

BNP Paribas Open

Wednesday, March 15, 2017

Rafael Nadal

Press Conference

R. FEDERER/R. Nadal

6-2, 6-3

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. You have now played Roger twice this season, and so many times in the past. Does he seem this year to you, from how he's played in those two matches, more relaxed than he was in the past on court?

RAFAEL NADAL: I don't know. In Australia was a very close match. I had good chances to win. Today, not. Today he played better than me. I didn't play my best match, and he played well.

These kind of matches, when you're not playing your match, is impossible to win.

Q. The way he's hitting his backhand, and you sort of changing your serving variation a bit, has that changed the way you two match up?

RAFAEL NADAL: The way what?

Q. The way you two match up. The way he's hitting his backhand and you changing your serving patterns a little bit, has that changed the matchup?

RAFAEL NADAL: No. I think was always that he returned well. But at the same time, it was obvious that I didn't have the right answer for his returns, no? I needed to neutralize the points. I needed to neutralize his two first balls, and I didn't.

So then playing two shots, he's better than me today. And five years ago, ten years ago, always was better than me, no?

I was a little bit better than him in general when I neutralized the first two shots, and then I can manage it a little bit better the point, no?

So I was not enough good tonight to make that happen, and he deserved the victory, for sure. Very easy.

Q. On this court with high bounce it would be an advantage for you. Were you surprised the court wasn't helping your game more than with this?

RAFAEL NADAL: Is always the same. You need to



play well.

The court or doesn't matter the surface. You need to play your best if you want to have chances to win, and I did not play my best. It's obvious that I have to congratulate him because he played a great match.

But I have to think from my side, and I think I can do it much better, and I think I gonna do it much better next time.

Q. Do you see a certain difference the way Roger plays against you on the backhand side since he has a bigger racquet, racquet size?

RAFAEL NADAL: You have to speak to him. I don't know about his racquet. I don't know about these things.

He's always played well, very aggressive, and his backhand was enough good to win the match.

But at the same time it's obvious, as I said before, no, I need to hit longer and I need to hit higher, longer to create him problems, no?

I was not able to do that, and then he was advantage. The main thing he take the break in the first game, and I had break point in the next game and come back and he had a good serve.

When Roger have advantage, his serve is so good, he has a lot of confidence with his serve, he's able to play much more relaxed, no?

Worst thing in that match for me was from the beginning I was in disadvantage breaking the first game of the match, and then breaking the second game of the second set. So that's so difficult to play against Roger this way.

Q. ITF is debating changing Davis Cup to best of three-set matches instead of best of five. Would that make it easier for you and other top players to play Davis Cup?

RAFAEL NADAL: I don't want to talk about that today. Sorry. Sorry. No, no. I spoke about that earlier. Maybe you were not here, but I spoke for a long answer of that question, so you can check it.

As I said the other day, it was not right the way that the people write it, I think was not right. I said the good thing is the new start, the new president, is trying to do changes, and that's always going to be good. I don't know if the changes are the right ones or not, but any change will be good, because it's always that with the old format things were not going enough well for Davis Cup.

But there is issues that can be better.

Q. With Roger getting the early first breaks, how did that affect your mentality with respect to going for more on your serves today?

RAFAEL NADAL: Repeat? Sorry.

Q. Roger getting the early breaks and you've been working to increase the velocity of your serves this week, we have been seeing success with that, but having that pressure of him already being up a break, how did that affect you mentally in deciding to go for more?

RAFAEL NADAL: Not mentally. But it's about tennis. It's about the mental part in this case. No, I was there. I was fighting. I was trying to find solutions. I tried to serve quicker. I tried to serve changing more directions, and I was trying to return inside and in the back.

Was not today. That's all.

Q. After a loss like this, do you go over it, do you think about it for a long time, or are you able to quickly put it behind you?

RAFAEL NADAL: No. A lot of years here. When you feel that you are playing bad or you are in a bad moment, maybe stays a little bit longer in your mind. Is not my case, no?

I started great the season, playing great tennis, winning a lot of matches, playing good tennis.

Today I didn't play my best, but I am really confident I gonna play well in Miami this week.