

BNP Paribas Open

Wednesday, March 15, 2017

Nick Kyrgios

Press Conference

N. KYRGIOS/N. Djokovic

6-4, 7-6

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. How much did you enjoy that match?

NICK KYRGIOS: The doubles, or...

Q. Sorry. The singles.

NICK KYRGIOS: Yeah, the singles was obviously pretty enjoyable (smiling). I knew it was going to be a tough battle today. I knew he wanted to come out there and obviously after Acapulco to come out there and win.

The conditions are completely different here than they are in Acapulco. I don't think I served anywhere near as I did in Acapulco. I fought for every point, and obviously we were a bit -- I think both of us were a bit nervous at times.

I thought it was a pretty good match. I played the crucial points pretty well. Obviously I just served well again. Yeah, it was good to get through. But honestly the doubles just kind of killed the mood a little bit. We just got destroyed. That was tough.

Q. How good did it feel to back it up after what you did in Acapulco a couple weeks ago?

NICK KYRGIOS: Yeah, that felt good to kind of prove it wasn't a one-off thing. I think I played well. I knew what my tactics were going to be. It felt good to back it up again.

Q. How about your ability to go for it on the second serve? That's a little bit of a gamble when you really do. Talk about your second serve a little bit.

NICK KYRGIOS: It's been like that for a long time. You know, I kind of -- I have lost some matches from it. I have won some matches from it. I'm okay if I go for it. At least I know I gave myself -- it's a high percentage for me to go big under pressure. That's my game style. If I miss, I miss, but I know I went down playing my game.

Q. Judging by your reaction, it looked like it made quite a bit...

NICK KYRGIOS: I think beating Djokovic for anyone is



a pretty big win, especially for me.

Yeah, it just felt good. I competed for every point. It was hot out there. We played for two hours. It was just a good, honest win. Yeah, I mean, I think there would be something wrong if I wasn't a bit happy after that (smiling).

Q. What do you remember about the first match against Roger Federer in Madrid?

NICK KYRGIOS: I remember the first game I broke him, and I said, Come on, pretty loud, just to show that, you know, I felt like, you know, he knew I would compete for every point that day.

But, yeah, I mean, that was kind of surreal, playing him, center court and winning was unbelievable feeling.

I think a lot's happened since then. I have played a lot more matches. I feel more confident in my game, and he's obviously playing unbelievable at the moment.

But, yeah, I remember a lot. It's completely different conditions from Madrid clay to Indian Wells in the desert. So it's going to be a completely different game.

Q. Is it true he was your idol in the beginning of your career? Were you surprised that he won the Aussie Open at 35?

NICK KYRGIOS: No, I'm not surprised that he won the Oz Open. You know, when I see him winning tournaments, when I see him producing level, it doesn't really surprise me at all.

He's the greatest player of all time. Age is just a thing for him. As long as he stays healthy, he's going to be the top player, you know, around that top tier.

But what was the first question?

Q. Did you look up to him? Was he your idol?

NICK KYRGIOS: I mean, he wasn't my idol, but out of the tennis players, my idols are probably Gaël Monfils and Jo Tsonga. You know, exciting players that played a lot of entertaining tennis and played aggressive.

But Roger when I first started being in the locker room and seeing him, it was something special. He's a great role model. Yeah, I like his style of game, yeah.

surprising me at all. He's amazing.

Q. I think you said on the court you're in a good place mentally right now. Can you talk about why that is and what's going on?

NICK KYRGIOS: Yeah, I think it's starting in practice, I guess. Every time I go on the practice court, I try and be positive, try and have fun, not being too hard on myself. I was in a pretty dark place. Even I was at 13 last year, but I wasn't in a good place mentally at all.

I was beating myself down, and I just wasn't in a good place. Some of that's obviously having my girlfriend back on tour is going to be awesome seeing her every couple weeks. Obviously, my mom is here.

I'm just trying to stay happy and just try and enjoy my tennis a little bit, you know.

Q. Great win today. Obviously there have been some tough stretches in your time. You have had people in your own country say some really unkind things about you. You're here today wearing your shirt saying "Equality." Talk about that. What does it mean to you? Is it important for you that all people come together? Do you think tennis does that to a degree? Just talk about your shirt and the meaning of that word.

NICK KYRGIOS: 100%. I'm a big believer in equal rights for everyone.

I mean, you gave me like 300 questions. (Laughter.) You started off with my win, people being mean to me, and then it was the equality. What do you want me to answer?

