

August 22, 2009



Western & Southern Financial Group®

MASTERS & WOMEN'S OPEN

R. FEDERER/a. Murray

6-2, 7-6

An interview with:

ROGER FEDERER

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. Yesterday you were mentioning your series with Andy was just a couple points here and there. The question is: What did you do differently today, if you can think of anything? Because the difference was only a couple points here and there that enabled you to pull through.

ROGER FEDERER: Well, I don't think that actually changed a whole a lot. In the last few times I played against him I -- very often, I think if you look back I won the first set. Ended up losing the second set and then can't find my way back into the match in the third.

So that's kind of how he sort of ran away with it. To me it was obviously important this time rather the same doesn't happen again. You know, I stayed aggressive. I was always looking to make the plays, and I think in the end I deserved to win just because I wasn't scared to go after my shots, you know. And I think I served well today.

It was just overall a very good performance.

Q. Given that pattern of matches that you mentioned, were you quite relieved to close it out in straight sets?

ROGER FEDERER: I mean, sure, you know. But even maybe losing the second set this time around, you know, I felt I was in the match, I was feeling well, I was striking the ball well.

Whereas at other times I really felt like, This is gonna get really hard in the third set. I kind of felt it coming that I was not gonna win the match.

Today was different. If even if I were to lose that second set, I would have been in the match with a good mindset. You know, I was feeling well. I think it's also in a way normal after two very windy days that made it very difficult to play here.

Today was just much easier, and I played a really good match.

Q. Talk about the pressure in the tiebreaker that can lead to double faulting a match away? Have you ever done that? And how do you keep your cool in those points?

ROGER FEDERER: I've done that as well last week, so I'm very happy. I did the same against Tsonga, and that was 7-6 in the third. Sure, that's not something you really want to do, but sometimes that happens. Maybe you're trying to spin the ball too much or, you know -- I mean, it's pressure.

Double faults just sometimes happen. You hope they don't happen on match points, but they sometimes do happen. Very rarely actually, and especially between two top guys they don't because we're too consistent.

But I think it's maybe also something to do that I was able to pressure him. He was not sure if I was gonna maybe run around the backhand and thump a big forehand or maybe just chip it in. Maybe making him doubt a little bit brought a double fault out as well. I don't know.

Q. When was the last time you felt that good on this surface this year?

ROGER FEDERER: Well, I mean, I guess it was at the Australian Open. I played some good matches as well in Indian Wells and Miami. I haven't played a whole a lot yet on this type of a surface this year yet, so this is good that I played well today.

Q. You're playing very well today, but do you think that the timing of the win is as important as the win itself obviously going into New York?

ROGER FEDERER: Um, I mean, to me, not really. I told the guys yesterday that winning or losing for me against Murray is not the key here. For me, it's about playing well and trying to win the tournament. I'm playing the tournament, not the player, you know.

So I'm not gonna change my tune saying, Now this is gonna put me as a massive favorite for the US Open and now Andy is not gonna beat me next time. That's not true. He's a wonderful player, and he's had an incredible streak on hardcourts. He's just been very consistent, and it takes a great performance to beat him these days.

You know, that's what I was able to do that today. I know it could be different, but right now obviously it helps my confidence. But I have to focus on what's to come, and this is the final tomorrow. The tournament is not won yet, even though I beat the second best player in the world right now. We'll see how it goes.

Q. Do you consider yourself a natural-born entertainer, or is that a role as an athlete you had to grow into over the years as you've been in the biggest stages?

ROGER FEDERER: Um, I think on the court, yes. Off the court, no. Um, I think that's something I grew into because I was -- I mean, I was very outgoing and energetic off the court when I was younger, but rather on the shy side if it came down to ceremonies, let's say, of award shows, or maybe signing autographs, taking pictures.

