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**Western & Southern
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MASTERS & WOMEN'S OPEN

R. FEDERER/N. Djokovic

6-1, 7-5

An interview with:

ROGER FEDERER

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. With the debate of the greatest of all-time, obviously with you winning the 15th slam and all that, Laver said you can't compare eras. If you had to answer the question in terms of criteria to determine who the greatest of all-time would be, how would you go about answering that? Not adjust a player, but what to you constitutes the greatest of all-time in the sport of tennis?

ROGER FEDERER: Well, I mean, I guess you gotta to be winning many titles and being at the top for very long. You know, dominating I think is also part of it. Yeah, I mean, I think that's about what it is, you know. Having streaks, you know, no matter how they are, you know. If you've been able to create stuff that maybe hasn't been done before.

Then again, Laver is not on the wrong side. It's hard to compare eras, and that's why we don't know who it is.

Q. It would be natural to lose focus a little bit after a milestone win at Wimbledon, after becoming a father for the first time. You clearly haven't if this week was an indication. How do you think you've been able to manage that?

ROGER FEDERER: Well, I mean, I think I had sort of a good mindset and I had a good nine months to get ready for it, which helped. You know, Mirka was great burg the pregnancy, so I

kind of knew that when the babies arrived that she'll be relax and she'll be, you know, great support and she won't mind the traveling if it's necessary.

All os that I think contributes to me to be free in my mind and being able to do, you know, what I do best. You know, the hard work I put in again in between Wimbledon and Montreal, you know, people don't know about, but things went great. You know, I was three weeks at the hospital, but I also went for practice, you know, almost every day except obviously during the time of the birth and right after.

But that was all great, you know. My condition trainer was really happy with the work I put in, and with Severin we were really precise on what we wanted to work on. We had Stefan Koubek come over from Austria and had a great practice week.

All of that I felt like -- actually I'm playing very well at the movement. Of course I was always going to be confident after winning, you know, those big titles in a row. I felt like my game was already pretty well in practice already, so I knew when I was coming over here it was just not just to show up, but to really do something. I mean, that it already paid off so quickly I'm a little bit surprised, you know.

But it's been great, and now I look forward to New York.

Q. You mentioned in the awards ceremony with Mary Joe how happy you are in your personal life. You said it's perfect. Is there a direct correlation between that and how well you play?

ROGER FEDERER: Sure, I mean, it helps if you're happy in your personal life. Then again, when I walk on the court it's all tennis. I have to sort of be able to block things out that happened off the court.

I want to have fun out there. I love playing in front of sell-out crowds. If you don't get a high from then something's wrong with you and you

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better retire. I don't ever have that feeling, and I'm sure I will never get that feeling. Walking out on center court is a great feeling.

So then in away connected, but not really. Then when the match is over, then you do your personal life and you see how you try to juggle both things best. It's not always easy, but by now I have some experience so it's not a problem.

Q. How special is this title for you? It's your 61st of your career and your first as a new dad.

ROGER FEDERER: Yeah, I think that's the special part, especially winning for the first time as a dad. It's a great thing. Gets me going emotionally a little bit, because I know it's been a wonderful summer. And going through all of what I've been through and then now right away having success again, it's a great moment in my career again.

You know, Mirka couldn't unfortunately be in the stadium today, but I know she was watching and happy for me. You know, it's good to have a week with her to really hang out in New York before playing some more matches.

Q. Is this title any different than the previous ones since you became a father?

ROGER FEDERER: I mean, I think I played very well, you know, throughout the tournament. But I think it was quite similar to a few years ago when I think I also won here against I think Blake one year in the final and Roddick in the final.

In all the years I've come here I've always sort of struggled early on but then got on a roll, and it was the same again this year. I mean, like I said, this is a special year for me to win the first title as a dad. But it's also my first Masters Series win again on hardcourts since a long time.

I'm happy I was able to win here in Cincinnati, my first Masters 1000 on hardcourt again.

Q. Do you ever let your opponents relax?

ROGER FEDERER: What do you mean? They are relaxed.

Q. Is there a point in the match where a point is not as difficult for them as it is at any other time? Do you always stay after it every point?

ROGER FEDERER: Yeah, I mean, I think that's what you gotta do to stay at the top, because it's windy at the top. You know, you're a little bit off your mark and off your game. You know, you won't win those matches. It looks convincing 6-1, 7-5, but if a few points go here or there or your focus is not right on breakpoint, then you'll be broken.

Actually maybe you are the better man, but you end up losing because you've lost focus on the biggest points. That's why you always got to push yourself on each and every point. My game allows me to mix it up and make it hard for the opponent, that he doesn't know what's coming. That's what I've done best for so many years now.

Q. One of the other things you said on court was that you are quite lucky to be here because the girls came earlier than expected. When were they supposed to come?

ROGER FEDERER: Beginning of August.

