

# BNP Paribas Open

Wednesday, March 16, 2016

## Milos Raonic

### Press Conference

M. RAONIC/T. Berdych

6-4, 7-6

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

**Q. General thoughts on the match? I thought there were moments in the second set when you were behind in your serve and you just played a lot of confident points and found a way of winning those games routinely.**

MILOS RAONIC: Yeah, you know, I don't think it was, let's say, a match where you sort of say you felt great but you went out there and you tried to put the pieces together.

I got ahead a few service games. He served well. He got ahead. I served well. That was pretty much only one point that I would sort of have played differently. Maybe just be a little bit sharper in the second serves in the beginning service games.

Other than that, it was all good.

**Q. There were big points when you hit the kickers a couple times in a row. Do you enjoy doing that compared to hitting the big one?**

MILOS RAONIC: Well, I think it's a good way to change it up. Like I said, the one shot I would change is probably not do that on match point. I think when it comes to that, just go for your money serve. I think that's -- normally for me that means with pace. I can hit that anywhere.

That was probably the only one. Other than that, I felt like I used it at the right times and kept him close to the baseline so I could push him back with the hard serves. Didn't serve particularly well, but I did in the important moments.

**Q. Three matches in after a very long layoff, are you pleased to be here? Draw is opening up a bit.**

MILOS RAONIC: Yeah, would I expect that I was going play like this sort of after everything that's been going on the last few weeks? Definitely not.

I just sort of tried to compete and get better with each match. I have been fortunate to do so. I give myself now a chance tomorrow with three matches behind me



to play even better, and I know I'm going to need to.

**Q. How is the body pulling up after each match considering you haven't played for a while?**

MILOS RAONIC: It's fine. No issues.

**Q. Do you pay attention to the draw and the upsets in your half of the draw?**

MILOS RAONIC: No. I just know who I play next. Well, I see what happens because I watch tennis when I'm here in the morning. I was watching most of that Stan match. I didn't watch too much of the other match that was going on on the Court 1.

So I'm aware of what's happening but not out of any particular necessity other than enjoying to watch tennis.

**Q. What were your thoughts about the Stan match?**

MILOS RAONIC: It was a little bit all over the place. I think Goffin won. I don't know because I went out to warm up at that point. I went out to warm up during that tiebreaker, so I didn't see how that sort of played out.

He definitely had a lot of opportunities before.

**Q. Does watching that match prepare you for what to expect? Because you said the match was all over the place and part of that has something to do with the conditions. Do you watch those matches to kind of...**

MILOS RAONIC: You pay attention. You know, at the end of the day the tennis world is pretty small, especially the top group. When you're in top 30 there are only 30 guys. You watch each other play quite a bit and you know how guys play and you ask see how guys are doing, how the conditions are.

Today it was hot; it was flying a little bit more. You could see that in some aspects. I felt that at some points in my match, and also could see that throughout that match at certain parts.

You know, you try and make -- you're faced with the exact same conditions of the other guy, and you try to put it together better.

**Q. Do you feel like you're playing better than last**

**year at the same stage of this tournament?**

MILOS RAONIC: Yeah, I would definitely say so, yeah. I think I'm just a better player for where my level was at then. I think I was playing better then probably relative to my level. I think I have significantly improved over time.

I think I can do more if I keep getting better with each match.

**Q. What's better about your game this year, or is it a mental thing?**

MILOS RAONIC: A mental thing, understanding, moving forward. I'm pretty efficient at the net now. I cover the angles I'm supposed to cover. I make the volleys I'm supposed to make. When I'm sharp with myself, I put that pressure on my opponents. I do more different things. I make a lot more returns. I move better on the returns, so even if I don't make it I get my racquet on it at least.

All these kind of things. I'm just getting myself in there and just putting pressure on my opponents, I believe, and hoping that eventually it just sort of pays its dividends.

**Q. When you put up that lob on the last point, what was going your mind? What went through your mind after that as it finished?**

MILOS RAONIC: I didn't expect him to miss it by any means. I didn't think I would have a chance in that point. I just saw when he sort of let it come down low on him that his only play was crosscourt. So I sort of tried going there, but I didn't think I would cover it. I just saw that he missed it wide.

**Q. Carlos ever tell you about his history with this tournament? He had one of the highlights of his career...**

MILOS RAONIC: Yeah. He won a semifinal match here to be No. 1, yeah.

**Q. Has he ever talked to you about that?**

MILOS RAONIC: Briefly. I think it's more me asking and me liking to know that kind of stuff rather than any educational purpose behind it.

**Q. Anything stood out?**

MILOS RAONIC: I don't think we talked about it in detail that much.

**Q. Are you on the phone with him at all during this tournament?**

MILOS RAONIC: Yeah. We speak over messages. We don't communicate in I guess over the phone, but we communicate over messages. He speaks with Ricardo plenty more than he speaks with me, and then

we communicate after matches what needs to improve, what was done well, and then we communicate with the objectives and goals are for the next matches one by one.

**Q. Not sure yet but if it was Monfils. Obviously you played him in Australia. Is there a particular challenge playing him because he's so unpredictable?**

MILOS RAONIC: You know, he's getting more consistent. He's been doing well the last weeks. He's been playing well. He played well in Australia. He's played well so far here.

He's gone through things pretty smoothly, so hopefully I can test him and put some pressure on certain aspects maybe that he hasn't been appreciated on and see how much he can withstand.

**Q. Have you ever had a situation with two coaches that there were mixed messages on what they are saying? Djokovic indicated he went through that with his two. Murray has intimated that happened with Bjorkman and Mauresmo. He has someone on a more regular basis. What about yourself? Ever been in that situation?**

MILOS RAONIC: So far, no. I have only done the two-coach situation twice.

When it was Ricardo and Ivan it was obviously not an issue at all considering how open the communication is between them.

Even with Carlos it's been as open, if not more, because he's always wondering what he can do better. He's very open about that. He puts any kind of ego that would be there for being a former No. 1 out the door and just constantly is asking pretty much after every practice, What can we do better?

I think he's taken things from Ricardo and he's been fairly very open. Yeah, we work a limited amount of weeks together on the road, but I think he's definitely made it a full-time job on himself, how he sort of follows things even when he may not be on the road with me.

**Q. You have been one of the youngest top players. Now you see 18 year olds coming up and playing here. How do you feel about that? Do you prefer to play older players, or are you looking forward to playing younger players?**

MILOS RAONIC: I don't think it really matters. When you face the guy across the other side of the net, regardless of what his age is, it's what he can do and how you can try to exploit whatever weakness or strength or situation you can't find to win.

The age, whatever it may be, anything, nationality all that kind of stuff is unimportant as anything else.

**Q. When you were 18, do you remember the unfinished product you were I guess? Then when you see something like, say, Zverev doing what he's doing, what's your reaction to that?**

MILOS RAONIC: Yeah, I have always been that way. Even when I was a junior, I wasn't a great junior by any means. And all these kind of things, I have always just focused on getting better. You know, it's good to see there are young players that are doing really well, and Zverev, especially this year, has been doing well week after week.

He's been winning and he's been battling also with the best players in the world. I don't know where he stands now. He won the first set, but I'd say for the last little while there hasn't been that same kind of competitiveness from the younger guys.

But then the question is also from another aspect, are the other guys the same way that they were a few years ago? And I think that has something to do with it. But definitely you see amongst the young guys a lot more belief and understanding and sort of that kind of glimmer that they believe they can do the things, because I don't think it's as locked up at the top as it used to be.

**Q. Happy to be in Stadium 1 after being in Stadium 2?**

MILOS RAONIC: Of course. Jeez. (Laughter.)