

August 18, 2011



R. NADAL/F. Verdasco

7-6, 6-7, 7-6

An interview with:

RAFAEL NADAL

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. Talk about how you're feeling physically after playing for three hours and 38 minutes as well as doubles.

RAFAEL NADAL: Fantastic.

Q. When Mardy Fish was in here, who you're playing next, he was asked about playing a long match and then playing doubles. Fish said something like, Oh, I can't imagine he'll actually play doubles. Did you think about pulling out of doubles?

RAFAEL NADAL: I don't think. For me wasn't a choice, no? I have a friend here. I play with one of my best friends. He came from Spain to play the doubles. If I don't go on court today, he don't have the points or the prize money of the second round.

I cannot thought about that, even if I am tired. That's what happened. I had to play, and I tried my best. We lost. I go home - well, not home, to the hotel - to relax a little bit and try to be competitive for tomorrow. (Laughter.)

Q. You won today. How did the match leave you feeling about your play?

RAFAEL NADAL: Was important victory for me. Wasn't an easy match. I think for moments I played well; for moments I played not that well, especially with the 5-1 of the tiebreak. I played a few really bad points.

I'm very happy I'm through; I'm in the quarterfinals. It's positive result for me. I need to spend hours on court. I would like to have one hour less than what I have, but was positive. It was a positive one.

Probably this match will help me for the -- I don't think for this tournament, but for the next one, yes. For this tournament, probably tomorrow I going to be a little bit more tired than what I would like to be. These kind of matches feel this pressure, finally winning one match like this when I had a few mistakes, when I had the match under control, even after I suffered a lot, because the end of the match was very close and emotional for me.

Was a positive thing to end with the victory. Hopefully I will be ready for tomorrow. I will try my best. He's playing really well. I think this kind of matches helps a lot for the US Open.

Q. What was the difference in the match today? There was just a few points here and there. Is there anything you can point to technically that enabled you to win?

RAFAEL NADAL: Probably I had a little bit few mistakes than him when the match was close. It's true he was playing more spectacular points than my ones, but I think I played with less mistake than him at the end.

One less mistake in the match and arrive to the...

Q. There were a lot unforced errors on both sides.

RAFAEL NADAL: Exactly. The court is not easy. It's very fast and the ball is flying a lot. For me, very difficult to have the control of the ball here in this court.

But I will try my best tomorrow. I think I have to do, and I will try for sure. I'm very happy to be in quarterfinals. I'm excited about the match of tomorrow.

Q. You mentioned it was an emotional match. Is that because you're playing a fellow

Spaniard? I know there are a lot of you out there. How much different is it playing a fellow countryman than someone else?

RAFAEL NADAL: Really doesn't matter. It's a competition, and we already played -- it's 12 times that we played against each other, no, so it's nothing new for us.

Really doesn't matter. You want to win; everybody wants to win. He's a friend, but that's it. All the match end in the court.

Q. Your opponent tomorrow, Mardy Fish, has had a very good summer and has won a lot matches here and moved up the rankings quickly.

RAFAEL NADAL: Uh-huh.

Q. What do you know about him and his style of play?

RAFAEL NADAL: I played already five or six times against him. I know a lot about him. (Smiling.)

Q. No, I mean since he's been on a really hot streak recently.

RAFAEL NADAL: He's a very good player and did very well in Wimbledon, very well last week in Montréal. He's doing very well here. Going to be a very difficult match tomorrow. He's aggressive player, fantastic serve, and very good volley. He's moving much better than before from the baseline with less unforced errors.

So he's a very dangerous player. What ranking? He's No. 7 of the world? So you cannot expect have an easy match against No. 7 of the world. Mardy is a fantastic player and one of the most dangerous players on the tour.

Q. You talked about how Novak is a mental challenge for you. For some reason it happens that when players have a new challenge, they struggle with their game against other players as well.

RAFAEL NADAL: Yeah, probably today I'm a little bit too tired to talk about Novak. That's the true. You can ask me every day. I am happy to answer every day before this, but I have to go to rest. It's 7:30. For me, the mental part against Novak...

Q. I mean against everybody else because you have a new challenge.

RAFAEL NADAL: I don't understand the question. (Through translation.) I don't have a

personal rivalry against Novak. I have a rivalry against everybody. I try my best every day when I go on court. This year, Novak is doing fantastic things, fabulous what he's doing, it's really amazing, and probably impossible to repeat for the rest of us.

I want to congratulate him, but for me the challenge is not different. I have a goal right now, and that's improve my tennis to be enough good to compete against him for next yeah. For this year, I don't have enough time to practice, but hopefully for next year, yes.

I have to change and improve a few things, and that's what I going to try.

Q. How is your hand after the fingers you burned? Any better? Any worse?

RAFAEL NADAL: A little bit better, but I'm playing with big bandage - very big one - and it's very difficult to have the feeling. Even when I am serving, to put the ball at the right place, it's not easy for me.

Q. You know what time to be ready tomorrow. What type of food are you going to be having tonight and tomorrow? You have a time.

RAFAEL NADAL: Normal food. I don't have a big -- not big, I don't have nothing of diet. I will eat tonight. When I go to the menu, I will see something that I would like to eat, and that's what I going to eat.

The thing that can help you that little bit don't going to affect a lot for the match. Important thing is have a good rest, do the right things, drink a lot, and for the rest. For sure I don't going to eat, I don't know, like crazy, because I have to go on court tomorrow not late.

I would love to play a little bit later tomorrow, no? I play at 1:00 another time with all the sun there. After today, more than probably five hours on court, is, for me, a little bit too early.

I would love to play later, but that's what happened when you play doubles, too.

Q. You played Fernando so many times. I know you respect all your opponents, but how did you guard against overconfidence? You had beaten him 11 straight times.

RAFAEL NADAL: 12.

Q. Before today.

RAFAEL NADAL: I don't think about that when I go on court. I think about play well. I know if I don't play well, I going to have a good chance to lose. Today was very close.

Doesn't matter what happened in the past. For sure I prefer have 11 wins on my side than have 11 loses. The mental part is there. But every match is different.

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