

BNP Paribas Open

Friday, March 11, 2016

Alexander Zverev

Press Conference



A. ZVEREV/I. Dodig

3-6, 7-5, 6-3

THE MODERATOR: Sascha wins his first match here at the BNP Paribas Open.

Q. Did you notice when he hit himself in the eye?

ALEXANDER ZVEREV: Did I notice?

Q. What did you see there?

ALEXANDER ZVEREV: I thought he twisted his ankle at the first, but then I saw him bleeding pretty close to the eye and I was like, Wow, probably hit himself with the racquet.

I don't know what happened, to be quite honest. I didn't see it. I didn't notice it. But, you know, he started bleeding quite heavily then.

Q. You have been having quite a great start of the season. Does it feel normal? Does it feel a bit crazy? How do you feel about it?

ALEXANDER ZVEREV: Well, I have been working hard this offseason. I had a two-month offseason with a lot of physical work and a lot of tennis work. I feel like it's paying off now.

You know, I'm just happy the way I'm playing. I'm happy to go as deep as I am in big tournaments.

Q. How hard is it to come off that tough Davis Cup loss and sort of get right back into this tournament?

ALEXANDER ZVEREV: Yeah, I mean, in Davis Cup I had a great match against Tomas on Friday, which took a lot of energy out of me, so it was tough for me to play on Sunday.

Even there I felt like I played well, you know. Just unlucky. We played one of the best teams in the world. They won Davis Cup twice in the last four years, so, you know, losing 3-2, me losing the deciding rubber, was painful.

In the back of my head, I know I played a great match against Tomas. I think for the first Davis Cup it wasn't too bad.

Q. How much do you think you learned during that Davis Cup tie?

ALEXANDER ZVEREV: Well, that's a complete different tournament I think to anything else in the world. You know, Davis Cup is such a big event. You play for your country, play for the team, so it's so much different there. So much more expectations and pressure, as well, sometimes.

But, you know, I really enjoyed it. Really enjoyed the team atmosphere. We had a great team around us. We had, you know, Philip Kohlschreiber obviously, who has been playing Davis Cup for several years now, and Petzschner as well, who can teach me a lot of stuff.

So, you know, I'm really happy to have those guys around me, as well.

Q. Do you think it will be beneficial for a young player to go through that?

ALEXANDER ZVEREV: Yeah. I mean, the earlier you start the better, I think, because you learn quicker then. So, you know, as I said, I had a great team around me. They tried to teach me a lot of stuff, which they did, as well.

And as I said before, I think I had a great match against Tomas. The energy was a bit low on Sunday, but still, all in all, I think it was not a bad Davis Cup for me.

Q. There were reports in the news this week that you used to take or were taking Meldonium and that it was linked to diabetes. Could you explain from your position?

ALEXANDER ZVEREV: Yeah, I have absolutely no idea what Meldonium is. I honestly never took it. I do not know where that is even coming from. I have no idea what that substance even is, and everything that has been there is absolutely not true.

I am getting tested with doping, you know, almost every week, so, you know, if I would be taking that substance which is not allowed, there would be bigger news than just that little article.

Q. Are you a diabetic? Do you have diabetes?

ALEXANDER ZVEREV: Everything that is in it that is not true. Everything that is in that news is absolutely, you know, made up.

Q. Do you know it by the other name, mildronate, that it uses?

ALEXANDER ZVEREV: I don't know what that substance is really. I have no idea. I have never heard of it before the accident with Maria. I have no idea what it does to you. I have no clue what it makes you feel like, so I honestly don't know.

Q. I think it was Niki Pilic, the coach in Europe, was saying that he thought you might be the one using it. Do you know him well? Is he someone who might know that? What's your relationship with him?

ALEXANDER ZVEREV: Honestly, we don't really have a relationship. I saw him once at Davis Cup. He was in the team, but he wasn't really a lot of -- he wasn't spending a lot of time with us.

But, you know, I don't know where he got that from. I don't know how this story even got there, so that's all really not true at all.

Q. As a young player coming on the tour, do you feel you have all the information useful for you to understand how it works with those lists and everything, or is it a bit complicated at first to...

ALEXANDER ZVEREV: Well, look, I have a great team around me who do all that stuff for many, many years much longer than I do, so I really trust all of them. You know, they take care of all that stuff, all the nutrition I take, all the vitamins and everything like that.

So, you know, most of it is not really me doing all that stuff. It's really my team who have great experience in that kind of stuff. I think they are doing a great job with me.

Q. Do you appreciate it more given the circumstances not only being just top 1000, Masters 1000, but also the long trip you had and how much you had to fight today? Would you say you appreciate more of those gritty wins?

ALEXANDER ZVEREV: Yeah, I mean, as I said before, I worked a lot this offseason. I feel like I had one of the longest off-seasons anybody has done this year, so it's kind of paying off.

I really am happy where I am and I'm really happy winning matches on a daily basis now on tour.

Q. Your next opponent, Dimitrov, what do you think are the keys to beat him? And also, have you talked to him - you guys have had similar situations - about how to handle the expectations and how to handle the juniors to the pro ranks?

ALEXANDER ZVEREV: Look, he's been top 10 for a

few years. I mean, he just got out of there last year. He had a few bad losses last year, but I'm sure he will get up there soon again. I think he's a great player and has great potential, like all the young guys do right now.

So, you know, playing him, playing him in the next round will really see how everybody is doing.

Q. Have you talked to him or other players that were in that -- that have kind of the similar juniors career that you did?

ALEXANDER ZVEREV: Well, he's a bit older than me, so, I mean...

Q. How about guys closer in age?

ALEXANDER ZVEREV: All of us, we are very good friends. Me and Nick play doubles here. And Thanasi, we have been friends for such a long time. I think we all understand each other very well. I think it's a nice competition, but it's a very fair and, you know, friendly one, as well.

Q. Back to the report once more. I mean, if it's true, why do you think Niki Pilic would say something like that?

ALEXANDER ZVEREV: Look, I mean, I don't know what else to tell you guys. I don't know where he got it from. I don't know why he even said it. I do not know what that substance is.

I mean, if I would take that substance, if you think about it, I would be tested positive for a few times now. I'm not.

So that says it all, I think.