

August 19, 2011



M. FISH/R. Nadal

6-3, 6-4

An interview with:

RAFAEL NADAL

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. The blisters on your right hand, were they bothering you a little bit at all during the match today? Affecting your ball toss?

RAFAEL NADAL: Not more than the other days, no? That's true. I don't have a lot of feeling when I threw the ball with the right hand, and to play with the backhand, too. But nothing strange. Nothing more than the previous days.

So I lost because Mardy played much better than me. I had a few chances. A little bit unlucky for moments. But that's tennis and that's sport.

Sometimes you win; sometimes you lose. Sometimes you are playing well; sometimes you are playing worse. I am playing a little bit worse now than well, so I accept the lose and work hard. The only way to come back to my best level.

Q. Do you feel like you got a good amount of play in and practice in going into the US Open next couple weeks?

RAFAEL NADAL: I didn't play well. I didn't play well here, especially. In Montréal I played for moments well. In Montréal was the really mistake for me. Here, a lot of things.

A little bit unlucky week for me with the burned fingers and with the very long match yesterday. Today is not a big mistake. Big mistake was last week in the first round.

Q. Hindsight being 20/20, do you regret playing doubles? Being on court for five hours, did it impact your performance today?

RAFAEL NADAL: Definitely the doubles didn't bother me.

Q. (Indiscernible.)

RAFAEL NADAL: I said yesterday yes, but nothing change for that, no? Maybe a little bit more rest, but it's not the moment to talk about that. I said yesterday.

I cannot say today because I lost. Everything you say seems like an excuse. The only excuse is he played better than me.

Q. Can you give us an update on your foot? You had a treatment during the match.

RAFAEL NADAL: I didn't have a treatment. I just pulled out one tape. Yesterday the match was long and hard and I have a few blisters in the foot, so I had to protect everything.

But was pain for me and I had to take one tape.

Q. You said Mardy was playing well. Is there anything in your game that didn't meet your expectations today, other than you lost, I mean reasons why?

RAFAEL NADAL: A little bit of everything. My movements are not being perfect, more mistakes than usual with the forehand. I have to play more inside the court, more aggressive.

At the same time, I have to play longer. You know, I don't want to talk about the backhand because I have this, so I didn't have the chance to practice the backhand and I didn't have the chance to play normal backhand, no?

But for the rest, few things to improve if I want to be ready for New York. I going to work on that. I don't know if I will be in perfect conditions in New York, but for sure everything I will try.

Q. Will your fingers be healed by New York? Will they be better before the US Open?

RAFAEL NADAL: Hopefully. Fingers stays a little bit so-so. Fingers are not easy. Hopefully going to be okay for New York.

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R. Nadal - 08.19.11

Q. Are those the worst blisters you've had on your hand?

RAFAEL NADAL: Is not a blister, it's a burn, so it's worse.

Q. Before the US Open last year you talked about changing your game a lot to try to win the US Open, being more aggressive...

RAFAEL NADAL: I didn't change my game a lot last year to play the US Open. My serve worked really well, but I played well. I played well a lot of times on hard court, not only in the US Open last year. I won the Olympics; Montréal; I won Toronto; I won in Indian Wells twice; few finals in Miami.

So it's nothing that you think I played something very different last year in New York. No, I played well. That's what happened. I played well and the serve worked better than other times. That's what happened.

Q. Seems like when you've had hard court success you've been more aggressive. You haven't hit that many winners here in Cincinnati in this match or against Verdasco.

RAFAEL NADAL: When I am having success in hard court, in grass court, in clay court, is when I am playing well. Doesn't matter. If I am playing well, I can play aggressive. If I am not playing well, I cannot play aggressive because I don't have enough good feelings to do it.

If I am playing bad on clay, I don't win, I lose. If I am playing bad on grass, I lose. That's the sport. You play well, you have more chances to win; you play bad, you have more chances to lose.

I know seems like it's too simple, but is very simple. Tennis is a simple game. You don't have to think a lot what's going on. The thing is I have to work hard to be fast, to be enough fast to come inside the court and take the ball early.

I have to be ready to play with high intensity and with my best rhythm for four hours. I have to be ready to defend well and I have to be ready to be focused and for sure prepared well mentally to play the important moments of the matches.

So I didn't here. For example, in the break point of the second set with the 4-3 I had the big mistake with the forehand to the net with the second serve. So that's the chances when the match change.

I had mistake in the first ball, so that's what cannot happen if I want to have success in New York. That's what I going to try, and that's the sport.

Q. Mardy mentioned in the first set he was going forehand to your backhand a lot and you changed the rhythm on him in second set. What do you do to change that?

RAFAEL NADAL: I started to play slower later. Was a little bit too late. I started to play slower and trying to go inside the court when I had the chance, but I played a little bit too flat for a lot of moments. Open the court and his movements was very good. He had very good shots; his defense was good.

So later I tried to play more to the middle, a little bit longer, higher. I think it worked well, but it was too late. And I had the mistake with the break point. That's it.

I was a little bit unlucky at the beginning of the match.

Q. 2-All in the second set, you had a first serve called out and the replay showed it was good. You had a discussion with the chair umpire. What did he tell you?

RAFAEL NADAL: Nothing. He's is fantastic umpire. It's he's not a bad umpire. Mohamed is one of the best umpires of the tour.

Q. Looked like you wanted the point...

RAFAEL NADAL: The best players of the world have mistakes, and the best umpires of the world have mistakes. Today he was wrong, because the call -- I didn't see the view on the TV, but I am 100% sure that the line said out after Mardy hit the ball.

I am 100% sure, so the point is for me. Sometimes I understand with the Hawk-Eye with these things, but, you know, they are the umpires and they're there to analyze what's going on. They have make the right decision.

He hit the ball after the line said out, so the point is for me. No doubt about that. I am talking only about that, this point. In general, that's not going to affect my lose today. Just talking about this moment.

For the rest he was playing better than me and he beat me.

Q. What do you have to change

specifically to defend your US Open title? You mentioned you weren't playing well here and you need to play better. What specifically do you want to do for the Open that you didn't do here?

RAFAEL NADAL: I have to play my game. I have to play aggressive. I have to move faster. I have to play with more intensity and less mistakes. You know, sometimes play well -- is not the first time in my career that I am not playing that well, no? Last year I played terrible here, probably worse than this year.

Play well or play bad sometimes is just a click. It's very close. The important thing is be ready to change the situation and for sure be enough fresh mentally and physically, too, to have the view about what you really need to change the situation.

I going to realize with Francis here, Toni is coming on Tuesday. I have one week to practice before the beginning of the US Open, and I have to be ready for that. If I am not ready for that, that's it.

I had a lot success in my career, and is not going to be always like this.

Q. The burns look really bad. Was that just a normal plate or a metal thing?

RAFAEL NADAL: No, it was ceramic.

Q. They just put it in your hand?

RAFAEL NADAL: I just touch it like this.

Q. Really?

RAFAEL NADAL: Yeah. It was very hot. I don't know why the people from the restaurant didn't tell me that the plate was that hot.

Q. Did you go back it that restaurant again?

RAFAEL NADAL: No thanks. Bad memories.

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