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**Western & Southern
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MASTERS & WOMEN'S OPEN

R. NADAL/P. Mathieu

7-5, 6-2

An interview with:

RAFAEL NADAL

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. It felt like you had bad calls go against you. How did you avoid getting too frustrated?

RAFAEL NADAL: No, that's just sport, no? Sometimes in your favor, sometimes against, no? Sometimes it's tough, because I had important in one breakpoint. But for the rest, doesn't matter.

Q. In the second set, you played so much better than you did in either of the two sets yesterday or the first set today. What was different? What clicked for you?

RAFAEL NADAL: No, I think I started the match playing bad, especially with my backhand I had a lot of mistakes. But during the match I change a little bit, and I, yeah, I improved my level when the match was coming, no?

So I think in the end of the first set I played better, and in the end of -- well, in all the second set I was playing very well, no? So very heavy for that.

Sure, very happy to be in quarterfinals and to continuing improve my tennis.

Q. What do you think the fans here in Cincinnati? When you're on the court, what do you like about the people here?

RAFAEL NADAL: Yeah, there's good crowd always. Good atmosphere, so always I am very happy to be here.

Q. It seemed in the second set also your tactics were much more aggressive. You were more attacking the ball. Is this right? And was it because of having more confidence in your game?

RAFAEL NADAL: Yeah, I started to feel better the ball with the forehand. I really played well with my forehand in the second set.

Sure, I feel it and I had the chance to go inside more times than all the matches in this American season, no? So happy for that, because I played in some important points some good winners with the forehand, and I finished playing much better with the backhand, and serving okay, all the match.

Q. What was the strategy going into the match in terms of were you trying to attack a specific shot of his, forehand, backhand, or...

RAFAEL NADAL: Today.

Q. Yeah, today.

RAFAEL NADAL: No, I don't think about a lot of tactics, no? I just try to feel well on the court, try to, if it's possible, to play aggressive. And I know he has a very good backhand, especially if he has place to go. He always play very fast shot.

But for the rest, I only try to play aggressive with the return and trying to put a little bit more power behind the baseline, no? Sometimes trying to play a little bit long.

But I did better after, because in the beginning with the backhand I was playing very short.

Q. Did you feel your timing was better today? If so, it was a matter of positioning?

RAFAEL NADAL: I think I lost less court than yesterday for sure, no? And I defended a little bit more inside the court, so that's important.

I finished playing better because I changed the directions easier than yesterday. In the beginning I only was playing cross backhand, and

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then I finished playing down the line, too. That's very important for my game, to have the confidence to change the place of the shots.

Q. How do you feel going into the quarters and looking on to the US Open?

RAFAEL NADAL: Very happy to be in quarterfinals, because I think that's important for my physical training, too, no? Playing matches, you get more rhythm and more physical performance, so I feel okay right now.

Q. What do you think about Berdych next? You've had some good matches with him in the past.

RAFAEL NADAL: Yeah, I lost a few times. I won another couple of times. I lost against him here in unbelievable match in 2005. I know the court is fast, and the conditions is good for him, I think. But I'm here to try my best and to find a solution to try to win.

Q. What's the difference between having Francisco and Uncle Toni in the stands?

RAFAEL NADAL: Not much. Not much. I feel very comfortable with both.

Q. In the second set especially it seemed you got to several balls that seemed like they were winners. You know, you ran them down and returned them for winners also. Did you sense that demoralized him a little bit or made him try desperate things or affected him?

RAFAEL NADAL: No, no. That's one of my best shots on the tennis court, no? When I had the very, very tough point in very difficult condition, a lot of times I save a very difficult shot with another very good shot.

So that's very important part of my game. When I am with confidence and I'm physically well, I can do it.

So it's a very good news if I start to do shots like the passing shot with the backhand.

Q. You seemed absolutely thrilled after the match with your level of play. How great does it feel to be back smacking around tennis balls after such a long layoff?

RAFAEL NADAL: Yeah, it's nice to be on court another time. I said in Montreal, only be here is very nice feeling for me. Sure, when you start to play better and you play your best match after

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coming back off injury, I must be really happy of that, no?

So for that reason I'm happy, because I think I played my best match after injury.

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