

# BNP Paribas Open

Tuesday, March 15, 2016

## Novak Djokovic

Press Conference

N. DJOKOVIC/P. Kohlschreiber

7-5, 7-5

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

**Q. Another tricky opponent. Are you happy with that?**

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: I felt better on the court than I did in the first round, which comforts me obviously.

But, again, you know, I allowed myself twice to lose the serve when I was break up in both sets. Especially in the second, 40-Love smash, easy backhand, match points, got him back.

As I said, those things cannot happen. I cannot allow myself any more to react that way in those particular circumstances. Because, you know, I was fortunate today to manage win in straight sets. But Kohlschreiber is an experienced player. He has played so many times on the big occasions, so he knows how to capitalize on the opportunities and come back to the match.

I just put myself in a very difficult position after that. But, you know, there are more positive things I can take out of this match today comparing first one.

**Q. Focus issues, in your opinion?**

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: Probably. Probably still finding right tuning on the court both mentally and physically. But, you know, it's getting better. Hopefully tomorrow it's gonna be even better.

**Q. When those sort of things happen, do you actually go away and think about it or just put it off to one side and think about the next match?**

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: Well, it does stick in the back of your mind. Of course to what extent it really does depend on you, whether or not you can overcome it and try to get over it and get things going in the present moment and what's ahead of you.

But of course when you're 5-3, 40-Love, and, you know, serving for the match and having overhead, missing those opportunities and then putting yourself in trouble, of course it does stay. You have a little traces of it. But, you know, it's not the first time that it



happens to me, so I think that's the kind of experience helps.

**Q. Pete Sampras, who I believe you admire quite a bit, just did a piece where he sort of wrote a letter to himself giving himself some tips for earlier in the career. If you could go magically and go through a lot of different chapters and give yourself an advice or tip as a young player or early in your career, what would that be?**

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: Well, the big things have small beginnings. That would be probably the biggest advice I would give myself. You know, patience is a virtue, as well.

When you're younger you're very impatient. You want things to happen right away overnight, which is not possible.

Yeah, there is nothing I would change, because I believe that everything I experienced in my career so far has happened for a reason and has brought me to where I am at this point of my career.

So, you know, if I could have had a little bit more patience in those years I think it would help, but nevertheless it has been a phenomenal career so far.

**Q. And that was when you broke out, in your first years on the circuit?**

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: Yes. Well, especially after winning Grand Slam in 2008, two, three years after that was a tough period with a lot of self-doubts and moments where it was just up and down, not much consistency.

It's basically in those years I was encountering a new form and level of pressure that I never faced before.

So it took me time on and off the court to understand how to handle it.

**Q. When Viktor faced his doping problems, you came out in his defense. Some other players did. The other day with Maria, you said you felt sorry for her and you thought it was courageous for her to admit what she did, but you said she also faces consequences. I'm wondering why we're not seeing as much support for what she's facing as other players have done in facing situations.**

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: I think she took the responsibility and said she will face the possibility if she needs to. If the results are basically going against her, you know.

It's still an ongoing process, so we still don't have the final, I'd say, decision from WADA and. ITF when that moment comes, I guess if she made a mistake and she used a forbidden substance, I'm sure she's very mature, intelligent enough that she's going to have to accept that fact that she's gonna be absent for a certain time -- how much, we don't know -- from the tour.

But I do feel that we all have to agree that she has been, you know, humble and responsible and brave in this process. You know, to come out with that, it's not an easy thing. You know, to face so much media and so much attention from the world of sport and also other fields of life and carry that on your back, it's something that you must admire and respect.

Of course I was saying that it, you know, can happen to anybody if she didn't know that it was on a forbidden list. Now I'm saying in that scenario it can happen to many players, because I can assure you that many players don't look in those e-mails.

But having said that, it's why you have a large team around you that makes sure that those things don't slip away and that they come to your attention and this should have happened with her and her team. Who made a mistake or how big is that mistake or whether or not she was aware before, she was warned before, I don't know. I'm not getting into that.

But as I said, you know, as a friend, somebody that knows her for long time, I think she did a right thing coming out and taking responsibility. Somebody, of course, who is always an advocate for clean sport, fair. You know, if she needs to, she's gonna have to face the consequences.

**Q. How do you expect she will be welcomed back when she comes?**

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: I don't know. It's too early to talk about it, honestly. Let's see what happens in the process.

But, again, there are players that are understanding and supporting; there are the ones that are blaming her. I can understand both sides.

It's a tough one to call.

**Q. We have been asking people how they would play you, and everyone said they would have to take a risk against you because no one feels their**

**game is good enough just to play their game. Wondering, when you were coming up, did you feel that way when you played, say, Roger or Rafa, that your game wasn't good enough, that you had to take gambles? And also, when in your career did that switch when you felt, My game is good enough; I just have to play my game and I can beat Roger and Rafa?**

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: Well, obviously it's a process of self-belief and, you know, working on yourself and your game to getting on that level that enables you to challenge the best players in the world.

The dominance of Nadal and Federer was, you know, tremendous, especially in this period when I was breaking through and trying to, you know, challenge them for major titles. Of course it does play with your mind. Of course, when you see somebody so dominant and so successful, you know, you wonder whether or not you have the chance.

So I think many matches have been won by top players already before going out on the court. I think mentally, you know, having that advantage and knowing, you know, who you are and what you represent and making sure that the opponent feels your presence, it's all part of the game.

Of course all the success that I have had plays in my favor in many matches, but it's not a guarantee. Of course you have to do your job, because on the other hand you have 90% of the matches you play on players don't have anything to lose against you.

They will come out firing and trying to do their best. That's where you've got to react.

**Q. In North America especially, tennis sort of fights for headlines over, say, football, basketball, baseball. Does it frustrate you, the fact that a lot of the focus on tennis turns to match fixing, doping, what the umpires are doing? Do you get frustrated about that when you're talking about a sport that's trying to, you know, get attention and garner more attention and is getting a lot of negative publicity for the wrong reasons?**

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: Of course it's not what we want in sport, in tennis, to have this kind of negative publicity and bad press. That's why we need to make sure that we keep the sport clean.

Of course those two subjects are very active right now since the Australian Open, the match fixing and the doping affairs now with Maria and everything that's going on.

It's definitely not good for the sport. But, you know, at

the same time, it's an opportunity for the sport to make sure that it shows its integrity and authority and sends a message out there that, you know, we are not going to tolerate any kind of, you know, misconduct or anything like that.

You know, we're going to try to keep the sport as fair, as clean as possible. So, yeah, I mean, America is one of the most important countries in the world, one of the biggest countries in the world. The center of media attention for sports is here. Of course, the fact that we have so many tennis tournaments, important tennis tournaments played on American soil is very relevant to us.

We all try to leverage that and make sure we use our opportunity and our spotlight, you know, however big -- whatever the size of the attention is, we're trying to improve it. I think that the tennis has still lots of potential in terms of marketing, in terms of promotion, in terms of, you know, various aspects.

So I'm hoping that we can, if not get on the same level as the top American sports, but get close to it. Because, you know, US Open is probably the biggest sports event in America throughout the year in terms of attendance during those two weeks.

I mean, that alone plays in a great advantage for our sport, so we should try to, you know, capture that and use it in our favor.

**Q. Andy Murray has confirmed that he will play for Great Britain in the Davis Cup tie against Serbia. Where are you in your decision-making, or have you made a decision?**

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: I haven't made my decision yet. I need to obviously see how my summer is going to go in order to make that decision.