

US OPEN

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New York, New York, USA

Novak Djokovic

Press Conference



N. DJOKOVIC/B. Gojo

6-2, 7-5, 6-4

THE MODERATOR: Novak, you know your game better than anybody else. Are you satisfied with where your game is at this point going into week two?

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: I am. I am satisfied. I like how I entered the match today. Good intensity, great first set. Obviously I didn't want to in a way repeat the first set or first couple sets from the third round where I was a little bit flat, I would say, and wasn't bringing the intensity that I brought tonight. That made a difference, especially in the first set.

Yeah, second set was quite close. He made an early break. I came back. Obviously one of the keys to the win today was try to neutralize his serve, get as many serves back in play as possible, make him run. He's a big guy. Obviously moves well for his height, but is not maybe the best mover. I knew that's where tactically my chance is.

I knew that's where tactically my chance is. I think I've done well, particularly in the second and third set in some key moments, held my nerve. I served well, and read his serve, made him play always an extra shot. I'm pleased to go through in straights.

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

Q. (Off microphone.)

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: It's a pleasure to have Aaron in the stands tonight for the match. I'm hope he enjoyed himself. Obviously him, Tom Brady being in my box for Roland Garros finals, and sitting next to my wife, was a huge honor. I have a relationship with Tom for several years. We go back. I have tremendous respect for him.

His longevity, I feel like his way of approaching recovery, is something that I feel like is a subject that interests us both. We spoke a lot on that topic. Hopefully we will more pick each other's brains in the future.

Yeah, I mean, I try to maintain and nurture relationships with athletes from different sports because, as an athlete, of course I relate to them, I identify myself with what they are doing, and. I can understand the pain, the sacrifice, the dedication.

I respect the greatness, especially the guys that have made it to an all-time great level in their respective sports. Those are the kind of people that you want to be around. You want to learn things from them because you never know, there are things that can be so inspirational, as they are in my relationship with Tom.

Zlatan, my favorite football player, no doubt. Soccer, as you call it here. His Balkan mentality is something that is very familiar to me, let's say, even though maybe it looks weird to the rest of the world. I understand him very, very well, have known him the last 15 years.

Nikola Jokic, best basketball player in the world at the moment. Incredible guy. Everyone is so amazed with his skills, what he does on a basketball court. I'm not a basketball expert, so I can't really talk about his game so much, but I'm a huge fan.

Obviously a Serbian basketball player coming from Serbia, dominating the NBA, is something that doesn't happen very often. I think it never happened in the history of our basketball in Serbia, that we had best basketball player in the NBA. That's amazing. We all love him, support him.

Currently there's a world championship in basketball happening. We're in quarters. I follow that. I try to stay up to speed with all the happenings in sports. Volleyball. Track and field world championship was some weeks ago.

Of course, I follow. That's my sector. That's my kind of field of life. I understand what they are going through. I admire a lot of them.

Q. If you keep winning, you'll play two Americans in the next two matches. What are your thoughts on seeing that sort of production from this country, which hasn't happened in a while on the men's side? Also when you do play someone in their home country, what is that dynamic like? Can there be such a thing as a bit of a home-court advantage when there are



thousands of people cheering...

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: Well, I assume there's going to be more support for Taylor Fritz in our next match. Obviously eventually if I win, to play Shelton or Tiafoe in the semis.

It's expected. We're in America playing against home players. It's something that I would be surprised if it's otherwise, to be honest. So I know what I'm expecting, and I'm going to get ready for that mentally.

Again, matches are only going to get tougher from now on. It's quarterfinals of a slam. I think it's important for a very big and important country in the tennis world, like America is, to have three tennis players from America in quarterfinals of a slam. It's important for this tournament. It's one of the four majors, one of the four most important events in the history of our sport.

America has had some all-time greats: Pete Sampras, Agassi, McEnroe, Roddick, Connors, incredible players over the years. Of course, when you are used to champions and No. 1s in the world, Grand Slam winners, anything except that is not a success, right?

It's a very high standard criteria for these guys to meet that you had players that were top 10, like John Isner after Andy Roddick. If he didn't win a slam, people think it's kind of failed career, which is something I don't agree with, but again I understand because America is such a big country in tennis.

Yeah, I'm sure there's a lot of excitement about Americans being so successful lately. Tiafoe played semis last year. Things are moving on. Tommy Paul faced me in semis of Australia this year.

Yeah, I think it's great. It's great that Ben Shelton, for example, a player that came from college tennis, is playing on the highest level, producing some amazing tennis. I think it's a great message for all the players who want to go to college but then still keep on playing professionally. It proves that it is possible, which maybe up to 15, 20 years ago, it was completely different.

I think especially I remember from my region, whoever goes to college, that's it, good-bye professional career. I think the college tennis level has increased incredibly, and Ben is a great example of that.

Yeah, I think it's great. It's great for attention towards the tennis, towards US Open. It's important that we have American players doing well.

Q. You touched for a moment on facing Taylor Fritz.

What has been the key to your success against him? What does he need to do to have a chance against you?

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: I'm not going to talk about what he needs to do to have a chance against me. I'm sure he's going to try to figure that out with his coach.

I'm going to get ready obviously for that match as any other match, doing my analytics, watching the last match we had against each other just few weeks ago in Cincinnati where I played a really, really, really good, really solid match, and won in straight sets. I'll take some positives out of that.

We know each other's game pretty well. I've played him quite a few times actually in the last couple years. Yeah, big game. Serve and forehand are two biggest weapons, no doubt. But he has improved so much. He's also playing very well on clay, which maybe wasn't the case first years of his professional career.

He's working hard. He's got a great coach in his corner. I'm sure he's going to be very pumped and motivated to win. It's going to be great atmosphere on the stadium and let's see what happens.

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