

Miami Open presented by Itaú

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Roger Federer

Press Conference



R. FEDERER/K. Anderson

6-0, 6-4

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. These semifinals are very contrasting, two veterans on one side and two very young players on the other side. What's your opinion about facing even younger players as the time goes by?

ROGER FEDERER: I mean, it doesn't feel that different to when I played Rafa, you know, when he was super young, or anybody. Any teenager you play, once I think you're 23, feels different to playing anybody else, because you know they come out there and they might not know all the plays down to the T yet, but, you know, they don't have to, because they just free-swing sometimes, and that makes it particularly dangerous, you know.

Yeah, I have always enjoyed playing against teenagers. I think it's very exciting, you know, because of that, and, yeah, I don't know. It's an exciting draw, I think, for John and for myself here, playing these young guys. They are not just young, but they are very good, as well. They are nice guys. It should be hopefully a good semifinals.

Q. That was an electrifying exchange at net, nose to nose at the net. Really got the crowd into it. What do those points do for you in terms of energy and electricity? And everyone talks about you as a shotmaker. Who was your favorite shotmaker?

ROGER FEDERER: Yeah, I mean, I think it's great for the fans, you know, to get them engaged. Some places you need to do a lot of great shots to get their attention. Sometimes you don't need much.

But these rallies just help to get everybody's attention. I think that's a nice thing. Yeah, that was a funny one. I don't know. I haven't played one like this, I feel, for some time. So that was fun.

And the other part of the question? Shotmaker? Yeah, for me, Pete, great shot making. I guess guys who came to the net, for me, always did the trick. And to some extent also, you know, maybe Hewitt and Agassi, just Agassi's sheer domination from the baseline, able to take the ball on half-volleying, all that stuff, we didn't know that quite yet. And Hewitt's defensive skills, that

he was able to pull off defensive shots like we almost haven't seen before.

Yeah, that's what I remember.

Q. A two-part question. One is the Laver Cup, I watched it this past year. Very exciting event. I thought it was as exciting as watching a Grand Slam event. What's your ultimate goal for the Laver Cup, like 10, 20 years down the line, even if you retired? What's your plans for that? My second question is how do you still gear up to play for these big matches even though you have been there a thousand times?

ROGER FEDERER: Yeah, I mean, I think it's easy to play in a stadium where there is a lot of people and they are really engaged. I think the harder part is how do I go out and practice, you know, in front of sort of a fence, a few bushes? That's the hard part, you know, sometimes.

But that's where I surprise myself that it's not that big of a deal. I think it's easier for me today because I know how hard it was for me when I was younger, you know, how much I dreaded it, you know, another practice session and how bored I would get after an hour, hour and 15, because I wouldn't understand how many forehands and how many backhands can you hit before you get super bored?

So I think that was the tricky part for me. Nowadays I just understand that I know what kind of work is required to be able to perform then in front of the full stadium, and that's what I play for, you know, those moments where I can play the best, hopefully beat the best and come up with good shots, and the crowds get into it.

So, for me, the motivation there is not an issue. It might be somewhere completely different. Am I in the mood to pack another bag? Am I in the mood to beat another jet lag? And all those other things, these are the tough questions when you get older.

And about the Laver Cup, look, I think it was just a goal of maybe uniting different generations of players, you know. Somebody like Shapo or Felix, you know, to be on the team with the likes of myself or Rafa or anybody, for that matter, and they can learn from us.

But then they can also learn from the captain, you know, that now it's Björn and John, and also in the spirit where, you know, Rod Laver walks the corridors with you, and all of a sudden they look back at tennis history, and they're, like, so many guys who paved the way, and hopefully more and more legends are willing or happy to come to the Laver Cup and have just sort of a fun, great weekend of tennis, and all sort of get a great mix going together, you know. I think that would be wonderful if it became, like, an incredible competitive all-star weekend, if you like.

That would be my dream, if you look back in 20 years and say, like, every weekend was fun of Laver Cup, and the first two really did that, and I had the pleasure to play in some of them. Maybe down the stretch I will be involved in some shape or form, but that's still far away, hopefully.

Q. You have talked about facing the younger players who have that one-handed backhand and have been inspired by you. You face one of them now in the semifinals with Denis. Can you talk about what you see in him and how he's improved over these last two years? And also, you said in February that you're not scared of lefties anymore, but he comes in with that left-handed, one-handed backhand. Does that present a unique challenge at all?

ROGER FEDERER: Yeah, of course, after playing righties ever since I got to the States. I'm not sure if I played a lefty in Indian Wells anymore.

And all I have is half an hour of practice tomorrow to get ready for that lefty. So the change is a big one, you know. I have done it many times before. So no problem there.

You know, when you're younger and you're facing a lefty, it's always super annoying, because maybe you're still, you know, lacking strength, you know, with the one-handed backhand. Especially when you're 12, 14, 16, it's just a challenge. And then later on you start figuring it out, and things become more simple and you have different weapons to make it also complicated for them. It goes like that.

Yeah, I mean, look, I practiced with Denis way back when when he was -- I remember Edberg was with me on the court and I was warming up. Maybe -- I think he warmed me up for a match in Toronto, I believe, and he came out. He might have been 16, 17, and, you know, similar to today, he was just hitting big. I was, like, Wow, it's unbelievable. How old is he? How good is he gonna get? I don't know. But he was very impressive. Same with the serve. He has that beautiful swinger

going. You know, it just felt like he belonged there.

Then I watched him play Tsitsipas in the Junior Wimbledon, semis or finals, I don't remember what it was. But it was during my Wimbledon run too. I don't remember. It was one of those matches where Tsitsipas should have won it, but both great one-handed backhand already, and, you know, I remember Denis was just going for broke, basically. The more important it became, the bigger he went.

It's nice to see that with Stefanos and Denis and that one-handed backhands will be around, because these guys will be very good many, many years from now. And I'm very excited playing against Denis, because I think he's a great guy, and he's one of the great shot makers. I still remember watching his game in Montreal, I believe it was, against Rafa when he crushed forehand down-the-line winner after forehand down-the-line winner. It was unbelievable. Yeah, big fan of his game, so it's going to be tough tomorrow.