

BNP Paribas Open

Saturday, March 19, 2016

Milos Raonic

Press Conference



M. RAONIC/D. Goffin

6-3, 3-6, 6-3

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. You haven't faced a lot of adversity this tournament. It's the first three-setter; first time going over two hours. Do you think that's going to help you going into the finals?

MILOS RAONIC: Yeah, I think so. I feel like I did the things right. I sort of lost my way a little bit in the second set, and it's important to me sort of to be able to recognize that and get the things back on the right track and play and finish off with some good tennis like I did.

Q. Seems like numbers-wise you had issues with your second serve. Can you talk a little about what you might have been struggling with?

MILOS RAONIC: I thought he returned well, but I think most of the issues or the largest number of issues came that second set. I think I only won one point on my second serve.

I think I just lost maybe -- lost the aggression that I had and I didn't mix up enough the first serve like I was earlier on. He sort of was able to settle things down. I didn't put the exact same kind of pressure on his service games. I was a little too passive.

I think it's sort of you get a few more looks, you find a little more rhythm, and he definitely had better rhythm the second set returning.

Q. Your career is 1.21 aces per game on hard court; this year only 0.93. You clearly have a different approach to your service games. Can you talk about it?

MILOS RAONIC: Yeah, I'm using a little bit more of the body serve. I'm just sort of changing it up. I'm not pulling off two serves before I was normally going either T or wide. Now I'm playing more off three serves; giving my opponent a little bit more.

Most of the time when I went body and it went well today there were free points. It's a higher margin, also. I think my first serve percentage was up because of that. I think it just gives me a little bit more looks and

makes it a little bit less predictable for my opponents.

Q. In Brisbane and Aussie semis and finals here, it's a pretty good argument that you're right up there maybe playing the second-best tennis this year behind Djokovic. Do you feel good about your year so far?

MILOS RAONIC: Yeah, I do. I feel like even when I'm not playing my best I able to find the answer and the solutions. I feel like I'm competing well. I feel like I'm dealing with the situations much better.

Definitely have been playing higher level this year, but I think also when I have had those difficult moments or let's say some kind of crisis throughout matches, I have found solutions better. I think I have been very more regimented about that and a lot more disciplined with myself and a lot more understanding about the way I need to go about things during the match. And also analyzing and adjusting and accepting things during matches.

Q. Do you feel this is part of maturation or something...

MILOS RAONIC: I think maturity is a big part of it, but I think it just -- who knows? I wish I could have played healthy last year, but I think I just -- it allowed me to watch more tennis and understand what the more important things are for me. I think I have had much more of a clear -- I wouldn't say it's a focus -- I think more of a vision of what I need to do in specific situations.

I try to always go back to that and that's what works for me.

Q. It will be Nadal or Djokovic next. Can you talk about both opponents?

MILOS RAONIC: Yeah, you know, against Novak it's a difficult matchup. I think that I have added good things to my tennis that can help me in that aspect. It's going to be important to control the center of the court; obviously be the one that's moving less. I think I'm going to have to do a better job of stepping up like I did in that third set with forehands earlier on and not being content with just putting it through. Not expecting sort of the match to be given to me.

I think if I can play with a forceful attitude like I did in

the second I can have my opportunity -- I mean, third set I can have my opportunities, and I can the same applies to me when I play Rafa. I think for me my game plan is simple: It's about dictating. I don't think it's so much about who's on the other side of the net.

Q. You know what you need to do and you know what's working well what was working well against Goffin, so when you say you have a lull in the second set, why does that happen? Is it the heat? Is it just a momentary lack of focus that kind of expands? How does that happen, other than you're being a human being?

MILOS RAONIC: I think things are going well. You sort of just lose the way. The first set I got away with a few well-placed slices bringing him in. I think I went to that too many times thinking I'd get away with that.

And then I got myself back in that second set after getting down a break, but then I went -- tried to sort of get away with that again. I don't think at this level you can sort of use that as a constant game plan.

I think that's sort of a way to change things up. Even towards the third, end of the second set, I hit a few more forehands. I made mistakes, but I knew that if I go that way they're going to start dropping in. Because I did have the looks. I think just because I went away from that it found me -- it took me just a little bit just to find that range.

Q. This will be your third Masters final. Wondering what a title breakthrough would mean to you at this stage.

MILOS RAONIC: It's definitely a lot, and I want it to be a lot different than it has the last two times, ironically both against the possibilities that I could face off against tomorrow. I think I have.

A better understanding of what I need to do. I think I have more tools, and just like today I can be a lot more accepting and I can understand how things happen during a match and I can adjust, which I didn't do well the last two times.

I hope that, you know -- I have obviously a big challenge ahead of me, but I have been pretty good this year at finding solutions.

Q. You have talked earlier, just now you were talking about that so long as you dictate you should be fine. But when you have played both guys, Rafa and Novak, what have they done to not allow you to dictate? What do they do that makes it difficult?

MILOS RAONIC: Well, Rafa likes to move the forehand around. He likes to use that forehand up the line to

sort of -- because everybody is sort of leaning over a little bit, because you don't necessarily want to get stuck hitting too many backhands there.

Novak sort of tries to move you and not give you the same shot twice. He can go up the line and crosscourt pretty consistently. His patterns are sometimes to try to not have patterns. I think you sort of -- if you can stay on top of that and sort of force them to play into you, which is difficult, at the same time, you know you can have looks that way.

Q. Can you follow up with Rafa? Did you mention Rafa?

MILOS RAONIC: Yeah, I did, at the beginning.