

March 31, 2009

Sony Ericsson Open

R. FEDERER/T. Dent

6-3, 6-2

An interview with:

ROGER FEDERER

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. Was that fifth game one of the more interesting of your career?

ROGER FEDERER: Yeah, I don't know how many times it happened that I had to save so many breakpoints over and over again after already saving it. So it was definitely a big game for me, you know, to stay ahead.

I was serving against the wind, so I was struggling with my first serve there a bit. He did well to keep coming at me and creating opportunities for himself. I thought he played really well, and he made it difficult for me today.

Q. Talk about the difference of playing his style. He has kind of a different style of play. What's that like to be across the court from him?

ROGER FEDERER: Well, I mean, I like playing that kind of style. It reminds how -- me when I came on tour, this is how many guys were playing, even myself. You know, coming to the net, forcing the issue, keeping the points short.

I think that's been a big change because of the strings, the way we're able to cover the court now and hit through the ball and still keep the ball in play.

Before we were all playing with natural gut, and by having that it was just hard to control the ball. You didn't want to rally forever. We used to break a lot of strings.

It was so different today. It was really a lot of fun playing against Taylor today. I think he was playing well. Like I said, I had to come up with some good passing shots to be able to make a difference.

He might have got a bit tired towards the end, but I still think it was a great effort from his side to win that many matches here.

Q. When you see the pressure he puts on you and how he wins points at the net and also inducing errors, does that make you reconsider how often you want to come in, do you think?

ROGER FEDERER: You think it should make me want to come in more? Honestly, I'm so used to this kind of play that I don't feel pressure when a guy is coming into the net, even when I'm missing some shots.

It's maybe a touch uncomfortable, but I've played so many guys playing like that, Henman and Mirnyi and all these guys, and Pete. You name it. This is how I grew up. This is normally how points are being played.

Today it's different. You rally and you only come to the net when you have a forehand that's like right here and maybe an overhead. If you're lucky, you get it back.

I like the sense of having to hit a passing shot. That's why I don't think, even though how great he does it, he's not going to make me chip and charge and serve and volley a whole a lot more.

Q. Sort of like Back to Future or something like that?

ROGER FEDERER: I guess.

Q. Next match will be against Andy Roddick. You have played against him many times. What do you expect this time?

ROGER FEDERER: Yeah, rematch of last year, isn't it? Quarterfinal match. Look, I love playing against him. We've had some big matches over the years, US Open, Wimbledon.

So, yeah, I don't know. It's going to be for sure a fun match to play against him. I played him at the Australian Open and played well against him there. He's seems like he's changed a couple of thing in his game, so should be a good match, I'm sure.

Q. Have you got a chance to see any of

ASAP sports
...when all is said, we're done.®

visit our archives at asapsports.com

R Federer - 03 31 09.doc

Andy's games? Obviously you played him earlier this year. Do you think it's benefitting his playing style? Is he playing better because of how he's changed his game? More competitive?

ROGER FEDERER: Yeah, I mean, look, he's only changed a few things. I don't think we're seeing a different Andy Roddick. It's just a bit of shot placement that seems different. He's tried many things over the years: to play aggressive and to play really defensive. Remember when he was really far back on the returns?

In the beginning of the career, every forehand he had was just going outright winners. He's always been dangerous. It never really changed, you know, from this aspect just because he's got that massive serve.

I think you just don't break it that easily, no matter how he plays from the baseline. That's why Andy Roddick is one of those guys who can really try out a few things from the baseline.

But he seems like he's playing quite safe at the moment. It's paying off. He's played well at the beginning of the season. But I'm happy I already played him this season so I get a sense of how he's playing.

Q. On the subject him having changed his game over the years, do you think you'll have to change your game as the years advance and you get more challengers and more tough players?

ROGER FEDERER: I've adjusted too over the years. I had to. I used to chip and charge and serve and volley when I was not feeling well from the baseline. I used to serve and volley against Nalbandian, against Agassi, against the greats, you know, of the returning passing shots.

You know, I almost came close. And Hewitt as well. Until I realized I had to get my baseline game into great shape. Once I got that going, the whole thing followed. My mental strength got so much better. My the footwork was incredible. That then allowed me to have so many more options.

It's just now a matter for me of when do I play aggressive and when do I let the other guy play and make mistakes, as well. Right now I feel I found again the right tactics against the right players, you know.

All I needed was a few matches, and I got those in Indian Wells. I feel like I'm playing well, and I'm excited about what's to come.

Q. Obviously for years you were the hunted, No. 1. Do you enjoy the hunting, being on the opposite side of that? Does it entail a change of mind or attitude in any way?

ROGER FEDERER: Umm, not a whole a lot. You know, I mean, I had more of an issue with myself, you know, getting myself back in shape for the last year. That's been my problem, not really Rafa or Andy or Djokovic, or you name it. Those comes naturally if I play well that I can beat these guys.

So for me, it was a matter of getting back in shape. I feel like I'm about to turn the corner. Mentally I'm really fresh again after taking a rest in December and February. So I feel like I'm getting better, whereas I couldn't concentrate that much on tennis. It was more about getting actually back in shape.

Q. When you've had so much success against one player like Andy Roddick, does it give you the confidence that when you're in a tight game that you have what it takes to beat that player? You have a mental edge?

ROGER FEDERER: Well, I mean, it helps having a great record. Then again, you saw last year. Doesn't really help you that much sometimes. I think on the big occasions I just have that extra gear that not many players have.

So I feel like that's an advantage, because of my talent, because of my experience. But in a match, best-of-three, you know, against a guy like Andy, it's all to play for really.

He's always been dangerous. I've always respected him a huge amount. You know, I like watching the guys and I also like playing the guy. It's going to be a fun match, I'm sure.

But I don't feel like now at deuce at 5-All in the second that I have an advantage over him just because I've beaten him. That's not the case. You always have to create it for yourself again, over and over again.

Q. At this stage in your career, what do you consider to be more important to you: being No. 1 in the world again or accumulating as many Grand Slams as possible?

ROGER FEDERER: Goes hand in hand, doesn't it? I guess it's slams right now, because I'm that close with Pete's record. I know if I win a Slam, a No. 1 ranking will follow.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports