

Rolex Monte-Carlo Masters

Principality of Monaco

Tuesday, 13 April 2021

Lucas Pouille

Press Conference



L. POUILLE/G. Pella

6-3, 6-4

THE MODERATOR: Questions in French.

Q. I suppose this is a good victory for you.

LUCAS POUILLE: Oh, yes. It's a good victory for me, for my state of mind and for my game and for my confidence. It's only positive.

Q. I watched your match. There were very good things. Some mistakes, but your game is in a good place.

LUCAS POUILLE: Yes, there were very good periods in that match. I'm very pleased about that. Of course, there are still some things to be improved or adjusted. I'm aware of that. I know it's playing match after match, then I will be able to get rid of the problems. It's really positive.

As you said, it was a lot better. It's my best match since I came back.

Q. What are your expectations for this clay court season? You had a break because of an injury. Of course, you were able to enjoy being a father. Congratulations. But now this clay court season seems to be good. It's only the first victory, of course, but do you have new goals?

LUCAS POUILLE: Well, I took a long time for practicing on clay. After all those hard court tournaments, I really wanted to adapt my game to clay, see what I could improve.

After the Biella tournament, I was not feeling too good, so we analyzed my matches and tried to see what needed to be adjusted. Physically also I wanted to train for clay. I had to work on my movement because I hadn't played on clay for two years almost.

For two weeks I practiced on clay. I went to Marbella. The

day after I lost, I started practicing again. I have many hours under my belt on clay.

I don't really have a specific goal in terms of results. I'm not thinking about winning tournaments and being in the finals. But I'm just wanting to win match after match, trying to implement what I've been working on during practice and build up my confidence. This kind of match helps. Now I have to do the same tomorrow and keep going.

Q. In a comeback like this, what is most difficult? Is it to be able to stay focused? How come today went well, better than last time?

LUCAS POUILLE: It was better today because here is not my first tournament. I've been competing for two months already in tournaments. I played challengers, Montpellier, Marseille. I had good preparation on clay. We worked a lot in the south of France. I spent time on the courts, in the gym, being really eager to have a good clay court season and to start well.

Last year I lost after a match that lasted 2 hours and 50 minutes. It was not all bad. But I needed to work. My state of mind is really good. It helps with those kind of matches.

After a long break, what is difficult is to be patient. Of course, we want things to come back as soon as possible, but the problem is being impatient or too demanding.

Q. The fact that you're a father, did that help you to have perspective?

LUCAS POUILLE: For some things, yes. For others, not. But, of course, I see things differently. That long period off allowed me to think about what I had been doing all these years, what I wanted to do.

After my loss in Marbella, I could have been down and depressed because it was another loss after a very tight match. I could have been discouraged. But I remained very positive. We remained positive in the team. We kept on working. We came here in a good state of mind.

Q. Did time seem very long to you? Did you have periods of doubt? Do you believe you lost a whole year? It was a very complicated break professionally and personally.

LUCAS POUILLE: Well, professionally I lost a year, of course. But not a full year because of the pandemic there were long periods where no one was able to play. But it did seem very long to me. I thought I would never see the end of it.

It started in September 2019. I stopped in October. After clinical tests, injections, I listened to the doctors, I did everything they said. Every time it was relapsing. After a while there was a doubt that I would ever be able to play again normally.

That's when I decided to have the surgery. Of course, the doctor was very confident. For them it was just a small surgery. But on an elbow, for a tennis player, we know it's always a bit difficult. Well, it took a lot of time.

Q. Now you are totally confident with your elbow? You have no doubts? You're not reluctant to use it?

LUCAS POUILLE: No, no, no. Everything is fine with my elbow. I have no pain. I'm not afraid. I can serve normally. During more than a year I was not able to serve 100%, so that was a long time.

This is the most difficult shot I have to adjust now. I have to find the rhythm, the whole movement, to be able to serve at my best level. This takes time, a lot of repetition.

But now everything is fine. I have no pain at all. This is positive.

Q. I don't know if you were aware that Medvedev retired because of COVID. Also, there have been lots of talk about what Benoit Paire said in the locker room. People seem a bit angry.

LUCAS POUILLE: About Medvedev, I just heard he was out of the draw entering the match. But I didn't even know he was positive, so I have no comments to make.

And Benoit? Well, the only thing I can say is that I'm happy to be on the court. Of course, everyone sees the crisis and sees life differently. I spent a year and a half without touching a racquet on the tour. I missed a lot playing tennis. I'm happy now the tour is going on.

Of course, with the public it would be better. We are all looking forward to be back to those conditions where we can live emotions. But we are able to play. I enjoy it. I'm

happy the tournament is on and I can do my job and I can wake up every morning to do what I like to do and what I worked hard for.

Everyone lives this differently.

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