

US OPEN

Tuesday, August 29, 2023

New York, New York, USA

Carlos Alcaraz

Press Conference

C. ALCARAZ/D. Koepfer

6-2, 3-2 (ret.)

THE MODERATOR: Carlos, even though a shortened match, give us an idea of how you thought you were playing, how you thought your performance was up until the point where the match had to be stopped.

CARLOS ALCARAZ: Well, I felt great during the match. I start pretty well. Really focus. Honestly, I didn't expect to play such a great level the beginning, the first round, here in the US Open.

I am very, very happy with the level, even if Domi had to retire. Have to see myself and hopefully to keep that level into the next round.

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. Can you talk about the sleeveless Rafa look for Nike? How did you like that?

CARLOS ALCARAZ: Honestly, when I wear the sleeves, I was thinking about Rafa when he wear that. He won that US Open, right?

I love to wear that sometimes in some specific tournaments. Here in the US Open, I supposed to play last year, but it wasn't. This year it's a good, good outfit, so I love it.

Q. You talked about the nicknames. Talk about the great nicknames, your vibe with the fans.

CARLOS ALCARAZ: Yeah, I mean, we try to bring good vibes to the crowd, to the people. I try to be myself all the time. I think the people love that part of me. I always happy, smiling. I love that people call me Carlitos, my nickname. That's it.

It's great to know that people love that, as well.

Q. This is a new experience for you, to come back for

the first time and defend a major. What did it feel like returning to and walking out on court and playing that match? Were there a lot of nerves? Was it just excitement?

CARLOS ALCARAZ: Well, I was excited to play my first round here in US Open. I mean, it was great to step on court again in the Arthur Ashe after such a great run last year. I was excited to come back.

I'm not thinking about the defending the title. I was not thinking about I was the champion last year. I just focus on play my best level, to recover the level that I played last year, try to do same things that I did last year. That's the only thing that I'm thinking right now.

I try to be apart about all the pressure people put of me about the defending champion.

Q. Can you describe your emotions now? How do you feel? Happy you're going to have an early night or are you disappointed or...

CARLOS ALCARAZ: A mix of both. Obviously I want to play battles. I want to play the full matches. This is not the best way to win a match.

But obviously playing night session, I'm happy to come back early, have some rest. Well, a little bit more than I expect before starting the match.

It's going to be better for me to recover into the next round.

Q. I heard when you were younger, your coaches thought about maybe giving you a single-handed backhand. Is that true? In general, how has your backhand changed and developed over the years?

CARLOS ALCARAZ: Well, I think it's not true (smiling). I mean, when I was young, I loved to try new things. Probably one-handed backhand was one of those things that I practicing just one day. I love to do it different shots, different things on court. Probably that day I watched Roger Federer match, and I try to imitate him.

I didn't practice too much that one-handed backhand. I think my backhand, it was improving during these years. When I was young, my forehand was my best shot. It's still



my best shot, but I feel really comfortable with my backhand.

Q. I want to ask you about No. 1. Novak will be No. 1 when this tournament is finished. Does it come into your mind at all? Players in the past have said when they've got to No. 1 once, that's fine, it doesn't matter. It's not all that important. Been there, done that. How do you feel about something like that? Obviously you'd like to be No. 1, but does it really matter to you?

CARLOS ALCARAZ: Well, right now it's a goal for me honestly. I said before that we are having a really good battle for the No. 1, Novak and I.

I knew that he was going to recover the No. 1 after US Open. When the tournament is over, I will try to recover as soon as possible. That's my goal. I am working for that.

The season has a lot of tournaments until the year is over. I'll try to recover it before the tournament end, before the year end.

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