

BNP Paribas Open

Tuesday, March 15, 2016

Alexander Zverev

Press Conference



A. ZVEREV/G. Simon

6-2, 6-2

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. Very impressive victory for you to win against a quality player like that. What does that kind of say to you about where your game is at and where your level is at?

ALEXANDER ZVEREV: Well, I thought I played really well today. I think I was really aggressive. Hit a lot of winners.

You know, beating someone like Gilles 6-2, 6-2 is something that gives me a lot of confidence for myself. He's such a great player and such a tough competitor, as well.

You know, I was really ready for a long, long fight and a long three-set match and that was that quick.

You know, I'm really happy that I got through so quickly.

Q. Many players seem to struggle a bit with the conditions here, sometimes the wind or the balls that are flying. Doesn't seem to affect you at all. How do you explain that?

ALEXANDER ZVEREV: Yeah, no, I mean, I think it was tough in the beginning. I mean, coming from Davis Cup from indoors where I had two tough matches was not easy in the first couple of days, but I had like three days here to adjust.

You know, the match against Ivan was still -- I thought I didn't play as well as I could and still I got through with a huge fight.

I think that helped me a lot. I think it's not the easiest transition coming from indoor to here in the desert where the ball flies a lot more than other places. But now I got used to it and I really like the conditions.

Q. You really dominated a player of Gilles' caliber. I'm just wondering if you feel like you're starting understand your own game better, getting to a new level? What's going on as far as your own feeling on court?

ALEXANDER ZVEREV: Well, I mean, I think against

someone like Gilles you really have to be aggressive even more than against other players, and that's, I think, what I did and worked out really well.

I had a great day today. You know, someone like Gilles, if you don't hit him off the court he's gonna be tough to beat. He's gonna be running and fighting all day.

So, you know, I knew what I had to do, and I think I did it pretty well.

Q. Next round will be Nadal or Verdasco.

ALEXANDER ZVEREV: Yeah.

Q. How do you feel about playing either one of them.

ALEXANDER ZVEREV: You know, both players are great players. I mean, me and Fernando, we played in Metz last year where he beat me in three sets.

Rafa, he's one of the greatest in the sport ever winning 14 slams. He's probably one of greatest fighters ever, so it would be a big honor to play against someone like him.

Q. In your previous match, you talked about the importance of physical strength. Could you talk about now you feel very strong in court physical-wise? What kind of training did you do offseason?

ALEXANDER ZVEREV: Well, we did everything. We did a lot of lifting. We did a lot of track running. We did a lot of VersaClimber. Everything that is really hard work we did.

But I know that I have a lot of work ahead of me still. I'm not done yet. I'm still building my body. I know that I have to get much more fitter to really be able to compete in Grand Slams and in big tournaments against the big guys.

So, you know, it's all the work in process, and I'm happy where I am right now. But I'm still far away from where I want to be.

Q. Since you have arrived on the tour, is there any aspect of the provisional tour that has been surprising to you that you weren't expecting maybe when you came out of the juniors?

ALEXANDER ZVEREV: Not really. All of the players are really good. I think the depth of our tour is quite sensational. I think players who are ranked even outside of the top 100, they can still give a hard time to a top player because they all know how to play tennis. That's what I expected and that's what it is out there.

Q. Do you think you have a good ability to bounce back? I mean, you come off Davis Cup where you had some tough matches, couple tough losses, as well. Can you talk about that.

ALEXANDER ZVEREV: Well, I mean, I always feel like I'm a good fighter. I think I'm always trying to win till the last point, and that's what I did in the first round, especially, even when I didn't play as well as I can against Ivan.

But still I got out of that match, and I think that was a very important one, you know. Coming from Davis Cup where I had two tough losses, you know, here having those kind of wins gives me a lot of confidence back.

Q. You want to talk about your love of basketball, the Miami Heat? Are you even a fan of the Mavericks? You kind of have that floppy hair Dirk used to have.

ALEXANDER ZVEREV: (Smiling.) I met Dirk last year in Irving at the challenger. He came to watch my match and he invited me to come watch him play against Orlando, I think was it.

So I met Dirk a little bit. I'm a really huge fan of him, but I have always been a huge Miami Heat fan since I always been a little kid. I always wanted them to win. I always wished that Dirk has a really great season; always wish the Dallas Mavericks a great season.

But if it comes to a final between Dallas and Miami, I would still cheer for Miami kind of (smiling.)

Q. Did you ever think about playing basketball? You're obviously in the right height range for that.

ALEXANDER ZVEREV: Yeah, when I was little I always played soccer and field hockey, so the basketball interest came a bit later when I started to train in Saddlebrook in the U.S. a bit more.

That's when it all started. But, you know, it's kind of -- was kind of too late back then. But I really love the sport of tennis, and I don't think there is any better job for me than to play tennis.

Q. You want to voice your thoughts about LeBron?

ALEXANDER ZVEREV: (Smiling.) Look, he's one of the greatest we are probably seeing right now. You know, he's playing some great basketball for the past few years now, and I think he's really doing great.

Obviously I wanted him to stay in Miami, but I really respect him going home to Cleveland. I don't have any problem with that at all.

Q. Unlike a lot of other Miami Heat fans?

ALEXANDER ZVEREV: Look, I mean, I understand it. I'm an athlete, as well. I totally get it.

Q. Last week at Davis Cup, Tomas Berdych said he thinks you're going to be a future No. 1. Wondering if you heard those comments and what you thought of them. Has he been like a mentor for you as you've been sharing Jez?

ALEXANDER ZVEREV: Yeah, we have been really good friends with him. We practice quite a lot. He gives me quite good advice, as well. We're really kind of close to each other.

So, yeah, if someone like him says something like that it's always a big honor. I know that I still have a lot of work ahead of me. As I said, I think it's a long way there.

Hopefully, you know, hopefully maybe one day I can reach my potential, and then we'll see where I can end up at.