets match. Obviously you don't want to get off to a bad start but you have more time to real it back in if you lose the first set or so on. A match you normally would lose two sets to love you can also turn around. I think that's important to have experience.

You know, I don't have the perfect record of turning a Love-2 down match back to winning 3-2 but I have done it a couple times and that also brings some kind of confidence to the table knowing I'm playing a younger guy, a little more unexperienced than myself. He was really fast and, you know, probably fit enough to play five sets. That's what I'm saying.

I think I just felt strong and in a way ready for a fifth set if we had to go there, and if we got into the fifth set I would think about other matches I have been able to win in five sets.

Q. Speaking about Carlos and just how young he is, are you surprised to see the kind of poise he has and what he's accomplished in this past year?

CASPER RUUD: Yeah, it's gone fast, you know, from just, you know, young teenager to best player in the world, it's quite a rise, and the timeline he's done it in is really, really impressive.

I remember seeing him for the first time live I think was maybe Acapulco in 2021, could be earlier, but, you know, he was even younger and more unexperienced. I remember talking to his coach Juanki, and, you know, congratulating him for winning a bunch of challengers that I had done in the past, and he was awarded I believe a wildcard to the tournament which was very deserved.

Then Juanki is very humble and he said, Thank you but now let's see. This is a different level. We are going to have to expect a couple more losses now.

That's kind of how it went there. In Acapulco he lost to Zverev, not easy, I would say, but I think it was like 3 and 2 or 3 and 1. Of course he was very young.

When I saw him there the first time I wouldn't imagine that, you know, a year and a half later we would play a Grand Slam final because he was just so young, and, yeah, he had great potential, but at least from what I saw back then, was a little unorganized. Then a couple months later he beat me, me kicked my ass in Marbella in a tournament.

Just from Acapulco 2021 until I played him it's not a long time, and he just, not going to say became a much better player but he was just two different players there at least. From there I just realized this guy is going to be really good and kind of changed my perception from one day to the other, in a way, because I think it was only couple weeks or a month or month and a half between the two times that I saw him for the first time and played him for the first time.

Yeah, he impressed me, impressed everyone, and he will be probably "the" player to beat for a long time.

Q. I was wondering if I could ask you about your Twitter account. I guess it's called X now. I think people think of you being quite serious but your Twitter presence is light and funny and you engage a lot with fans. What do you make of the tennis Twitter community and how you're able to engage with them the way that you do?

CASPER RUUD: Yeah, it's this new, I guess, feed where you can put, like, I don't follow that many people on Twitter or X, but you can get, like, content that is kind of based for you, in a way, based on who you follow and what you have done in the past.

So I read a bunch of these, like, so-called tennis experts

and their opinions, and it's just insane. It annoys me in a way, because it's just -- I feel like if you haven't played professional in the past, most of them have no clue what they are talking about.

Their opinions, for fans, if anyone listens to what I'm saying, I would just not take more than maybe 5% of what so-called tennis experts on Twitter say as good info because it's just not the way it goes.

I could probably reply to many other things, but I just leave it, because it's just interesting to see how people just exaggerate all the time on social media about anything. You go from being the best player in the world to the worst player in the history from one week to another, and it shouldn't be taken serious.

But it's new modern world, I guess. Sometimes I like to interact, because, you know, I feel like sometimes my opinion can matter, but it's more I have to be really annoyed to actually take the time to actually reply to someone (smiling).

But, yeah, it's a wicked place to spend too much time, I think. Because also reading about yourself is not really nice always.

I don't know. I take it with a smile, but sometimes I just, yeah, I guess I can't control myself. It's easy to kind of communicate to other fans or haters, if you want to call them that.

It's worth it sometimes, but it can be dangerous to spend too much time there, that's for sure.

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