

US OPEN

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New York, New York, USA

Casper Ruud

Press Conference

ZHANG Z./C. Ruud

6-4, 5-7, 6-2, 0-6, 6-2

THE MODERATOR: Obviously not the results you were hoping for. Can you give us your perspective on the match.

CASPER RUUD: Yeah, it was tough obviously. Disappointing to lose. The goal was to stay longer, that's for sure, win more matches.

But I have to give credit to Zhang. He came out firing from the forehand, from the backhand, served great. Just made me a little uncomfortable at times. Played really well in the sets that he won.

Yeah, there are things that I could do better that I need to kind of analyze a little, go back home and try to work on, come back as a better and stronger player next time I step on the court for competition.

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. You played him at the French Open. How much better has he gotten since then?

CASPER RUUD: Yeah, well, it's different surface, for sure. That kind of makes a difference, at least in my eyes mostly. He plays similar kind of style on both surfaces.

Yeah, I think he probably played better today. He probably feels more comfortable on hard court compared to clay. I guess he grew up playing mostly hard court. I don't know, I'm just guessing right here. You could tell that he feels comfortable.

Today there were many times where I kind of felt like I hit a good serve or whatever, and he would just smack a return back inches from the baseline, make it really tough for me.

That's kind of the advantage for me when I play on clay that's not easy to do compared to hard courts. I get more time to kind of play my topspin, heavy shots. They bounce



up more on clay than here.

That's no excuses as to why I lost, but you could tell his game style was tougher to kind of compete with here.

Q. Talk about the New York crowd and their appreciation for you.

CASPER RUUD: Yeah, it's loud here in New York. I've been welcomed really well this year. Since last year and what happened, of course, I think I might have gained some fans here in New York. It was pretty packed in my first round on Court 17. Today was also quite a good stadium, Grandstand.

Yeah, I enjoy it. I'll always enjoy coming back here. I will always have the memory of reaching the final here last year. Every time I come here I will try to think about that and use that as motivation to do well in the tournament.

This year it didn't work, but there will be a new year next year or next time here.

Q. At the beginning of the fifth set, you got in an exchange with the chair umpire. You were agitated. What was that?

CASPER RUUD: Yeah, it's just little hard to keep up with the rules at times. There were big changes in the kind of toilet or changing clothes rules after I think was it 2021 or last year or something. Even here at the US Open there were a couple of matches where this happened.

From what I understood, they kept it down to one change of clothes, and you could have one toilet break on top of that if you really need it, if it was emergency. One of the breaks can go up to five minutes and the next one has to be short, maximum of three minutes. That's what my perception of the rule was.

I just felt like the second change took longer than three minutes. At least on the ATP Tour I've seen cases in the previous year where someone goes over the three minutes the second time, out on a break, clock starts ticking as I'm ready to serve, I will win basically every point where he's absent from the court because I'm ready and he's not. That's going to give him a point penalty. That's been happening on the ATP Tour.



I was just a little in a way curious if there were different rules here in Grand Slams. Some rules are different from ATP and ITFs. It's ITF who is hosting here, so different rules.

My point of view, I was ready for two, three minutes. I just felt like he was taking more than three minutes. That's why I got a little frustrated. I was in the flow, I won the fourth set 6-Love, I wanted to kind of keep it going. I have to wait for six, seven minutes because it takes a little while to get into the room, then five minutes in the room, then he has to come back to the court.

It's six, seven minutes where I kind of walk around doing nothing. Lost my maybe groove there, and that's frustrating, because you're on a roll, you won the fourth set, you want to kind of keep going.

That's why I was a little frustrated, kind of asked the umpire about what the rules are here.

Q. What happened in the fourth set? 6-Love, kind of crazy.

CASPER RUUD: Yeah, well, it's how it goes sometimes in five sets. I broke him early, then he did a couple of mistakes. I broke him. I held my serve, broke him right away, 3-Love. When you break him the second time, 4-Love, hold to 5-Love, I feel like he kind of gave up the set. That's kind of how it goes. Two breaks, then it's tough to get it back.

I guess sometimes people in Grand Slams, they throw away the last game to save energy for the next set. That was kind of how I viewed it.

Q. In the fifth set, how much do you think it was your opponent playing well or you not being able to find your best tennis?

CASPER RUUD: It's a mix of both. He plays so fast that I kind of find it difficult to set up my shots. That's something I need to be better at, for sure. Flatten out the shots, kind of counterattack when people are playing this fast against me.

Like I said, credit's to him because he went for it. Many of the shots he went big on, they went in. That's frustrating of course because typically when somebody goes that big, mistakes will kind of creep up, especially in a five-set match. I felt like they didn't in the fifth set, when I thought there would come more mistakes.

Two breaks down, I fought all the way till the end. I didn't

want to give up. I don't want to leave New York tomorrow, but that's going to have to be the case this time.

Q. Could you reflect on how 2023 has been. What would you look to do different for next year?

CASPER RUUD: Yeah, it hasn't been what I hoped. But I was pretty honest I think after last year that I have to prepare for a tough year because things last year went kind of beyond my expectations for myself. Starting the year at world No. 3, I didn't think that was going to be realistic when we started, let's say, 2022.

I kind of prepared and talked pretty openly about I'm expecting at some point there will be some kind of down period or will be a year or months where I don't get it right. That's part of the sport, I guess. It's not fun to be in that period.

Of course, this year the highlight was Roland Garros, kind of changed a little bit everything for me. Without Roland Garros I would be pretty disappointed on how the year has been. If you told me in January you would reach the final of a Grand Slam this year, of course are you going to say no? You're going to say yes, for sure. I'm very happy I got that result.

But overall, in general, I'm disappointed with other results. I think there's time to kind of go back, reflect on certain losses that I hope can be kind of shaved off in the future in a way, losses that I want to try to avoid, get some rest home, then go strong from Laver Cup and on.

It's going to be a hectic fall. I need to be ready mentally, physically. I think last year I played so much, US Open final, I went straight to Davis Cup, straight to Laver Cup, then straight to Asia, that I was just really tired in Asia. That's not going to be the case this year. I'm going to get some time home, rest, work on my game, yeah, be fit and strong hopefully for Asia.

The goal is still try to make it to Nitto Finals. It's going to be a hectic race for that, as well. I hope I can be one of the contenders to get there in the end.

Q. Can you talk about Zhang's game, which part of his game you find most challenging?

CASPER RUUD: Yeah, he plays really aggressive. I think today he played better forehand than in Roland Garros, was more mistakes from the forehand last time. That was my game plan, to try to play heavy to his forehand, try to make him run on the forehand. He was just slapping winners cross-court, down the line, coming to the net. Made it really uncomfortable for me, played fast. Credit to

him. I think he played really good honestly.

I mean, I'm not sitting here super disappointed with things that I could have done better or my level, but at the most important moments he was the better player, he stepped up. That was different from Paris. I think in Paris I was the one who really stepped up when I had to. It's a different surface, of course.

But he has a great serve, beautiful backhand, and forehand also. When it's on, it's on and really dangerous. Yeah, I was impressed in a way how he played. He's going to be a threat for many years.

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