

August 22, 2009



**Western & Southern
Financial Group®**

MASTERS & WOMEN'S OPEN

N. DJOKOVIC/R. Nadal

6-1, 6-4

An interview with:

RAFAEL NADAL

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. What happened in the first set when you got broken twice in terms of was there something about his game that threw you off?

RAFAEL NADAL: No, I think he played good. He played really good with very good intensity during all the match. In the last games I think he decrease a little bit more than the rest.

But I think he played really well, no? So I told you yesterday, no, it's another step. Physically and mentally it's difficult for me be ready. But I think this match gonna be a good experience for me right now to try to be in this step in the US Open.

Q. Despite the result tonight, you played great tennis after being two months out. What we can expect for the US Open?

RAFAEL NADAL: You never know. You never know. I expect play really well and try to win. That's what I expect, no?

But tennis is difficult, and all the players are very close and gonna be really tough in one tournament like the US Open, no? Five sets, so we will see how I am physically to play the five-sets matches.

But this week is very important for me, no? These two weeks, winning three matches here and two matches there, six matches, five matches win and seven matches in total, so it's enough matches I think.

I am happy for everything: happy to be here and happy to be more ready for the US Open than what I expected before came to this American tour.

Q. You've talked this week like you didn't expect to win the tournament. Do you feel like you're ready to win tournaments again?

RAFAEL NADAL: We will see, no? The No. 3 of the world normally is ready to win tournaments.

Q. Does any ranking change affect maybe your mentally, the drop from 1st, 2nd, and now 3rd?

RAFAEL NADAL: Yeah, a lot. I am really sad. (Laughing) No, sure, speaking seriously that's normal. I didn't play for the last two months and I was -- I had the season under control before Roland Garros. I was No. 1 on the race by far, by a lot of points.

So remains the end of the season, and I expect be there to try to be 1, 2, 3, 4, you never know. But I gonna be there to try to fight for the top positions.

Q. What was the strategy, your plan of attack going into the match? Djokovic actually had is 4-3 edge against you in hardcourt matches, even though you led overall. What were you trying to capitalize on in the match?

RAFAEL NADAL: I tried to play aggressive, no?

Q. Do you feel you did that?

RAFAEL NADAL: No. My feeling on court was he always was in the middle the court and I was always outside, two meters behind the baseline. That's the feeling what I had.

So I told you before, I think I wasn't 100% ready to play at this step. So it's another level, and I need to play at this level more than one time to be ready to compete another time with this level,

no?

I know when I am playing well I can play at this level. But these matches, you only can win the matches against these top players at your best tennis.

Q. We miss your Uncle Toni. Where is he now?

RAFAEL NADAL: Yeah, probably he -- well, right now he's probably sleeping, (laughter) but he's in Mallorca, no? I think he's enjoying more than us.

Q. Is he gonna be at the US Open?

RAFAEL NADAL: Yeah, he's coming there.

Q. Djokovic had you running around a lot and staying in a lot of long rallies. In terms of the long rallies you were playing and hard hitting rallies, how do you feel physically after that?

RAFAEL NADAL: No, I feel well, no? But Djokovic played with very high intensity, and for me it was a little bit hard to keep at this intensity all the time, no?

I can play some points, but remain a little bit more, I don't know exactly how to explain in English, no? A little more concentration, a little more...

Q. Focus?

RAFAEL NADAL: Not focus, no, but be ready to play at this level, no? Don't have to do something special to play at this level, no? So right now my feeling is I had to do a little bit more than usual to play at this level.

When I'm okay, I play at this level and it's a normal thing for me, no?

So...

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