For me, I didn't think that was sort of part of whole pack, so I didn't kind of figure that out early on. Of course it was nice when it happened, but I didn't know really how to handle it. Also in the beginning you get mixed up. They ask you if you're another player. So that doesn't help your confidence sometimes.

Today I feel great. On and off the court, for me, it's a lot of fun. Now it's for me natural to feel good everywhere I go and everything I do.

Q. The fans are hoping Rafa wins tomorrow. Do you have a preference?

ROGER FEDERER: I'd like to play Rafa just because he's been hurt. It's always nice seeing a guy back at the top right away again.

But, again, same thing with Novak. He's maybe not had the run he was hoping for and he's also coming back. I think it's a good match for both players.

Q. How would you describe the difference between the last tournament in Montreal and here in Cincinnati?

ROGER FEDERER: Well, not serving out the match I should have won, and then maybe who knows what I would have done in the semis against Murray. But the next thing you know, you have to concentrate on the first round again in Cincinnati.

That's how it goes in tennis. But, I mean, I think I could have done something good in Montreal. Maybe it was too early for me to...

Q. Do you feel better now?

ROGER FEDERER: Well, I mean, I thought I was playing okay yesterday and the day before. But conditions were so windy, so it was just -- some of those matches you just want to get through them and hopefully win.

But I definitely think Ferrer and Hewitt, who are both baseliners gave my better rhythm for the semifinals today, for instance. Whereas maybe last week I wouldn't have been so consistent off the baseline yet because I came through different type of players. You know, Tsonga who's mixing it up a lot and doesn't give you that much rhythm.

Q. If it's Rafa tomorrow, did you expect to face him so soon after his comeback, or does it seem like a long time since you played him?

ROGER FEDERER: Well, I mean, we played in Madrid. That's not that long ago. That really got the streak going for me, beating him on clay and then going to win Paris and Wimbledon.

Not that surprised, you know, that he's doing so well just because -- I mean the guy's only lost like six matches this year. It's not like he already lost like 20. I know he's coming back from injury, but the injury wasn't ten months. I mean, it was two months. I know that's a long time as well, but it's not too long after all.

I mean, of course he's looking for his game. I hope he's feeling well now. At the end of day, he's a great player and an unbelievable competitor. He's got that image, too, which the players know about. He's obviously going to make

it hard for the opponent.

It seems like things are coming back together for him, which a great to see. Of course I would like to play him, but that's not something that I think was playing in our heads, of Rafa and myself, that we're gonna play in the finals here. He's still got some work to do. I'm there already waiting. Maybe it's gonna happen.

Q. Even though recent matches with Andy have been close ones, psychology starts to enter into it if it gets too lopsided. How important was it to win today rather than going into New York perhaps with an 0-5 streak if you meet again?

ROGER FEDERER: Doesn't matter to me. I'm past that point, you know. People and media like it hype it up that you get a -- you know, you don't have the mental edge and stuff.

I don't read into that stuff. For me it's important that my game is on. I know when it's on, I can beat any player in the world on any given day.

Sure, it's better to have winning streaks. But if you don't, you kind of forget about those and you regroup and come up with a better game plan next time.

Q. Who presents more of a challenge for you tomorrow? Both players are very difficult. In terms of your game, who would be more difficult to play?

ROGER FEDERER: Well, it's just a completely different matchup, you know, just because -- I would say that too if, let's say the other guy were to be Nieminen, let's say, against Djokovic just because one is a lefty and one is a righty. That has nothing to do with the quality -- both are quality players. Both have incredible footwork and solid shots, forehand and backhand. That's why they're up there in the rankings.

Sure, Rafa has caused more problems for me in the past, but I also played him about, I don't know, 12 to 13 times on clay which didn't help in my head-to-head.

Sure, I've had better matches with Rafa than with Novak in the past.

Q. Who would people confuse you with when you said you were just coming up?

ROGER FEDERER: Oh, I had long hair, so it was Carlos Moya and Tommy Haas and some other guys, you know. So I knew I had some work to do.



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