

Miami Open presented by Itaú

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Roger Federer

Press Conference



R. FEDERER/J. Isner

6-1, 6-4

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. Congratulations on two weeks. Fantastic. A lot of people have talked about your backhand and your forehand and your serve. Your chip return was just incredible today. Talk a little bit about how you developed that shot. You came up in an age of big servers. Was that part of it?

ROGER FEDERER: Yeah, I mean, I think it definitely helped being able to play against the serve-and-volley generation, more than the big servers, per se. You know, they would make you feel the pain, you know, in some shape or form, either by always coming into your weakness time and time again or by variation.

So I think it comes from there. And then I just think the slice was always the more natural shot for me, the safety shot, to some extent, you know, because when you're younger and you're lacking power to come over, the slice is the go-to play. Just easier to keep the ball lower for the next shot, or it's just easier not to shank it, for me.

I think it comes from there. And then whenever the serve, I guess, is a little bit faster, it helps me a lot just to keep a lot of balls in play. But you're right. I think today was definitely an exceptionally good day for chipping. I could feel it also against Anderson. It was the same thing, you know. Big server. I was able to block it back nicely and get into a neutral position quickly.

Of course, when you can do that against somebody like John, I mean, that's great. So today was a good day like this, but it doesn't always work (smiling). Sometimes I get a bit too passive.

Q. A tough one last year here, actually, in the opening matches and also a close final in Indian Wells. How meaningful is it to get back in the winning circle in Miami after those things?

ROGER FEDERER: Yeah, I mean, it's nice, you know. I'm happy I chose to come back this year. It's easy just to say, Well, last year didn't work out, so I won't come back this year, and as I'm playing the clay, maybe add rather another clay court event.

But I felt like let's extend the hard court season. Let's see the new venue. To be honest, I think that was something also I was excited to see. I did feel like the game was there last year. And I thought also the game was definitely here this year, as well, even after the Australian Open. So I'm happy with the team we took the right decision.

I mean, the first one was tight. John told me he was watching, and he said, Whew, I wasn't sure you were going to make it there (smiling). I told him the same. The margins are so slim sometimes that it could have slipped, as well.

So of course you feel fortunate when you come all the way to the end of the event and you can sit here with the trophy. It's definitely a moment you appreciate a lot, because you know it could have turned out very different.

And maybe also the secret was I was more positive this year after losing Indian Wells over last year, because last year I was, I don't want to say frustrated, but I think I was down on myself. I think it cost me a little bit on confidence because I was so down. I was so, so close. I was a shot away from winning.

So maybe this year I didn't feel that way. I was just able to say, Okay. Team played well. Moving on, let's go to Miami and have a good tournament. And I did.

Q. First off, congrats. You talk about your return game. Talk to me about your service game, as well. You know, your first-service points, you were perfect today.

ROGER FEDERER: Yeah, apparently so. They told me at the desk of ESPN. Yeah, I don't know what to tell you. I think I was very clear on how I wanted to play, so I think that helped that I was able to not just have the plan but then being able to execute.

It's always two things, having the plan and then it not working. And of course to win every single point, things need to go your way against him. So there needs to be both sides to the thing because he did have chances obviously to win some points. But apparently also on second serve I hardly dropped any points.

I just can be very happy on either end, return and serve, and that's why I'm so happy that I was able to produce a performance like this in a finals, because this is what you train for and play for that constantly your level keeps going up as the tournament progresses. And this was my best. I'm very excited.

Q. Let's say wouldn't this be, like, a great time, if you were to do it, to say good-bye to Miami after this win?

ROGER FEDERER: And not come back here next year?

Q. I'm just asking. Would it be a good opportunity?

ROGER FEDERER: Sure, it would be a perfect scenario. But as I don't know what the situation is for next year, I can't say that. I hope to be back next year, but if I don't come back ever again, you know, this is a good end, anyhow.

I don't have to announce anything, and of course, you know, when you win a big title you could always think that way. But I didn't have any thoughts about, you know, this kind of, you know, direction in my mind before the event, and it won't change now that I'm sitting here with the trophy (smiling).

Q. At what point did you realize that John was hurt? Did you think he might finish the match? My follow-up question is: The other day you talked a lot about his serve and you said it was fun to watch and fun to be a part of. Was it the case today?

