

March 30, 2009

Sony Ericsson Open

R. NADAL/F. Gil

7-5, 6-3

An interview with:

RAFAEL NADAL

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. What did you know about your opponent before? He said he remembered one time many years ago when you were 14 and 15.

RAFAEL NADAL: Yeah, I know that. But, yeah, no, yeah, he did well in Johannesburg. He did well in Sauipe. He's doing a good season, no? I want it congratulate him for that.

Q. Was it a harder first set than you thought it might be?

RAFAEL NADAL: Well, always is tough. No one opponent is easy, especially if you are not playing your best tennis. So everything is more difficult today, no?

I think that's what was happening today. I didn't play very well. And, yeah, I had chances to lose the first set.

Q. Was it tough to get motivated today? Looked like you were a little flat and listless out there.

RAFAEL NADAL: I don't know. Yeah, I didn't feel very well on court. Yeah. Sure, every match is very important for me, no? I want to win always, and the motivation when you go on court always is full in every match, no?

But, yeah, today, you know, you can't play well every day, and today was one of these days.

Q. Any special reason why you didn't feel good?

RAFAEL NADAL: If I know that reason before, I gonna play better, no?

Q. Nothing physical?

RAFAEL NADAL: No, no. No physical , no.

Q. What do you think turned the match in your favor today?

RAFAEL NADAL: I don't know. Yeah, I don't know. In the end, in some important moments, anyway if I didn't play my best he had some mistakes. He was with the 2-0 in the second.

Later I played a little bit better. Not too much, but a little bit, yes. Yeah, in the first set, I had -- in the 5-4, 15-30, I had two points okay, so that's was important moment, and later I had the break.

The first set, that moment was the important thing. If you lose the first set always you never know. But winning the first, the normal thing is win the second.

Q. You play all over the world. Can you sense how popular you are in South Florida when you're here?

RAFAEL NADAL: Yeah, yeah. I say two days ago, no? I think, yeah, being here with a lot of people, a lot of crowd are waiting for me when I am playing, when I am practicing, so that's really, really nice feeling, no?

Q. Why do you think that is?

RAFAEL NADAL: I don't know, no? I think there is a lot of Latin people here, no? But in all the parts of the world the crowd was always really nice with me, no?

That's nice, because if you saw the crowd being nice with you, I think it's because you are doing the right things.

Q. It seemed like you were playing very deep on the court today, and you've been doing so well on hard courts by playing inside the court. Was that part of problem, and did you fix that as the match went on?

RAFAEL NADAL: If I didn't play inside it's because I didn't have the chance to play inside today, you know. Maybe, but the problem is I don't touch the ball as well as I want.

If you're not doing that, you lose court.

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You play two meters behind the baseline, or three, and that's bad because the opponent have more time or you didn't see where you have to put the ball. Everything is going worse, you know?

When you play more inside you have more chances to have the winner. Yeah, the court bigger. When you are more behind, the courts looks smaller, and the potential has more time to think. So the sport is really easy. Yeah, the sport is easy.

That's the thing. You don't need to study a lot or know about the tennis.

Q. Were you ever a junior player here in the junior tournament or a ball kid or spectator at this stadium?

RAFAEL NADAL: Here?

Q. Here.

RAFAEL NADAL: Miami is far away from home. No, no.

Q. No junior Orange Bowl or anything?

RAFAEL NADAL: No, never.

Q. We've had Hawk-Eye around for a few years now. Most of the top players, their percentage is quite low. You're 36% for getting it correct. I'm wondering, why is that? What do you think of electronic line calling?

RAFAEL NADAL: Yeah, sometimes I ask. I don't know why. For relax a little bit. Another ones I have mistake. And another times I think the machine is not exactly okay.

Q. Are you a bad loser? Do you sleep well after a loss, or do you say it's just tennis and it's okay? I mean, how are you after a loss?

RAFAEL NADAL: Yeah, perfect. No, no. Sure, no problem.

Q. And that was always that way? Even when you were younger, no problem?

RAFAEL NADAL: Yeah, well, if you lose the final of Wimbledon, having a good chance to win, maybe this night an a little bit tough, no?

But for the rest, no problem. Yeah, when you go on court you know you can lose and you can win. You have to accept both things.

Q. Clay season is coming up. Are you looking forward getting back on the dirt again?

RAFAEL NADAL: Looking forward to my match tomorrow against Wawrinka or Andreev. Clay season is later. Hopefully far away than one match. Always it's exciting play on clay.

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