

August 17, 2012



R. FEDERER/M. Fish

6-3, 7-6

An interview with:

ROGER FEDERER

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. You played a lot of tennis lately. How are you holding up?

ROGER FEDERER: Fine, fine. Few days can work wonders, like I had after the Olympics, and also knowing I will have an extra week between here and the Open.

So I'm absolutely fine. Then after Davis Cup, or if I do play there, I've got the extra, whatever, two, three weeks before Shanghai.

So you always see the light at the end of the tunnel. As long as you see that, you're fine. When you don't see that light anymore, that's when it's not good. (Smiling.)

Q. How enjoyable is that sort of match, a very offensive match with quicker points? Do you enjoy that more than a grind-out style?

ROGER FEDERER: It's different. I'm happy that it's not every matches are the same, and obviously every matchup is different. But it was a great atmosphere. I think it was sellout crowd maybe. That always makes it exciting. Playing an American here in America, it's always special.

Yeah, it was pretty straightforward. Whoever was going to be more aggressive, serve more consistent, and then play maybe a tiny bit better from the baseline was probably going to win. I'm happy I was that guy tonight.

Q. Stan has had some very good results this week and is playing confident

tennis. You have him next. Have you followed his progress here this week, and what do you think about the matchup?

ROGER FEDERER: Well, I played exactly at the same time when he played Ferrer, I think, so I didn't see anything of that.

We practiced together earlier in the week when I arrived. Then I did see some of his match today against Raonic, and none actually against Nishikori.

Then again, I don't need to see Stan playing really. He doesn't need to see me play. We know each other very well. I'm happy for him he's done so well, because he has had a rough spell since the French Open where I thought he played amazing.

Could have, should have beaten Tsonga. So here he is now making a big run at a Masters 1000, which is not so easy. Probably takes couple of wins over top 20 players, if not top 5 players, which is exactly what he did.

I have a tough matchup with him. It's going to be a difficult one. Seems like he's playing really well. I'm just excited for him and for me two Swiss guys can make it to the semis here in Cincinnati. It's great.

Q. Do you empathize at all what's it's like for a guy like Wawrinka who is a much bigger guy in his own country. Seems like sometimes players from the same country as another big guy -- whether it's Troicki with Djokovic or Verdasco with Nadal -- sometimes really struggle against them. Do you empathize with that at all?

ROGER FEDERER: Sure. I mean, I think there are positives and negatives out of it. Obviously you can say or think he might be my shadow at all times when it comes to Switzerland and all that stuff, he's always the second guy.

But then again I think he's also learned a lot from me. Maybe through me he's gotten to the player he is today. Not that I want any credit whatsoever, because I think he's one of those guys

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who has worked extremely hard throughout.

He comes from a complete different background than I come from. That's why I think he will and should get a lot of respect from the way he's done and handled his career really.

That's why I was extremely happy for him when he got the call that he was going to be flag bearer for Switzerland at the Olympics just now in London. That was great recognition of a great athlete and great tennis player.

He gets recognition, but sometimes in Switzerland we do have a hard time showing that.

Q. You didn't work the drop as much tonight. Was that just strategy or...

ROGER FEDERER: I didn't work it as much?

Q. Not as much as you have in previous matches.

ROGER FEDERER: No, of course he plays much closer to the baseline. He's got a shorter distance to cover to get there. When I tried it, it didn't work out, so I was like, I'm not gonna use that anymore. (Smiling.)

Q. Last time you played Mardy was end of the year, and obviously he's been through a lot since that time.

ROGER FEDERER: Right.

Q. How do you think he looked physically?

ROGER FEDERER: Fine. Looked great. I must say looked like his old self, you know. Then again, it's just one match, one hour and something out there, so you can't read too much into it.

I guess I could say more if it was a five-hour grind in a five-setter somewhere at a slam. But he looked great. Looks happy on and off the court, which is great to see, because, yeah, I was worried for him.

All of a sudden things just were all funny and all strange for him. He didn't quite know what was going on, so I'm glad for him that things are better.

Q. Is Stan the kind of guy who has often come to you and asked advice about different things, whether it's technical or practical stuff?

ROGER FEDERER: Yeah, I mean, honestly automatically we do talk about it. I'm happy he doesn't shy away from it, because

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sometimes there is, you know, the occasionally player from Switzerland who doesn't dare to ask or he thinks like he doesn't want to do it because I don't have any time or I don't want to do it.

But I'm always very happy and open to give any sort of advice, whether it's business, family, traveling, tactical advice, or just common sense, you know. Or maybe press. Who knows what it is.

So it's something I'm very happy to do and talk to Stan about. For me, that's normal.

