

US OPEN

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Daniil Medvedev

Press Conference

D. MEDVEDEV/A. Balazs

6-1, 6-1, 6-0

THE MODERATOR: Straight sets. An hour and 14 minutes. Assess your performance, please.

DANIIL MEDVEDEV: Yeah, that's probably the fastest three-set match I played, even though I'm not sure, but probably.

I felt not bad on the court. Quite well. Looking forward to next rounds. I think, you know, the goal is always to try to play better and better every match, because every match is going to be tougher and tougher. Let's see how the next one goes.

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

Q. When things are going as well as they are for the first two-and-a-half sets, how difficult is it to stay focused and stay the course?

DANIIL MEDVEDEV: Yeah, I think it's fine. I think at one moment I thought I had total control of the match, I tried to maybe work some shots. Even I felt I was playing better and better throughout the match, I was hitting stronger, and more confident in my shots, so that was great.

Yeah, in general, felt great. So focus was there. Hopefully it's going to be there for the next matches also.

Q. You have Chris O'Connell next who you have played a couple of times this year. You had a very tough match against him. What are your memories of that match and what makes him a difficult opponent?

DANIIL MEDVEDEV: Yeah, in Doha was a very tough match. I think we played only twice, and one of them, if I'm not wrong, here in 2020. I remember playing well, because I was not that confident in my game at the time. I mean, it was first tournament after six-months' break and stuff like this.



In Doha, actually that was when I was in full confidence, amazing run, and stuff like this. He was really close to beating me. It was a great match from him. It was a very tough one. He served particularly well, like served and volleyed a lot. But this doesn't bother me that much unless the serve is good, but his serve was pretty good.

And I saw today they made a lot of aces, both of them. That's his strengths. Need to be ready to return well, and at the same time be very strong in my serve because like this you put pressure on his serve.

Q. Since it didn't happen today I hope I can ask you a fun question about what happens when you are fighting yourself out there. Sometimes it looks like on TV almost you miss a shot, and some other players much more often, like you're yelling at your team afterward. Why do tennis players do that? It doesn't happen in basketball or soccer where you miss a shot and you're yelling at someone else.

DANIIL MEDVEDEV: I don't know. I don't really have an explanation. I'm trying to think.

I would generally think that tennis drives people crazy. When I say "people," tennis players, drive themselves crazy. In my opinion, mostly because there are days, even let's say practice, it's the same in the matches, but practice days where you come on the court, you know, you warm up a little bit. You're, like, Wow, I'm feeling great. The forehand is going where I want. The backhand is there. Can even do a dropshot or maybe a slice from time to time. Everything feels well.

Then there is going to be days you slept well, you wake up well. You can't hit the ball in the court. You get frustrated, because then at one moment when you miss maybe 10, let's say, you're gonna be starting looking at your coach, like, So what's happening? It happens to me, let's say, I miss a forehand long, so usually when you miss long, you have to cover the ball a little bit more so it goes in the court.

Sometimes you think you did it, and then you ask your coach, Well, I did it? What happened? Then there goes you argue, you talk and stuff like this, so I would think it's because of this, yeah.

Q. I want to follow up on that. Do you think the dynamic is different because you are the boss, actually? You hire the coach whereas in other sports the coach tends to be the boss.

DANIIL MEDVEDEV: Well, generally I would think that in team sports I kind of see what you mean, because in team sports, it's the team who hires the coach.

So probably if the player says something to the coach and, let's say, they disagree, I mean -- wait. Let me think about it. I had the thought and I completely lost it, because it's a good question.

I think it's more not about who hires the coach, because in tennis I think it's still very important for the coach to kind of be the boss, because otherwise it's not gonna be a player-coach relationship. It's going to be more like either player-friend or when player is the boss, I don't think it's good.

But it's more about that you are being one and one with your coach. So you're every day with him and he has only one player and you have only him as a coach. You don't have any teammates.

So as soon as something happens, you either address yourself, and let's say, I don't know, break a racquet or scream when you're not happy with yourself, or you think that you did something, as I just said, and you ask your coach, Okay, but I thought I did. And then there goes this argument.

Whereas in team sports sometimes you can yell at your teammates, other team maybe, and stuff like this. And the coach must be much stricter because he has to control the team. He doesn't have to control only one player.

So I would guess that if he doesn't impose himself, he's gonna be very fast taken out by the team, anyway, because they are going to take control. He has to always show this who is the boss in control. Whereas in tennis you don't want this, because then you're going to put the player down and it's not going to be good at one moment.

Hopefully I answered your question (smiling).

