

# Miami Open presented by Itaú

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Miami, Florida, USA

## Novak Djokovic

Press Conference



N. DJOKOVIC/C. Ugo Carabelli

6-1, 7-6

THE MODERATOR: We'll open it up to questions.

**Q. When you walked in the arena, the little girl you were with, you had a long conversation. Giving her coaching advice? What did you think of playing on Sunday with all the kids out there?**

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: Absolutely, yeah. It was Sunday, so I guess more families, more children on the stands. It's a joy to my eyes, to be honest, to see this many children coming up and really showing passion for tennis and admiring tennis. It's beautiful that I was able to share some moments with some children today.

The girl that walked on the court with me today, yes, she was a bit nervous, so I was trying to relax her and ask her if it was a first time for her to do something like that. She's seven years old. It's obviously a special moment.

I mean, I love the fact that we have that kind of tradition now here where you walk in with children. I think it's beautiful. It also kind of allows us to relax a little bit our nerves before the match.

**Q. We saw you sharing a picture of the prematch meeting that you had. Can you share with us? Is that something you guys do often or...**

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: Yeah, it's one of the social games we play. It's a board game. So, yeah, it's quite competitive. It's quite intense, let me tell you that. I don't think we have a video, or maybe we do, of how it ended up. My agent and I, Mark and I, beat Andy and Carlos. It was great. It was even better than a victory on the court. I just enjoyed it very much.

**Q. Last press conference we talked about you have 99 titles. Connors had 109. Is that a goal of yours to surpass?**

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: You could say, yeah. I mean, it

would definitely be amazing to get to that record. Connors is someone that I truly admire and respect. He's always very supportive of me in public, so I'm very thankful for that.

It would be amazing.

But again, it's probably, yeah, more difficult to achieve that nowadays for me than maybe it was some years ago. Yeah, I'll go step by step. I'll see. I don't know how long I'm going to compete for. But I'm still enjoying myself when I play well.

**Q. I am asking about Federico Gomez. A few weeks ago he posted a message about the mental health. Then you asked in the story. Last week he played here the quallies. You can talk with him?**

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: We practiced today actually. He was the one warming me up for the match. But we didn't have time to speak. I think we're practicing tomorrow, so hopefully we'll have a little bit more time to reflect a little bit on his situation.

There's a lot of what he wrote in that caption in his text that I relate to, to be honest. I mean, we all have dark moments and psychologically what we go through and emotionally, so...

I really empathize with him.

I told him that I'm here to support him in any way if he wants to share.

**Q. A non-match question. When you were No. 1, what did that feel like for you personally, being at the top, nobody in essence better than you? And do you dream about getting that back? Does it really matter to you anymore about getting No. 1 back after spending a gazillion weeks at that spot?**

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: No, it doesn't matter as much. If it comes as a consequence of great results and titles that I win in a season, then that's amazing. But that's not my objective.



My objective is to be able to play my best tennis on the Grand Slams and the tournaments where I participate. My schedule is revised, so obviously I'm not chasing the ranking points and everything. It's different nowadays maybe than it was a few years back, for most of my career to be honest.

I'm happy to win a Grand Slam and big tournament rather than getting to No. 1. Yeah, right now that's more important for me.

**Q. What did it feel like in those days?**

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: It's a different, obviously, time, different objectives, goals. I set my schedule in such way where I play a lot. I'm thinking about points, where I need to defend or not. There's a lot that goes into that.

But I always try to really work around my schedule so that I am able to have those practice weeks, which are really meaningful for me and my team, where I'm able to build my body, my mind and my game so that I'm able to excel when I need to, when I want to.

But, yeah, I mean, there was more in terms of in the aspect of thinking objectives. It's less now, less of that stress and pressure for me to say that all of a sudden I feel I have to play the next week because this week I didn't generate enough points or didn't have enough matches. I don't have that.

Nowadays for me it's really playing what I want to play, what I enjoy playing, and trying to make the most out of it.

**Q. I wanted to ask you about Joao Fonseca. He's really come on strong and become a fan favorite, especially here with the Brazilian population. Can you talk about him as a player, what you think he brings the sport.**

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: Well, he's been talk of the tour in the last several months. I mean, deservedly so. He's very good tennis player. I mean, so young. Just incredible firepower from both ends of the baseline. Serve. He's very complete player.

Of course, what is impressive is the way he strikes the ball, but even more so how he handles the nerves on the court for someone that doesn't have experience at all playing at the highest level.

He's exciting for Brazil, for the world of tennis. I was saying back in Australia, for our tennis ecosystem, our sport, it's super important to have a superstar, future

superstar, hopefully coming from Brazil. Such a big country, big market, important. Of course, Miami, I think everyone knew that he's going to have quite a support here.

He's very exciting player to watch. But he's not the only one. You have Mensik. Maybe because people talk about Fonseca so much, they forgot about Mensik. They're the same age. Tien, as well. All those players are very young, but they have as good of rankings as he does. They're as good as he.

I think it's exciting, I don't know what should I call it, that generation, new, new, new generation is bringing. It's always great that you have exciting players to watch and see the players that have potential to reach the greatest heights and to carry this sport.

Obviously Sinner and Alcaraz are the leaders of today, still very young. But then these guys, seems like they're knocking on the door of Sinner, Alcaraz in the years to come.

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