

March 28, 2009

Sony Ericsson Open

R. NADAL/T. Gabashvili

6-2, 6-2

An interview with:

RAFAEL NADAL

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. How pleased are you with your performance tonight, and how difficult was it to adapt from Indian Wells to Miami?

RAFAEL NADAL: Yes, I very happy. Very happy, no? I think Gabashvili didn't really play bad game. He played hard. He was there, no? I think I played a very serious match, and yeah, I think I played well.

How tough was adapt? Well, yeah, I didn't practice as well as I did in Indian Wells. Well, more wind here. I think it's more difficult to play. But it's important get the rhythm right now with the match.

Q. How much do you like this tournament? You've had a long history here. Do you enjoy this Miami tournament more than others, or is it just another place for you?

RAFAEL NADAL: Yeah, every tournament for me is special. So here I can feel a little bit closer like if I am at home because a lot of people speak Spanish. So that's really nice.

Yeah, it's always important tournament, no? I had two finals here and I never won. So, yeah, I would love to win.

Q. What has been the most difficult thing to learn for you to adapt on hard court? When you started to adapt your game to hard court, what has been the most difficult thing for you to learn?

RAFAEL NADAL: No, right now, the true is not really difficult, no? Because I play more on hard than other surfaces. It's tougher on other surfaces.

But, yeah, maybe the beginning the position on the court. Yeah, I played a little bit behind the court. And for me, it's -- well, to play on this court it's important to play a little bit more inside, no?

Q. Everybody would assume that clay is your favorite surface.

RAFAEL NADAL: No, it's not my favorite surface. It's another one. It's maybe the surface where I play better, but I think -- yeah, for the volley it's much better, the clay and grass, than hard court. That's what I always say, no, because there is a lot of injuries.

My feeling, better feeling, is much better when I am playing on grass or on clay than on hard, but I love to play on every surface.

Q. Do you know much about your next opponent?

RAFAEL NADAL: I played against him maybe in the Borotra Cup in Under-14 in France. I don't remember the place exactly. It's strange. I always remember everything, no? I don't remember that place.

Well, he improved the last few years, no? He's doing very good results. Yeah, I think beating Karlovic today is a great win. Yeah, going to be a really tough opponent. I have to play well.

Q. Wherever you go here the last couple days, huge crowds, kids are screaming. You take off your shirt and people go crazy. Does this strike you as crazy? Do you enjoy that, or do you think, No thanks, I would rather just play tennis. Is it fun for you in any way?

RAFAEL NADAL: Not fun and not no thanks. You know.

Q. It just is?

RAFAEL NADAL: I'm on the court and I am focus on the match.

Q. Like whether or not you're going to the practice court the place goes crazy?

RAFAEL NADAL: Yeah, it's a little bit tough because I would love to sign everybody, but that's impossible.

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Yeah, I think it's tough for me, but it's tough for the crowd, too, because they're waiting and this is tough. It's difficult.

Anyway, it's nice with the support of the crowd, and I just can say thank you very much, all the people. When you go on court and you practice and you saw all the people waiting for you, it's a really nice feeling.

Q. When you were a kid, were you like that with sports people?

RAFAEL NADAL: No, no. No. I just -- no, I never was like this, no?

Sure, yeah, I know in that moment a lot of great football players, because my uncle was playing in Barcelona and I was there close to the players and having lots of chance to signing the pictures, but I never did.

Q. You never did an autograph?

RAFAEL NADAL: No. Autograph, no. Some photos, yes.

I think photo is more than an autograph. I prefer that. I think I don't need.

Thank you.

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