

Western & Southern Open

Wednesday, August 16, 2017

Rafael Nadal

Press Conference

R. NADAL/R. Gasquet

6-3, 6-4

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. You always talk about the importance of playing with the right intensity and right feelings. Do you feel like you have that right now to make a run here and possibly at the US Open?

RAFAEL NADAL: I don't know. Just the start of the tournament. Was important start for me. Always important to win the first match, especially after what happened last week, losing the match that way.

So just happy for the way that I played, and of course for the victory, no? So let's see. Tomorrow another tough match against, you know, against Albert. I know him very well. He know me very well. Going to be a tough one. I hope to be ready to play well.

Q. Knowing that you're going to be returning to No. 1 in the world no matter what happens, how is that affecting your outlook here and at the US Open, as well?

RAFAEL NADAL: No, in no one different way, no? My goal, I always say the same, is important thing for me because to come back to that number after all the things that happened to me since the last time that I have been in that position is something very important and very difficult, no? I worked a lot to give me another chance, and here I am.

Just to be back to that position is something that makes me happy, and of course is going to be an emotional moment for me.

But that doesn't change my goals. My goal is try to play a good tournament here, and of course then we gonna think about the US Open. But now it's Cincinnati.

Q. Why do you think you've had so much success against Richard?

RAFAEL NADAL: I don't know. He's a tough opponent in all the rounds, but especially in the first round he is a tough one.

So I think I played a solid match. I think Richard has a great backhand, and his best shot probably goes

against my best shot, too. That probably can make the difference, no? But in general terms, I don't know why, because he's a great player.

Q. You expressed disappointment obviously for last week's result, but you had a very convincing win today. Are you happy with today's result, or do you still think you can do some things better?

RAFAEL NADAL: I work every day to play better. Is obvious that was an important start for me, a good one. And now I have another opportunity tomorrow to go on court and play another match. I hope to be ready to play well tomorrow. I think I can do it, because I have been practicing well. So that's it.

Q. Can you talk about the injuries to the other players that aren't here? Does it surprise you? Do you think the season is too long, too grinding, too many events?

RAFAEL NADAL: The season didn't change for the last 20 years probably, so we cannot think about that now. You know, is something that happens because we are not 20 years old anymore, no? We are over 30, most of us, you know.

So is something that can happen, no? This year happened couple of times, but I tell you one thing, no, I have been in that position more than all these players that are out now, no?

So that's part of the sport. I know how tough it is. I am very sorry for all of them, and I wish all of them a fast and good recovery. But at the same time I tell you, no, Roger didn't have a lot of things during his career. Novak, the same. Andy, the same. Stan, I don't think he had a lot of issues, too.

I am the only one of these top players that I miss a lot of important tournaments in my career, no? More than nobody else. I know how tough it is. But the only thing that you can do when these kind of things happen is accept and keep going.

Q. You still seem to be so passionate about the game. When you see somebody like Roger who is playing in his mid to late 30s, has so much success, does that maybe change your mind about how long you'll be able to continue playing at such an elite level?



RAFAEL NADAL: No. I do my way, and Roger did his way, no? Everybody is different. For me, personally, I always say the same. I'm going to keep playing until what I am doing makes me happy. I am a very lucky person that I can choose when I want to stop, so that's the real thing.

If I am happy doing what I am doing, and especially if I am healthy, I continue, I keep going, because I love this sport. I love the competition, and I still feeling the passion for what I am doing, no? When I arrive the days I lose one of these things, I gonna do nothing.

Q. Given your history with Roger, you guys are both having these exceptional seasons at the same time. Does it make it extra special that you're both back on top together after all these years?

RAFAEL NADAL: Well, it's something that probably is special because a lot of people thought that we will not be able to be back where we are now, but we have been in that position for a lot of, a lot of years. Is special, yes, but is nothing new.