Q. I want you to answer what your thoughts are on your wearing that shirt that says "Equality."

NICK KYRGIOS: Pretty self-explanatory, is it not?

Q. I wanted to know what your thoughts were about that and your experience and people saying wretched things about you in your country.

NICK KYRGIOS: I mean, they are going to say wretched things whether I do well or not. I'm the type of person that's going to have a fan base, and I'm the type of person that have people that don't really like me. I'm comfortable with that.

Q. How much of Roger's run in Australia down the stretch did you actually watch? Were you watching the matches?

NICK KYRGIOS: Yeah, I mean, I didn't watch the final, but I was on a plane. I was -- I was kind of hoping that he'd win. It was going to be an unbelievable story seeing him come back after his injury and winning that.

When I see him get through the draw, it wasn't

Q. You have played all the top guys now. What's the experience and the challenge, like, playing Novak now that you have had a couple cracks at it now compared to the other players in the top of the game?

NICK KYRGIOS: I played Zverev a couple days ago and I thought the level was incredible. The level is not that different, I don't think. You know, it's just about being able to bring that every single day, and that's what the top guys do the best.

I think Alexander some days could play a higher level than Novak, but he couldn't bring it as consistently as Novak can. I think that's the main difference.

Q. I'm just curious to hear a little bit about your experience playing with Nenad Zimonjic this week. Did you get much time to hang out with him? Do you know much about his story or his career? Did he give you any interesting or good advice?

NICK KYRGIOS: Yeah, I have been in the locker room for a while with Zimo now, and we always talked about playing together.

We both didn't have partners this week. Couple things went differently than we had planned. We ended up playing together. He's a great guy. I actually practiced with him a couple times before my singles or the day off, and he was great. He was helping me a lot on the tennis court. He was giving me tips here and there, and it was good. Obviously didn't work today.

But my experience was good. I had the best win of my life on the tennis court with him. Beating the Bryans was amazing for me. I don't know how we did it.

Obviously I wanted to do a lot better tonight. You know, I did try hard, but I was obviously just a little bit tired. I'm glad -- you know, whenever he wants to play again, I'm happy to play with him. He's a great guy and he's helped me a lot.

Q. Did you know that when you beat him in Madrid it was the birthday of his twin sons?

NICK KYRGIOS: I didn't know that, no.

Q. I think that hurt him the most.

NICK KYRGIOS: I think he's all right. I think Roger is all right (smiling). I don't think he really cares.

Q. Earlier you talked about being comfortable in this role, but I'm curious, do you embrace that role, as well?

NICK KYRGIOS: Which role?

Q. You know, your role on the court. I guess some people might see you as -- some people love you in your game and some people might dislike you for certain things. If they put you in that bad-guy role, do you embrace that somewhat, or are you just...

NICK KYRGIOS: I don't think I'm a bad guy at all. Honestly, like, I have had a couple mixups in the court, but that's in the heat of the battle, but that's when you're competing or you're angry.

Off the court, I don't think I have done -- I haven't done anything against the law. I haven't drink-drive, haven't shot someone, I haven't stolen. I'm not a bad person. In the scheme of things, you put it in perspective, I'm really not a bad person.

Q. Could you just like expand on that dark time, place? Obviously last year the suspension and all that stuff was going on. But now you have gotten Ajla around a lot more. Lleyton Hewitt, you can call him up with any questions. Does that also mean that you kind of are enjoying tennis a bit more now than what you were?

NICK KYRGIOS: Yeah, I mean, I just -- towards the end of last year, I was just going to places and dreading going, like just really dreading going to tournaments. Didn't want to practice, didn't want to really do anything. It was really -- I had a physical trainer for a little bit, but it was tough, because my team was motivated but I wasn't motivated.

So it's, like -- I don't know. After Australia it was tough, as well. Obviously it felt like the whole of Australia was against me after I lost. Even though no other Australian did really well, but I copped it all, I felt.

I was in a dark place, didn't want to play for a bit. I was going to take a break for who knows? I was talking to my team, like, I can't really play anymore.

Q. Was that after...

NICK KYRGIOS: After the Australian Open. I went and spent a week with my girlfriend, and then Rusty called me up, Lleyton, and then he really wanted me to come play Davis Cup. And that was the best thing I could have done, come back and be with the boys, and I found some enjoyment practicing again.

Yeah, I don't know what happened. Something -- something switched, and now I'm really enjoying it again. We still talk to this day, the whole Davis Cup team.

I think that's helped me the most. You know, having some people on my side and, you know, they have my back. So that's been the key.