

**March 25, 2009**

# Sony Ericsson Open

An interview with:

## ROGER FEDERER

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

**Q. Just give us a little idea of how you're feeling, how you've been practicing since you've arrived here from Indian Wells?**

ROGER FEDERER: Um, I'm feeling all right, you know. A bit tired yesterday from travel, but I practiced yesterday and today, and got one more hour tomorrow, and then off we goes.

So it's a decent amount of time to get ready. You know, it's more of the gusty winds over here, and more humid, but it's not been bad. You know, so it's actually been pretty easy to adapt.

**Q. Can you talk about just how important this tournament is to you right now at this stage of the season to you? You obviously want to win every tournament, but how important is it to you to get a win?**

ROGER FEDERER: It's always been an important tournament for me. I won the Orange Bowl here in '98, and I've been back every year since, you know, so I think this is my 10th year as a pro coming here.

I've always enjoyed coming here. I always hope to do well. I mean, it's sort of important, let's say. I mean, it's the end of the hardcourts. You don't take that much over, you know, to clay because it's so different. But it would be great to play well and win the tournament here, that's for sure.

**Q. There was a sense, Roger, that your back was probably giving you more trouble in Indian Wells than you led us to believe.**

ROGER FEDERER: Yeah, I mean, the back is okay. I still wish it was better, but it's not really handicapping me even when I'm playing.

It's not that bad. You know, I just didn't play a great match against Andy, you know. But the tournament was okay, you know. At least, you

know, I had the match on my racquet when I play Andy, whereas versus last year when I lost to Fish, you know, I didn't have that much control.

Maybe you're a bit more disappointed when you lose a match like this year. But it's okay; it happens. I haven't played in a while, so it was a decent comeback.

**Q. I just want to ask you about becoming a father this summer. Are you already, like, reading books about babies and things like that? Do you know anything about babies? Have you ever changed a diaper?**

ROGER FEDERER: Well, you know, I'm very excited, you know, so is Mirka. We're looking forward to see how it's going to, you know, impact, you know, our lives.

You know, I hung around quite a few kids, you know, last few years, so it's been fun seeing, you know, how it all works. You know, before that, I was, you know, young myself. So I think it's sort of the right time now for us to do this move, and, yeah, we'll see how it goes.

**Q. What makes this tournament so special, Roger? This is called like the fifth major.**

ROGER FEDERER: Yeah, it's well-run, great crowds, you know. Many South Americans come up, you know, and enjoy this event, as well. Great stadium. You know, nice location, too. The city is fun, too.

So I think the players really like coming here. It's a good time of the year. Coming to the States, the swing with Indian Wells and Miami really works well. Yeah, it's the end of the hardcourts, as well. I think it's kind of a celebration of that before we come back for the American hardcourts later on in the year.

But, no, they run a great event here. It's always a big interest in the media side and from the fan side. I always enjoy coming here, so it's a good tournament.

**Q. What do you know about your opponent, Kevin Kim?**

ROGER FEDERER: Not that much, you

know, even though he's been around for a while. You know, he plays a one-handed backhand. Yeah, he's an aggressive baseliner, you know. Didn't see anything of his match today, but I know a couple of friends who played against him.

**Q. Are there any specific places, any restaurants or something that you like to go every time you come to Miami?**

ROGER FEDERER: I like going to South Beach. It's the place to be here, you know. I used to stay down there actually for many years during the tournament. I decided it was too much of a distraction, so I kind of changed it up.

I like still going there for dinners, you know, and hanging out down at the beach.

**Q. The last few sets you lost to Nadal and Andy Murray, is it something you want to think about a lot or you want to forget about?**

ROGER FEDERER: Oh, like the five setters against Rafa?

**Q. Is that something you want to analyze or not?**

ROGER FEDERER: Well, I mean, I guess you could analyze it but in a big way. But at the same time, it just happens sometimes. Of course I was disappointed the way the match ended in Australia, also how it ended at Indian Wells. But at the same time, you know, it's not the end of the world, you know. You move on from there, and you try to not make it happen.

But honestly, it doesn't really play on my mind a whole lot, you know, because I go out there and try to play every point as tough as I can. When errors happen, it's disappointing; and when they don't happen, it's what you expect, kind of.

It was a bit unexpected, but I just have to make sure I play well and have the right attitude. I was excited. I was playing okay midway through the second set, so it was surprising to play so bad towards the end.