ROGER FEDERER: So I thought -- I mean, I guess after he called the trainer and I saw his face after the first point after the trainer, I was unsure about his health. But then, you know, he had a good game where he did hit his spots. I mean, he hit them so short, it was crazy. So I felt like, well, he can at least do that. I have seen John being incredibly tired and still serving his spots. I knew he could do that. One match came to my mind, I think it was against Roddick at the US Open in the fifth set when he just kept doing the same thing for the whole fifth set and he was able to beat him in the breaker.

I felt, Well, you never know. And plus I could also start missing because of this whole situation. But then, of course, as in my service games, that's then the true test. How much defense can he do? How much running around can he do? And this is maybe when I was thinking, well, this is maybe not just one game.

And then latest, by the 5-4 game when he was starting to serve instead of at least 120, 125, he was starting to drop it to 105, 110, and I felt, well, now it's not looking good. I saw him taking a painkiller, and that doesn't

kick in for the next three minutes. That takes usually 25 minutes to 30 minutes. So I did feel like, well, you never know.

And I know with foot pain that these things feel like it's the end of your career, but at the same time, two minutes later, you could be totally fine again.

So it's a tricky one. You don't want to get too overexcited to think, well, let's quickly finish this as quick as possible, because it could be this point or first couple of points he's serving slow, and then he starts serving big again, because all of a sudden the pain is gone or it's less.

And that's why it was just important to keep on doing what I was doing, and if he's hurt, well, then that's, so be it, and bad luck for him. And I think this is where experience kicks in for me. I'm able to stay calm, and, you know, just do it. You feel bad at the same time, but it's part of the journey, I guess. And I just, after the game, of course, you're just, like, you hope it's nothing serious and I hope he's fine. But it's tricky, no doubt.

Q. Congrats on your 101 title. I hope your journey never ends. As you're getting older, have you changed anything specifically in terms of the way of training on and off the courts, managing your diet, or setting a career goal?

ROGER FEDERER: No in terms of diet. Nothing really. It's always been the same.

In terms of goals, yeah, I don't know. It's about trying to win titles and trying to manage life so I stay injury-free. It's often around, What can we do in training? How many tournaments can I play?

Because some days you just don't feel so well, you know, or some weeks sometimes, because problems linger longer, you know. But this is a good phase, a good stretch for me right now. I really feel super healthy. That's why I have been able to play every day for the last four weeks. That's something that maybe hasn't always been the case for the last few years. So you appreciate these moments.

And then, I mean, I just think it's all based on family, to be honest, just getting things organized for the boys, the girls, my wife, that we are all always constantly anticipating and discussing what's the plan for the kids? Because that's the No. 1 priority. It has to be. I didn't have kids to play tennis and not care about them.

So from that standpoint, it's very clear where the priorities lie, you know, and we just have always a constant, How do we figure it out? That's an interesting one. It's not easy, by any means, but I feel like we do a pretty good job at it. And she's great, my

wife.

Q. You have won four titles here. Can you talk about how this one -- does this one feel any different? What is specific about this title to you? What's it mean to you compared to the other three?

ROGER FEDERER: So the other three were -- well, the one with Rafa, I guess, was very special in many ways. I felt like it reflected who I have become until that moment. Was that 2005? 2004? 2006? It's a blur.

You know, being able to fight back, being able to, you know, find a way to win, I know I got lucky in that match, but then ended up playing unbelievable tennis in the fifth set and all that. I really feel like it was a big moment for me in my life, in my career there, that match.

I mean, the finals against Ivan was just during the time where I was in, you know, dominating so much, winning so much, that how long could I keep it up, you know, and how many times could I beat Ivan in a row? All these things were happening. I don't know if it was in the time where I was beating all these top 10 players or winning every final I was in. It was just a matter of just extend whatever you can and for as long as you can.

And then of course the win here two years ago, maybe as much as it didn't come for a surprise for people, for me it still did, because I felt like the tank was empty. I had a tough week here against Berdych and I think Kyrgios, as well, and all that.

Before that match, I just said, If I had only played one finals that whole year, take away Australian Open, take away Indian Wells, and just made finals of Miami, I probably would have taken that. That's the mindset going into the Miami finals was that year two years ago.

And then I played another great finals, I remember, it was incredibly humid, it was super hot. Rafa had his chances and somehow I just squeezed it out. That was a beautiful win for me.

And this one just feel like also I didn't expect it, to be honest. Because I knew the problems of the year I had last year, that I went through a similar situation with, you know, losing in a very close finals in Indian Wells and coming here again and seeing what could happen. New venue, didn't know what to expect there. I mean, almost losing against Albot in the first round here.

These Masters 1000s are hard to win. They are really a test for me, especially later in my career. So I know these guys don't come around very often, so when they do, it's a bit of a surprise for me. That's why this one

feels really cool in many ways.

