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**Western & Southern
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MASTERS & WOMEN'S OPEN

An interview with:

ROGER FEDERER

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. Back-to-back Masters 1000s, Canada and then here. How does that affect your preparation for the US Open? Would you rather see a break if the action?

ROGER FEDERER: No, I think we solved that problem for, let's say the top guys, with the byes we have in both events. I think before, when we used to play, let's say if you wanted to win both, you had to play 12 matches in maybe 13 days. With the traveling, that was something almost impossible.

So I think with the byes it's almost not so bad. For Del Potro and Murray they have a couple days off for travel and play Wednesday again. I think that kind of works.

Q. You're gonna hear Bill Tilden's name in the coming weeks because of his record. He had a bunch of points for playing the game. I wanted to run two by you to see if they're dated in this era. One was you have to play your hardest at 30-15 or 15-30, and the other was hit your shot and don't worry about whether you telegraph your intentions or not. What are your thoughts on those two points?

ROGER FEDERER: Well, I mean, sure, 30-15 or 15-30 are big points, but you do almost play today every point as hard as you can, because there's no way around it. Otherwise you'll be in trouble for not trying, and then the whole thing turns around because of a couple shots. That's why you got to stay very concentrated.

That also answers the second question. Everything you do has as purpose. Everything you do you think about it why. Sometimes you can

also play the situation, you know, and not so much the point.

Basically, all of us are analyzing each shot we hit out there, you know, in a fraction of seconds. We have to go through what happened not just a few seconds ago, but also the last maybe few minutes and hour and take the right decision.

It's hard sometimes and sounds complex, but then once you've done it many, many times, you kind of get used to it.

Q. It's early, but have you felt any impact of parenthood on your game, good or bad, sleeping?

ROGER FEDERER: No, I been sleeping enough. It's not been bad like I sort of expected. But, no, things have changed in a good way. I love my life now. I'm happy Mirka could join me with Myla and Charlene as well. It's been a lot of fun outside of the tennis grounds, let's say.

No, I haven't felt any impact yet. I'm sort of trying to get into good shape on the hardcourts, you know, because that's a big change after not having played for a while on them. That's the challenge I'm seeing.

They're not really connected, those things.

Q. Have you had a chance to ask your good friend Tiger Woods any parenting advice since becoming a father?

ROGER FEDERER: Yeah, we spoke a little bit. I asked him how was it for him, and he said, Well, it's hard, but it's in the impossible. You'll love it. I think that's how it's gonna be for me, too.

Q. Did you watch that yesterday?

ROGER FEDERER: I saw the last few holes only.

Q. It's sort of interesting to make the tennis analogies.

ROGER FEDERER: Yeah, I mean, I was

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disappointed for him after being in the lead for so long. We're used to seeing Tiger, you know, pass everyone on the last day or sort of when he has two days left.

This time around it sort of went from good start to getting not so good towards the end. We like to see it the other way around with Tiger, so it was a bit unusual. That's also maybe why he couldn't come up with the putts he needed at the very end. I guess the other guy played well, too. That's how it goes sometimes.

Q. You have been playing such good tennis for so many years. Can you tell us a bit about what you've learned about how to structure your practices, how much you need to practice, and how intensely to practice, to keep yourself healthy and injury-free, yet at the top?

ROGER FEDERER: Yeah, I think as a teenager you're trying all sorts of things. You especially listen a lot to your coach. If he says you're gonna go out and practice five hours, that's what I do. If he says you're not practicing today, that's what do too.

Later, after having some success, you realize actually what you really need to do. You know, the coach as well who's been with you, and also as a player, you realize how much time off you need, how much the body can take, and how much treatment, for instance, how much sleep you need, when you eat. All those things sort of fall into place as you become an even better player.

At some stage then, I don't know, 23, 25, everything is normal. But then you got to find, you know, different ways sometimes, you know, practice early, practice later, practice more, practice different. You just got to make it interesting for yourself.

I think tennis allows us to be very creative in the way we approach practice sections. Every shot is different for us. Forehand on the run, backhand volleys. You can always improve your game, and I think that's what's stood out for me over the last few years trying to become a better player.

Q. The debate seems to be settled about the greatest ever. How much have you reflected on that this year?

ROGER FEDERER: For me, I think the whole obviously Paris and Wimbledon swing was amazing. I wish I had a longer break in between.

Could have enjoyed Paris a bit more. But that's the way it goes.

Wimbledon was a dream as well, so I couldn't have wished for better. And after that, to sort of enjoy, you know, becoming a father and supporting Mirka was also a very enjoyable time, of course.

I didn't think much of everything I accomplished, actually, to be honest, during that time. I remember leaving to Canada and thinking -- I didn't even think about Wimbledon for quite sometime actually. It wasn't like I was walking down the streets and thinking I was the greatest of all time.