**Q. Would you say is the reason for the change in balance in tennis? Years ago it was like United States all over. Agassi, Sampras, Connors, and McEnroe. Now you don't see any American players like in the top spots. What would you say the reason?**

ROGER FEDERER: Well, I mean, I guess Americans always have had problems to a degree playing on clay, well on clay. So especially Andy's record at the French Open is not the greatest, you

know; James, the same thing. You have other players coming up that maybe are a bit more comfortable on clay, like Querrey.

I think that's hurt them over the years, you know, to be maybe more of a threat to the top ranking. If you look back, you had Courier who played really well on clay, Agassi played well on clay. Pete was so good he could play well on clay, too, you know.

I think this is a bit of a difference, you know. But at the same time, they -- you know, they were legends of the game, you know, the other players we're talking about. You can't always have a generation that's always so incredibly strong like what they had, you know.

I still think they have very good players. That's why they won Davis Cup. That's why, you know, one of the toughest teams to win Davis Cup, but I don't know. We'll see in the future what's going to happen. But, I mean, men's tennis in the States is not doing that bad after all. Andy is coming back strong.

**Q. Speaking of Davis Cup, not that long ago, players played Davis Cup really just for their expenses and not getting a payment for being there because they were playing for their countries. Do you think that concept could still work in today's era of tennis, or would the players maybe not go because they're not getting paid anything?**

ROGER FEDERER: Honestly I never heard of money being the issue here, why players are not playing.

Um, I get paid very little when I play Davis Cup, you know, because our federation is small and doesn't have much money. We have a system in place that works and is fair from No. 1, 2, 3, 4 player. But we don't get paid like maybe the Americans do or the French do. We get 50 or 100 grand each match plus prize money or whatever.

Sometimes I walk away with \$5,000, you know, or \$10,000. It's not that I play or not play because of the money, you know. I'm beyond that point, you know. I don't know if that's even in the talks that they want to increase prize money or not.

For me, it's the problem with the weeks. I can't focus on No. 1 in the world, trying to win the Grand Slams, trying to win Masters Series, and then also trying to win Davis Cup, you know.

It's just been too much, so something had to give. I decided Davis Cup was the one thing I

was not going to play in February. If they would make to quarters, I would then maybe get back into the team. But it never happened in five years, so there you go.

**Q. You mentioned that you were young once. How enthused are you still about what you can achieve in the game?**

ROGER FEDERER: Um, I'm excited to see how much longer I can play. You know, I've got a very, is it energy -- energy-consume -- not consuming game, like a relaxed playing style, so that helps me to play for long times. I already have, you know, done so many things and achieved so many great records that everything that comes now is such a -- I'm just adding up, you know, which is scary to some degree, even for me, you know.

So I'm excited to go for my sixth Wimbledon and my sixth US Open. All those kinds of things is just fascinating, and it's like motivating at the same time. That's why I work extremely hard in the off-season and make sure I'm in great shape.

You know, I'm a professional, but I like to have fun, you know, next to the tennis court. And because I have the right balance, I think I'm going to be in the game for a long time.

**Q. You're friends with a couple of former players, like Pete Sampras and Tim Henman, both of whom are fathers and both of whom had to balance the challenge of playing with being a father. Have you spoken to them, or would you like to speak to them to find out how it was for them?**

ROGER FEDERER: I haven't actually spoken to them, but they both congratulated me. That's nice.

No, I think it's up to me, you know, to make the right decisions. I'm sure I'm still going to be very, very focused, you know, in the game of tennis. That's what Mirka wants, anyway, as well. That's a good thing.

I think it's just going to be more fun, you know, even. I think it's going to motivate me and inspire me, you know, seeing how the child grows and so forth, you know. And Mirka's dream, especially mine too in a way, was always to maybe one day have maybe, you know, a kid on the sideline seeing me play while I'm still active. I think there's a great possibility now, and so I'm excited about that.

That's why even more so I want to play for a long time.

**Q. Down the line in this tournament, if you end up having to play Rafa again, do you play him differently, or do you still go out and play your regular game? Do you feel at some point you need to change the way you play against him?**

ROGER FEDERER: No, I play as well as I can against him. I've tried many different things against Rafa. It depends a lot also on the conditions, you know. You look at the finals last week. Both couldn't play the way they usually play because the wind was howling, you know. You have to adapt to the conditions. Is it really hot? Is it windy? Is it cool? Is it day? Is it night? All those kinds of things matter in tennis.

Usually, it's the aggressive playing style that makes me beat Rafa. And especially on the hardcourts, you know, I didn't get that many chances if I look back. I've had so many more times on clay.

You know, on a hardcourt I have to play aggressive against him. There's no way around that. I know how I have to play him. I've beat him enough to know.

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