

August 18, 2011



N. DJOKOVIC/R. Stepanek

6-3, 6-3

An interview with:

NOVAK DJOKOVIC

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. You really engaged the crowd near the end there, and they gave you a warm reception. If you do that, I think that would suit your game going forward, especially in New York?

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: Yeah, it's been very slow kind of ugly match to play and to watch, so I think we needed to engage the crowd a little bit towards the end.

Q. Now that you're further into the week, is anything different?

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: I'm in another quarterfinal. (Laughter.)

Q. You were broken a couple times quickly yesterday, and again a few more times today. It's part of the game, but it seems like it's happening a little bit more than recently.

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: Yeah, it's happening more often, which is not great. Look, if I can compensate the good performance, compensate the bad serve with the good strokes, with the baseline play, it's important.

I will try to focus on positives that I have this tournament, and that is return, good forehand from the baseline, and just keeping the ball in play and playing as much as I need to to win.

Q. When your serve is not working, you're saying you focus more on returning better than fixing your serve?

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: Well, you know, there are periods of the match where I serve okay, and then periods where I serve very bad. But that's okay. It all happens.

I played so many matches, and they caught up to me a little bit. It's expected that some part of my game is not working 100%, you know.

But, you know, I believe that tomorrow the serve will be better. It's important to have the right mindset and positive attitude. I don't think that my rhythm is bad, it's just that, okay, a little bit my toss and I'm out of balance on my serve and I'm forcing it a little bit too much.

Maybe I should go a little bit for percentage rather than speed.

Q. When you play every day and go from one tournament to another, do you get days like today where it's a bit of a grind and you're a bit tired?

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: Yeah, there are days like this where you don't feel like playing. But I hate losing, so I need to win. That's what makes me motivated on the court.

Q. You went through a period earlier where you got up to a point where there was only Nadal, maybe Federer in front of you, and they were the main challenges you had to beat. Can you talk about how you approached that to focus on beating them, taking that next step? And how did it affect you?

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: I didn't focus on them. I focused on myself and improving my game and getting mentally stronger and believing in my qualities and ability and just maturing as a person of the court as well, knowing how to deal with pressure, expectations, and things that are part of our sport.

I think that's something that worked well for me in the past 12 months. I mean, results are

showing that.

Q. Speaking of Nadal, he had a three and a half hour, three-straight tiebreak match today. Does that give you any kind of insight to what it might be like if you play him here or at the US Open if you meet up in the final again?

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: It's still very early to talk about it. He had a great match today, but I need to focus on my next opponent. That's my only concern.

Q. Did you have any problems with a turnaround from last night to this afternoon?

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: No. I think the weather today was quite okay. It was not that hot, and we played actually at the nice time of the day.

Q. As the world's top player, would you have any advice to offer to kids that might want to be tennis players or just an athlete in general?

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: Well, sport is a very healthy way of living. Sport can offer a lot of good things to the kids. You know, sport can teach you how to be determined, be professional in the life, and know how to appreciate things.

You know, even though tennis is individual sport, you still get to travel a lot and be with people, meet different cultures, different countries.

So I would definitely suggest tennis to kids.

Q. What is your usual preparation next week, the week before the US Open. Will you be in New York?

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: Yeah, I will be in New York. I will be taking some time off after this tournament and then preparing.

Q. Are there additional demands on your schedule since you've had this extra level of success?

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: Depends. In terms of...

Q. More demands from tournaments to show up?

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: Yeah, there is a lot of requests, but, you know, it's important to organize your schedule the way that it doesn't hurt your tennis, doesn't hurt your preparation.

My priority is to get ready for the US Open, prepare well, practice. And whenever I have some

free time, I will be, you know, open for some other demands.

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N. Djokovic - 08.18.11