

Rolex Monte-Carlo Masters

Principality of Monaco

Wednesday, 14 April 2021

Rafael Nadal

Press Conference



R. NADAL/F. Delbonis

6-1, 6-2

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. How did you feel today for this first match here in the club you love?

RAFAEL NADAL: Good, no? It was solid match, I think. Of course, a very positive result. He's a good player on clay. Yes, positive start for me. I think I just really played a solid match. Nothing unbelievable, but nothing wrong. Just a solid match, a positive start. I think I did what I had to do today.

Yeah, something else tomorrow against a great player like Grigor, but I am quite happy about today.

Q. When you heard the news about Daniil Medvedev and his positive test, how worried were you because you practiced with him? How close had you been?

RAFAEL NADAL: No, I don't know. Somebody told me on my team. I was not worried because I practiced with him, but I was never close to him. Honestly, no.

Of course, when these kind of stuff happens, is not good. But I felt sorry for him more than for me because, well, everything can happen, of course, yes. I mean, as much as I know about the way that you can be infected was not the way that I was supposed to be infected practicing with Daniil because I never have been in touch with him, never have been closer than four meters, something like that. Just at the end to say thanks for one second. Anything can happen, of course.

Q. Can I just ask, obviously you're a player who is known for giving everything, even in practice, not just competition. You've now gone back to playing without spectators in Monte-Carlo. Is there anything maybe you feel was different and you maybe struggled to get up for a match as much as you would normally when you have no spectators?

RAFAEL NADAL: It is obvious, for example, today in the second set, for some moments you lose a little bit that intensity because you feel the match almost was over with 6-1, 3-0, double break. I don't know. Is difficult to keep going sometimes with the same intensity without the crowd.

The crowd helps you to keep going. You want to show that you are in good shape. I mean, the type of energy is a little bit different, especially in situations like today that I had the match more or less under control.

Yeah, in some way, I mean, that's not the case. Tomorrow I have a very tough opponent in front, so I need to be at my 100% every single moment.

Is true personally I miss the crowd. I can't lie about that, no? I enjoy much more playing in front of a good crowd than without.

Q. The changes with the schedule, you're used to sort of a certain rhythm. You play the French Open in May to early June, then you start about 10 months later the new European clay circuit with Monte-Carlo, Rome, et cetera. Does it feel strange to be back on clay with a shorter gap since the end of the French Open?

RAFAEL NADAL: Honestly, I just played two tournaments on clay. That's the true, no? I mean, I never felt last year that I played a full clay court season, no? I just played Rome and Roland Garros.

For the same time that you told me you should feel strange because we have a shorter gap, at the same time inside myself I never had a real clay court season last year, no?

No, I am just trying to adapt myself and trying to make the decisions that I feel more comfortable always. Talking with my family and my team about what's best for myself and especially for my happiness, no?

We are facing very strange times and very difficult times for everyone. All the decisions are very personal and makes the things little bit more difficult than before.

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I mean, everyone can approach this situation different ways. It's true that I didn't play much for the last 12 months. That's the way that I understood I had to proceed under these circumstances.

I am really excited to play more the next couple of months. I really want to do it. I hope to be ready to do it.

Q. Today was your first match for quite a while. You have been injured. Did you feel 100%?

RAFAEL NADAL: I feel good, yeah. I think I had great practice sessions for the last three, four weeks. Yeah, I feel in good shape, honestly.

You can win, you can lose, you can play better or worst. In terms of physically and mentally, I'm enjoying being on the tour.

Even if looks nothing for us, have the chance to walk for one hour outside of the hotel per day, I mean, creates a big difference, no? At least you can go out little bit, some fresh air, walking around sometimes with the team. Even if you can't stop in a restaurant or shopping, this stuff, but just feeling yourself a little bit more free. I mean, that helps mentally. Is an important improvement.

Q. Going back to your next match, what kind of memories do you have about the toughest match that you played with him in Melbourne in 2017?

RAFAEL NADAL: We had some great matches, no? In Melbourne, of course. Have been best-of-five. The semifinals have been an emotional one. We played another great match in Beijing, another one in Shanghai with Grigor.

He's a good friend, a good guy, and a great player. Yeah, going to be a tough test in my second round. Going to be his third. I need to be ready for it. I hope to be ready for it, no?

I am just excited to play a tough match very early in the tournament.

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