Q. Could have been difficult.

ROGER FEDERER: Yeah, I mean, I guess I would have come here, but then without the girls and without Mirka. You know, so that's the way it went.

Q. Going into next week's US Open, how would you assess your current confidence level as opposed to going into the US Open this time last year?

ROGER FEDERER: Just a little bit different just because last year we didn't have the break we usually have in between Wimbledon and Canada. Instead of having, you know, let's say two weeks off, two weeks practice, I ran from like, you know, one week off, five days practice, and off we go to Canada. Cincinnati I'm trying to hang onto my No. 1 ranking. And then we run to China and some to the US Open, and here we are, you know.

I was lucky enough that when I got to the New York that the fans were I think really there trying to push me back to No. 1 right away. They were great, you know. Like all the cab drivers and everybody was stopping to wish me luck. It was something that I've never really experienced before in New York.

I think that really helped turn it around for me. Because after having the disappointment at Wimbledon, even though I played great -- and also

in Beijing where I actually played all right, but also didn't win that. I was sort of disappointed coming into the US Open, even though I won Olympic gold in the doubles. For the singles that maybe didn't really help that much.

The fans for me really turned it around, and that's why this year I'm so excited going back there. I've had even better results, so I hope I can again show them what I can do on a tennis court.

Q. How would you compare this tournament to the other stops on the tour? What do you appreciate about Cincinnati the most?

ROGER FEDERER: I think it's sort of a quiet tournament in between the big majors we have or the big cities we sometimes have. It's nice to have it a bit more calm at times. I like that change. You know, the players like coming here. They really try hard to put on a good event.

I think the stadium is fantastic to play in. It's always a good atmosphere. It seems like people really come here for -- maybe it's a weekend, maybe it's an entire day, but then they stay all day at the grounds. Wherever you go practice or walk out, they're waiting for you.

That's not always something that happens, because in the big cities they come watch the match and they leave. They go for dinner or go somewhere else. Here, they always stay at the courts, which is quite different.

I think that's why they're very tennis fanatical here. For the players, it's awesome.

Q. Tiger will be in the New York area next week for a tournament. Have you texted or talked about getting together at some point?

ROGER FEDERER: I didn't know, so thank you for the hint. I'll contact him and see what he's up to.

Q. Do you have a friendly rivalry with him just in terms of like you're one major ahead of him now. Do you guys give each other grief?

ROGER FEDERER: It was more like when we met for the first time. The first few years were very like, all right, I'm up on you. And I was like trying to catch up, but I knew I was never going to because I thought he was gonna to always stay ahead.

Of all of a sudden he had his long injury, and that allowed me to catch up and even pass him. Ever since it's sort of calmed down. But of

course I support him as much as I can, and him the same thing.

So we're always happy when we win titles, especially majors. I think it's gotten to a really fun rivalry.

Q. Seems like your serve is back to its very best. Is that something you're most happy with?

ROGER FEDERER: Well, it's just good to know that when I need a good serve I can hit it, you know, whereas maybe last week I still had some muscle pain just from coming back on tour. Pounding the big serves your arm gets heavy and stuff.

That's stuff you just have to go through. That's why I'm happy I was able actually to also come to Montreal and one of the reasons I was able to win here. I got the muscle pain out and got used to hitting big serves again.

I have no back problem and pain, so that allows me again to play freely and focus on the way I want to play and not the way I have to hit the shot. That's a big difference today than a few months ago.

Q. 3-3 in the second set, you had a fantastic dropshot that kind of got the crowd going. Was that a big momentum changer? The first set you kind of had a relatively easier time compared to the second set. Talk about your performance in the second set. And also, did you feel that Djokovic maybe increased his level in the second set to make it tighter?

ROGER FEDERER: Well, yeah, I mean, my focus is on my own game. I mean, Novak plays good or bad, for me, I try to weather the storm if he plays better. But I was happy the way I came out of the blocks again. I played aggressive. It was quite similar to the Murray match. I didn't maybe give him that many chances.

Even though I didn't have a first serve percentage that was very high, I think I served very smart and good on the second serve to always keep him guessing and not knowing what's gonna come.

I wasn't missing much. When I wanted to play aggressive, that worked too. Unfortunately I got broken early on in the second, which I could have avoided. But he hung tough, and in the end played some good points to get the break.

I knew that though, because I was in so

many service games with him in the first set that if I keep at it I'll get a chance to break back and then maybe momentum swings again.

That's kind of what happened. I really had the feeling today I could mix it up the way I wanted to. That then gives me a lot of confidence. You know, I was playing great from the beginning to the end.

Q. Can you speak to the importance of winning that second game of the first set today?

ROGER FEDERER: The second -- well, I mean, it's important, but I don't think it's crucial. I mean, sure, the beginning is important, but I feel like such an early stage of the match, that's not the deciding factor yet. I broke him plenty of times today, and he also broke me once. I don't think the second game was all that key after all.

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