

March 31, 2009

Sony Ericsson Open

N. DJOKOVIC/T. Berdych

6-3, 6-2

An interview with:

NOVAK DJOKOVIC

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. Was it as easy as it looked, or not?

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: No, look, nothing is easy in these stages of the tournament. I'm playing top 20 player, and a player who won against basically all top players in this moment, so it's never easy to play, on this surface especially.

So I was trying to stick with him all the time, because I knew he's very aggressive, but not really consistent from the baseline. He makes a lot of unforced errors, especially from the forehand side, so I changed the pace and I played a really good tennis today.

Q. Is that what separates the top 10 from maybe the top 20, 25, the consistency? They all have the strokes, but it's just the consistency.

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: Well, it's just the details, I think. It's just maybe mental calmness and confidence in certain moments, important moments in the match.

Q. The other day you were saying that you were looking for confidence, in fact, this year. Did you find it back, or you still need some more wins to be sure?

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: Well, wins are necessary to get the confidence, and this is what I'm getting lately. Luckily for me, I'm winning more matches than I'm losing. Winning the Dubai event and a couple matches at Indian Wells and here again, so far it's going well.

Hopefully I can continue this way.

Q. The next two, Simon or Tsonga, you've had great matches with both. They're

two entirely different players. Talk about the challenge each match would present.

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: Yeah, big challenge for me. Certainly not a favorite in both of the matches I play, because they're great players. Simon has improved incredibly in the last five or six months. He's been playing very solid tennis from all sides. He's a very tricky player, because he makes you always play another extra shot.

On the other hand, I lost to Tsonga four times in a row, so he has a little advantage probably there. But, again, I think all the matches we played was very close. So if I play him, it's going to be a challenge for me to win.

Q. Have you found this a little bit of a strange year? Because a lot of people are talking about obviously Roger and Rafa, and then there's almost an assumption that one day soon Murray will be maybe No. 3, No. 2, No 1. Does that stiffen your resolve a little bit?

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: Look, I'm really happy that the people don't talk too much about me now. It releases pressure, and then I can really perform my best tennis. So I think it goes to my favor.

Q. You've kind of grown up with electronic line calling the last three years. Is it something you sort of take for granted now?

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: I think I've been quite successful with that.

Q. You've been more successful than any other top player.

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: Really?

Q. Yeah.

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: That's good. It's not that I have, I don't know, eye of the falcon or something. I just get that feeling. You know, probably I have a good eye, okay, good feeling for the ball.

Q. But does it seem like it's just part of the game now, it's integrated?

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: Yeah. I support it. Some players do; some don't. But I'm on the side

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of the players who really like it. I think it brings out entertainment for fans, and it's interesting.

On the other side, for the players, it gives them chance to overcome -- to overrule the first call, which is good.

Q. Are you going to bring it to the Serbian Open?

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: Hopefully -- yeah, well, money, money. We have clay, so that's a little bit different.

Q. The new racquet you have, you have mastered the feelings with the racquet, or you still have something to improve in the feelings you have with it?

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: We're working on it, but I think we're -- it's not really 100%, but it's very close. I mean, I was working a lot on the racquet in last eight, nine months.

And it was hard decision for me to switch, but I did, and I suffered a little bit in the start of the season. More mentally than the real racquet because it's a hard switch, but now I'm really starting to get used to it much more.

Q. Can you explain the difference between the two?

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: Head racquet has a lot more I think swing weight and it's really fast. It's really fast.

Q. You've got the same amount of prize money as the women's event here, but it's configured in different ways. If you were to win, you're actually going to earn less than the women because the distribution is different. Are you happy with the way that the men's prize money is being distributed?

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: I don't want to go too deep about that. There's been a lot of talks about that. Look, I'm not paying attention on the women's tennis. This is something that's not in our hands.

What is in our hands you have to be concerned about, and that is to increase the prize money and really work on some things that we really deserve. I don't think it's fair to have equal prize money, that's for sure.

Q. I understand that a lot of players did like you, which is to have their early training outside of Serbia. Is that the current trend? If so, why?

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: It's because of the lack of professional conditions in our country. We didn't have any tradition and any conditions which - or facilities - which would bring us and develop us to the professional waters of tennis. That's why we had to go different ways abroad.

Q. And now it's changing, or...

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: It's changing.

Q. Are you confident that everything will be ready on time for your tournament? I saw some pictures, and...

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: No, no, no, don't worry. Everything will be on time. They are working on it since the start of this year. I mean, already two months working, and we gonna make a good impression.

Q. Talk Viktor Troiki, your countryman. We don't know much about him.

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: Yeah, he's playing fantastic in the last two events. He's a physically very strong guy. He's always been like that, even in juniors. He had a little issues with the groundstrokes, with the technique, but now he is improved. His forehand is much better, and his movement has always been very powerful for his height. So we can expect him to do well in the future.

Q. Have you helped him or mentored him in any way?

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: He's older. He knows.

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