Q. I just want to ask you your general feelings on play on Ashe. Do you think over the last couple of years when you played on there a lot that it's given you a significant enough of experience that you now feel like you have an advantage against most players? How does it rate against maybe some of the other big show courts that you play on?

DANIIL MEDVEDEV: Well, first of all, I hope so. I won a lot of matches on Ashe. I don't think I have lost actually a lot.

A lot of great matches, and I remember last year against Nick, playing someone like Nick in New York, I don't think there is going to be much players on tour where the crowd is going to be, like, 50/50, something like this. That's how I felt. The crowd was going for both of us, depending on the moment of the match. That was amazing feeling.

I feel like honestly every time I go on Ashe right now, I feel like the crowd is there for me. I honestly feel like New York loves me and that's very rare that I say something like this about the city (smiling).

It's a great feeling, and I really always love coming back. Always excited to play there.

What was the second kind of part...

Q. How does it compare to other courts? Do you, like, enjoy the space and the bigness of it?

DANIIL MEDVEDEV: Yeah, yeah, I enjoy everything about it. I think in general it's just a great arena first of all, the biggest in tennis, I guess. So that already makes it special.

I would honestly say there are a lot of great courts, but especially night session is different to day session. Night session there is something, everyone says it, there is something special in US Open.

But even day session is pretty fun too. So in general, I might put it to a No. 1, but I don't want to also disrespect other great arenas. Let's put it somewhere at the top.

Q. What do you see as the biggest challenge this year to reaching the final of the tournament, and who would you look forward to playing in the final? Alcaraz, Djokovic, or somebody else?

DANIIL MEDVEDEV: Well, Alcaraz, I can't play him in the final, not possible, so maybe semis.

In general, you know, it's kind of -- I know I'm not someone who doesn't look at the draw so I know that Alcaraz in the semis part of the draw, Rublev is quarters. You have to take it match by match. You have to enjoy the moment. Try to get there.

Of course we know that the biggest, let's say, players right now are Carlos and Novak, but, well, they have to win their matches also to meet me, if I'm there (smiling). Same

works for me.

So the most important now is try to win my matches step by step. Then see how they go. But of course, I mean, Carlos and Novak are biggest names right now, biggest favorites. But they have to win their matches also to be there.

Q. On the subject of court assignments, I don't know if you saw what Holger tweeted before his match and the comments he made yesterday?

DANIIL MEDVEDEV: I saw a little bit (smiling).

Q. I just wondered how much sympathy you had with what he was saying, like, whether you went through that process when you were kind of first having your best results, feeling, like, Hey, why am I not getting the best court assignments?

DANIIL MEDVEDEV: I think it's a very tricky question, because you always have to see it in perspective. I don't remember who exactly from men's side they had yesterday. Ashe, we don't even talk about it. I think it was Frances and Novak. Then I think two Americans, so nothing to say.

Armstrong, Tsitsipas, more, I would say, let's call it more Grand Slam experience than Holger. Two or three finals. Two, I guess.

It's, I mean, I can understand his frustration. I can understand why the tournament put him there. The thing is that you always want to, even if it happens to you, you always probably want to talk about it after the match, because especially if you win, because then it's a little bit easier to kind of push your way through, let's say.

But, you know, if he continues the way he's playing right now, soon he's going to only play on big courts.

So did it happen to me? I remember once I complained, and it was in Australian Open. But then I love the director. I think we're in great relationship with Craig. He actually said he didn't want to put me late at night. He straightaway came to me and said, I would be happy to put you on Rod Laver, but he didn't want to put me late at night. Sometimes it's also a misunderstanding between players and the tournament.

So, yeah, Holger, again, if Holger stays where he is, plays as good as he does, he's going to play more on the bigger courts.

Q. You have played Chris O'Connell a couple of times.

I think it was tight in Doha and then the match over here a couple of years ago in an empty stadium. What are your thoughts about going in against him this time?

DANIIL MEDVEDEV: He's a very strong player. I think this year, I don't know if it's his best year of his career, but I feel like he had better wins maybe, especially in terms of ranking, than he had before. I feel like he's more consistent.

Yeah, the match in Doha, he played very well against me. It was very, I felt like, high-quality match. So I'm expecting not less than that.

I saw a little bit the end when I came off my court, and great composure from him on the tiebreak. He was leading, lost a little bit advantage, still managed to win. I mean, not much more to add. Great player, and I know I need to be at my best. I know I need to have these matches at the beginning of Grand Slam to see where you are and if you're ready to go the rest of the way.

Q. Few more people in the stands?

DANIIL MEDVEDEV: Yeah, a little bit more. Let's see which court we play, but yeah, it's going to be a little bit different. But the match here in empty stadium was really great for me, so I hope to play the same.

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