Q. (Question off microphone.)

ROGER FEDERER: No problem. I was not 100% wrong. 50% wrong. And Rafa was '04 when I played him the first year, I guess? Okay. I don't even remember, so thanks for reminding me.

Q. Congratulations. A finalist at Indian Wells and now a winner here at the Miami Open. 37 years of age. But have you ever felt more confident in your own ability heading into a clay court season?

ROGER FEDERER: I probably have, yes. I'm not very confident going into this clay court season, I can tell you that, because I don't know -- I didn't even remember how to slide anymore. You know, I'm taking baby steps at this point.

To be honest, I didn't play one point -- not one shot on clay, I don't believe, last year. Two years ago I played two days. Three years ago I played not feeling great in Monaco and Rome and all that. So it's been so little that I really don't know what to expect.

And I think what this win does for me, it just takes even more pressure off from the clay court season. And I anyway wanted to play the clay in not a relaxed fashion but let's just go and do it and prepare well. That's what I'm looking at now the next four or five weeks with my fitness coach and coaches Ivan and Severin and Pierre, figuring out how we gonna go about it.

Madrid is, like, Let's see what happens, anyway. Obviously I want to be ready for Paris. I hope all of that work is going to pay off for the grass court season and also for the hard court season. Already just how I've been playing here and moving here makes me believe just going on vacation now, a bit of a break, and then preparation, you know, the things physically should be fine, but again, we'll see how the body is going to react.

Yeah, I'm very excited. It's a good challenge, good test. Confidence, I don't know, it's in no-man's land. It's just there if I play well. I don't know. I have to gain it all again. Start from scratch, really.

Q. Slightly away from this match, Tsitsipas tweeted earlier that he feels experienced players like yourself get preferential treatment sometimes from umpires. I assume that's something you don't necessarily agree with. Just wonder about your thoughts.

ROGER FEDERER: That's a tough one. What I do feel sometimes is on the outside courts, more than just preferential treatment to, how do you say, the top guys, whatever it is, I feel like they are tougher on the rules on the outside courts, you know. You do something,

and, bang, warning. There is like there is no messing about.

I think with the umpires and the top guys on the main courts, I think the umpires know the top guys, and they know their problems or they know how they behave or they know how they are gonna react, so they know what acting stupid and silly means and what normal is.

I think because we know each other very well, I think it's easier for the umpire to handle a top guy that they know over an up-and-coming guy like Tsitsipas or a young guy. And that sometimes gets lost in translation and maybe bad mistakes can happen.

But I don't see preferential treatment, to be honest. There shouldn't be. If I get warnings, and I do get warnings sometimes -- I got one just recently, maybe Dubai, I don't know, whatever -- it's normal. So they should just, based on what happened, take those decisions, and I really feel, how do you say, the umpires do that. I'm sorry that Stefanos feels that way.

Q. You're 37. Bob Bryan is about to turn 41. I don't know if you follow what he's been doing. Has a scar on his hip and is winning again. Your thoughts on that, why tennis players seem to be thriving so much longer now.

ROGER FEDERER: Yeah, it's tough to -- I don't know. I guess definitely nowadays, with all the stretching and, I don't know, silly elastic bands and stuff we do, maybe we can extend our playing days. Then you add diet to it and maybe more sleep and maybe not such a rock 'n roll lifestyle that maybe guys were doing back in the '70s and '80s, all that stuff maybe takes away years of your life on tour.

And also, prize money increase has helped maybe to keep some guys on tour, let's be quite honest. Because if you know you can make as much money not traveling, at one point you're like, I'm happy to stay home, and tennis was fun. But nowadays if you can stay on the tour and you can make a nice living, and actually traveling is easier now than ever before with the airlines we have and avoiding transits more and more, I think it's much easier. I think all of those little things help.

And then guys start doing ice baths and I don't know what. I think all these things matter. What Bob is doing is definitely I think inspiring for a lot of the players, you know, even if it's just doubles in the sense that it's not as physical as the singles, as we know.

But nevertheless, he's not just playing a little bit; he's winning. And that is just beautiful to watch. I'm really happy for him. I played him back in Marseilles I think back in 2000, don't quote me, but we go way back with

Bob, as well. I remember seeing them play the Sunshine Cup here I think near Delray or West Palm Beach somewhere.

It's great when they come back. I'm sure also Bob is a big inspiration for Murray to come back. I hope that's going to help Andy maybe finding a way back.