Q. So it's two weeks later, different continent, different surface, but we're seeing three out of the same four players in the semifinals. Any comments on that? The similarity is obvious in a sense of the cast of characters, but the differences are pretty big. Can you talk about the differences?

ROGER FEDERER: Well, I mean, they are different, but then again today I think the way the tour plays and all that stuff, the changes might not be as drastic as they used to be.

I just think the way the players have evolved in this day in age is that you can play on all surfaces. There's not really guys I know of right now that cannot play on grass or guys who cannot play on clay.

Everybody is stronger or weaker on certain surfaces, but I feel everybody can play well on all surfaces, you know. That makes it possible for guys to just tear through clay, grass, and hard courts. And just with confidence and footwork and all that stuff it comes together and you can do it everywhere.

Obviously it takes some getting used to. I think particularly there are different balls here so we have to get used to that, and then there is another ball change going to the US Open.

That's tricky for me as a guy that only plays Cincinnati, so I'm happy I was able to find a way there. Now I kind of have three matches under my belt and I feel like I know kind of how the ball reacts to spin and pace and all that stuff.

And then obviously the bounce. The bounce is completely different here than at Wimbledon. But it's just something we have to be used to, playing with jet lag, playing with injuries, playing with being tired, thinking that we play at noon but at the end we play at 10:00 p.m. just because of rain, whatever it might be.

As a tennis player you have to be very

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flexible with your eating schedule, sleeping schedule, warming up schedule, you name it.

I think this is why I think our sport is pretty unique in that sense.

Q. Stan did a good job of closing out Milos. I know that he would have been your opponent here. He's a big fan of Pete Sampras.

ROGER FEDERER: Milos is?

Q. Yes. You have played Milos a few times not too long ago. Can you talk a little bit about where he is in his game and what you see when you play him?

ROGER FEDERER: Yeah, obviously he's in an interesting phase of his career really. There's so much to look forward to, I would think, not just for him but that generation of players.

Obviously there is a big focus and a little bit of pressure at the same time. I think these guys sort of improve every week, every month. They discover something else in their character potentially and their playing styles and the way they approach the game, try out different things. If it works, great; if it doesn't, it was good experience.

So I think it's very interesting. It can be stressful at times, but overall I look back at those times with great reflection, I think. I hope that they do the same as well.

Q. I think the fans are not ready for the Rafa-Roger rivalry to come to an end. Maybe now they're worried how much Roger and Rafa they are going to get in the future. From your point of view, what is the state of the rivalry?

ROGER FEDERER: The state of the rivalry?

I haven't thought about it, that I might play Rafa less, because I am convinced he will come back strong sooner or later. Indian Wells or when was the last time we played? I don't even know our last time.

I don't see that way at all. We have had a great rivalry already, great matches, great fighting spirit, fair play, different type of matchup him being a lefty, me being the righty. The way we play is completely different.

I think it's been the sort of setup that has it all: me with one-handed backhand him with double, you name it.

So I think this is not the end just because he's injured. One time one top guy misses a major, I think some make a big deal of it.

Because it's true that it's a big shock, but at the same time, it just does happen from time to time.

Q. Turning to New York, what's your favorite thing to do in the city away from the tennis, your favorite spot to go to?

ROGER FEDERER: Well, I have a lot of fans coming over to New York and I know a lot of people now in New York over the years, so it's always exciting just spending time with those people.

Going out to nice restaurants with my wife. Just walk in the city a bit, see the hustle and bustle, you know. Don't want it every day, but while I'm there I love it and enjoy it so much. The New Yorkers are very special people, so I think it's always a thrill for me and my team and my family to go back there.

There is many things to do. Sometimes just don't have the time, but one day I will come back to New York and do all the museums, all the art galleries. I have done some of them, but I like to get around a bit. It's a lot of fun.

Q. With the arrival of the Open Series come the night matches. In years past you said you really look forward to them. Do you still look forward to them?

ROGER FEDERER: Night sessions at the US Open?

Q. During the series, you know.

ROGER FEDERER: Here as well for instance? I mean, honestly I've played a lot of night sessions this year: Dubai and, I mean, Indian Wells and Miami, you name it. Even on clay now started playing some night sessions, too.

So here again, the same. I mean, I like playing at night. I mean, if I wouldn't, I wouldn't be ranked where I was I guess today. I'm happy I have gotten used to playing well at night, because honestly we never practice at night. It's always a day practices. Except when I was in Dubai when it was too hot to practice during the day I would hit at night.

But overall, I do enjoy the night sessions a lot. Might be the case I even enjoy it more than the day session. Who knows?

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