I just thought I did really well and happy to be a father more than anything. That was on my mind the last few weeks.

Of course it feels nice going out on the court knowing what I achieved this summer.

Q. Tiger said last month everyone thinks he was put here to be a great golfer, but he thinks he was put here to be a great dad. Do you see this as a huge part of your life and huge goal and your sort of destiny as well?

ROGER FEDERER: Yeah, I mean, I'm growing into the situation, you know. Look, I'm trying to be a good dad, and I think I am. Mirka is a wonderful mom so far. It's only been a few weeks. (Laughter.) It's not like I can say I've done amazing the last 20 years.

Q. I guess maybe people look at guys as athletes first and foremost. Is that maybe not how you see yourself in the bigger picture?

ROGER FEDERER: No, I do see myself -- that's what I'm best at right now, you know, a tennis player right now in my life. Maybe down the road I will say I'm also a good dad.

So far I'm just trying to handle it, and I'm having fun with it. Yeah, it's really good times. But I think this is a question you can maybe ask me a bit later when Myla and Charlene are a bit older.

Q. How long do you want to be the best tennis player?

ROGER FEDERER: Well, as long as possible, you know. Of course I would like to win as many titles as possible for the remainder of my career. Stay at the top, I always said that's important to me. Yeah, enjoy the tour. I think that's big for me, too, you know, because traveling

can be tough at times, especially after 10-, 12-year career.

You know, but for me, that's not a problem, otherwise I would still be home in Switzerland maybe doing other things and just relaxing. I like to move and I like to be on tour. I like playing in front of great crowds. I feel like we have a good time in the men's game right now. It's great excitement, and I don't want to miss this exciting time.

Q. This is the last main event before the US Open. How important is it for you to have a good run here in terms of your preparation for your defense at Flushing Meadows?

ROGER FEDERER: Um, well, I mean, it would be good, but it's not crucial. I'm gonna try everything to have a good tournament here. This tournament has been tricky for me. Either I won or I sort of lost earlier. I hope it's one of those years where I can go all the way again.

I feel my game is good enough to do really well here. Then again, I still have to do little adjustments playing on hardcourts again. Sounds simple, but the points are played different than on clay and on grass. Just takes some getting used to.

Last year's US Open definitely swung the whole thing around for me again after struggling here in the North American tour and not winning the Olympic Games and everything. That's why I'm very excited coming back to New York. Fans really pushed me to turn around the year I had. Yeah, I'm looking forward to coming bag there as well.

Q. What do you think of Andy Murray's rise to No. 2? Clearly that's due in no small part that Nadal has had injury problems this summer. Are you impressed with the progress he's made? He's defending champion here, and won another Masters Series. Do you see him as another big threat in the weeks to come?

ROGER FEDERER: Yeah, I mean, I think he announced himself when he won here last year in Cincy. From then on, he had an unbelievable run, especially on the hardcourts. He's almost won everything there is to win except, let's say US Open and the Masters. He's done really well. Doesn't come as a surprise to many people now.

Of course Andy and myself have both benefited of Rafa being injured. We both took

advantage of it. I won both majors and he won Toronto now, or Montreal. He's done really well. I think it all comes down the US Open for him. If he loses early, he's not very happy having won here and then losing there. He's doing well, and I expect him to be a tough opponent in the future obviously.

Q. Is he your biggest threat in New York?

ROGER FEDERER: No, I mean, if you look at last week's draw, so many guys are very equal, I think, right now. I mean, the finals was close, for instance. I think there's many guys who are beating each other right now. I think it's quite interesting dynamics right now.

Q. You and Rafa have been setting the standards for so long. How healthy for the game do you think it is to have Andy Murray there splitting you two up?

ROGER FEDERER: Well, I mean, I don't know how much it really changes, to be quite honest. We all know Rafa was injured, so he couldn't put in the fight he wished to concerning the rankings. Now he's back, you know, I'm back playing again after a few weeks. Everybody seems healthy again, and that can only be a good thing for the rest of the season.

I think stories come about very quickly in tennis, and he's definitely a good story right now. We'll see how the next few weeks play out.

Q. Speaking of Nadal and his absence and now his return, I'm wondering, to what extent do you get a more full appreciation of your own game when he is there to compete against? Is that valuable to you to know where you stand, or is that an inner sense you have whether he's in the game or not?

ROGER FEDERER: I mean, I like when he's in the draw, you know, but I don't necessarily need him to play in that particular tournament to prove to myself that I was better than him, you know, or that I need to beat him to be considered better or whatever.

I just think, you know, draws are played out the way they are. If someone else were to beat me and then Rafa wouldn't beat me, you know, let's say in the finals, doesn't mean he's a lesser player. You have to beat whoever is across the net. Definitely makes thing more difficult when

he's in the draw because he usually gets to the final. He's only lost a handful of matches this year. I'm sure he'll bounce back strong if he's really fit and healthy.

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