

# Rolex Monte-Carlo Masters

Principality of Monaco

Sunday, 11 April 2021

## Rafael Nadal

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

**Q. You haven't played since Melbourne. First of all, how are you? We know how much you love this place. How does it feel to be back here in Monte-Carlo, in this beautiful club, even though it's a bit different this year?**

RAFAEL NADAL: Good. I am feeling good. Thank you. Yeah, I took a while after Australia. Going to be my second tournament. Is true that the situation we are facing not helps to play that often.

But, yeah, arrive an important part of the season for me. I think I did the right work to be ready. So let's see. Remain a couple of days of practice here. But, yeah, happy the way that I am playing. Yeah, for the moment my body is in good shape. Yeah, I am excited about playing here in Monaco again, Monte-Carlo. As everybody knows, is one of my favorite tournaments without a doubt. I love being here.

Of course, we're going to miss the crowd, yeah, the normal tournament. But we are happy. Well, I am happy that we are still able to play. Be here is always a good news for me. Excited, happy, hope to be ready to give my best.

I hope to be able to come back next year with a different story, with a normal situation again.

**Q. We have all seen the news of Toni working with Felix. I was wondering what are your thoughts on that? How do you think Toni can contribute to Felix's game, obviously since you worked with your uncle for such a long time?**

RAFAEL NADAL: Yeah, I mean, I am happy for him, happy for at the same time academy have somebody with such a great player like Felix is a positive thing.

At the same time, well, Toni has a lot of experience. He knows a lot about this sport. He has all the knowledge that somebody needs. I am sure that going to be an important help for Felix.

**Q. It has to be weird not having played any tournament since Australia, starting the clay season when we all know how much it's important to you? What are the expectations? How are you dealing with the situation?**

RAFAEL NADAL: No, I am good. Honestly, no, I am confident. I am playing well I think. I'm practicing well these couple of days here in Monaco, in Monte-Carlo, before the tournament start. So I feel ready.

It's true that I didn't play much. At the same time is true that I had good success in the past without playing match. My mindset is the same as always, no? Just try to be ready for Wednesday. Going day by day. Tomorrow another practice. Just try to be ready for the first match, and let's see.

I'm just going step by step, as I always did. I hope to be ready to stay healthy, that's the main thing. If I am able to stay healthy for the next month and a half, I hope to have my chances to compete at the right level.

**Q. Another question about Toni coaching Felix. Did Toni ask you what you thought about the idea of him coaching Felix? Also, what do you think you will feel like if you are playing Felix in a match? Will Toni be helping him then?**

RAFAEL NADAL: Is something that I didn't tell to him, no. I don't have any problem, no. I always said the same: I want the best for Toni.

First of all, he doesn't have to ask me anything, no. He's my uncle. I am very grateful for all the things that he did for me. I am happy that he's on the tour a couple of weeks, no?

At the same time I am happy for Felix. I mean, is going to be a good support, have a great coach like Toni next to him. Happy for me, too. I am happy to see my uncle here, see him here, spend time with him here on the tour again. That's a positive thing.

**Q. I'd like to know if you watched the tournament in Miami, with Jannik Sinner doing so well? He said it's the best experience he had so far was to practice with you. Since in this draw Sinner could possibly play with Djokovic, which could be the first match of Djokovic, like you playing the first match after Melbourne, I wonder what is the disadvantage to have not played for two months since Melbourne, almost three, and finding yourself already with a strong opponent?**

RAFAEL NADAL: Well, let's see, no? I am happy for Jannik. He is a great guy, having a great season. I honestly didn't see much of Miami. Sorry. I can't have a clear opinion.

But at the same time, I mean, I saw the draw. Jannik has a tough first round against Albert Ramos. He know how to play very well on clay. He play a very good week last week in Marbella.

For Jannik, I'm sure he's focused on winning the first match. If he plays against Novak, is of course a tough match for Jannik, probably a tough match for Novak, too, no?

But Novak came here after winning another slam. Even if he doesn't play for a while, I am sure that he was able to practice on clay more than never. He will be ready, no?

But let's see. I don't know. I can't have a clear opinion on that. Of course, going to be a tough battle if that happens.

**Q. We haven't seen you since Melbourne. In the meantime Novak broke the record of weeks at No. 1. As someone who has been at the top of the game for so long, how hard it is to be 300 or more weeks at No. 1? How big is that record in regard to tennis history?**

RAFAEL NADAL: Well, honestly during this period of time, for the last years, have been a lot of records breaking, no? Three players did a lot of important things in the history of our sport. Now that's another great achievement for Novak. So well done for him. Just congratulate him.

I don't know what means for the history of tennis. Just another record breaking. That's it. Well done for him.

**Q. Obviously it's a bit strange that the clay season is happening again so soon after it happened last year, even though it was just Rome and Paris. For you, does it feel strange that the most important part of the season for you is back again so soon after it ended?**

RAFAEL NADAL: Well, last year was only two

tournaments of clay court season for me, no? That's the real thing. Was not a long clay court season.

No, I am excited. More than for the clay court season - of course, I love to play on clay, too - but I love to be here, Barcelona, Madrid, Rome, Roland Garros, Paris. I love these events. Of course, will not be the same without the typical atmosphere.

At the same time I play I will have the chance to play in a places that I know very well, places that I have a great story with every single event, yeah. For me, that's important, no?

Just happy to enjoy another experience, yeah, another opportunity for me to compete in these historic places of our sport.

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