

Miami Open presented by Itaú

Friday, March 21, 2025

Miami, Florida, USA

Novak Djokovic

Press Conference



N. DJOKOVIC/R. Hijikata

6-0, 7-6

THE MODERATOR: Novak, well done. How did it feel for your first match in six years in Miami where you have so much history?

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: Yeah, great. I mean, it was a perfect start of the tournament. As you said, six years, way too long. I was excited to get out on the court and hopefully perform better than I have in the last couple of tournaments.

You know, I had two weeks since the last match that I played in Indian Wells, so I had plenty of time to work on my game. I think that has positively reflected on my game today, particularly for set and a half, almost flawless tennis.

I'm very pleased with the way I felt and played on the court.

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

Q. Given that you and Andy have spent more time together in the last few months, I was wondering if there is something new or interesting or funny that you have learned about him that you didn't know about him before, when you guys were rivals?

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: I didn't know how good of a golfer he is. Great golfer (smiling). Great humor. I mean, we knew that before.

Just super-nice guy that cares about relationships with people, that cares about this coach/player relationship we have, and he wants me to do well. He's just very genuine guy. I enjoy spending time with him, for sure.

Q. How important was it to get off to a good start, especially with what you have been through? Was there pressure on you at all to come out with a bang? How important was that?

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: Oh, super important. I wanted to make a statement to myself and to others, as well, that I'm

still able to play on a high level.

I lost two tournaments in my first rounds, so I really was eager to get the win in the first match in Miami Open.

As I said, you know, a perfect tennis almost for set and a half. You know, I think he had stepped it up. In the second set, deservedly taken to a tiebreak, and then I played a great tiebreak.

All in all, there is always something you can work on, but for me it's just about maintaining this level of tennis and, you know, trying to be even better if I can as the tournament progresses.

Q. You have talked a lot about club tennis and racquet sports. What do you think about the growing closeness of these sports to tournaments like this? For example, here we have a padel court.

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: Well, I think that the future, at least on the recreational club level of the tennis clubs, will be racquet clubs, to be honest. I think the growing popularity of pickleball in this country, but overall padel, more than pickleball globally, is so big and so vast, it's such a great -- you know, padel, for example, is such a great sport for recreational players who never maybe held a racquet in their hands. Easier to learn to play padel than tennis, certainly. And it's fun. You know, it's social and it's engaging.

So I think that the future of the clubs is definitely a hybrid between all these sports. On a professional, competition level, I'm not sure. But why not? I think obviously if tennis being the king or the queen of all the racquet sports, you know, attracts the most people and attention and, you know, we have big tournaments, and padel is globally relatively, as pickleball, relatively new sport, so it's going to be interesting to see the rise of these sports and on a professional level, see how people, whether they are interested or not to watch the tournaments, but padel has been growing very rapidly.

They have had tournaments played at Roland Garros central stadium, for example, center court, Philippe



Chatrier, I saw that. So there is an interest, for sure.

Why not? It could be fun to do, like, a little racquet sport, mixed racquet sport competition, you know. We can all try different sports and see how we do in different racquet sports, yeah.

Plus I saw, I think, everyone probably saw that, this doctor was saying that people who play racquet sports live the longest. So, yeah, definitely play the racquet sports (smiling).

Q. So right now you have 99 singles titles, and I know you probably are aiming for title No. 100, so you personally, where would you choose to celebrate that win? Which tournament would you pick for your 100th title?

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: Miami, for sure. No doubt. I'd love to celebrate the 100th win here.

But let's see. You know, it's a long tournament. Just the first win. Of course it encourages me knowing that I can play the way I played today, but it's a long ride.

Hopefully I can do well and I can get myself in a good position in the finals to fight for a trophy. That would be amazing. But let's see.

Q. If I can just go back to yesterday when all the discussion was happening, you made a comment about the case, there are some things that you like, there are some aspects you don't like. Are you able to indicate what's what on those?

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: No, unfortunately not. I'm sorry, but I want to move on from that topic. I have said what I needed to say. Thank you.

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