

Miami Open presented by Itaú

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Miami, Florida, USA

Novak Djokovic

Press Conference



J. MENSIK/N. Djokovic

7-6, 7-6

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

Q. You left it all out there tonight. Gave the fans an incredible, incredible performance out there. Sometimes you run into a player that is in the zone, a buzz saw, maybe at the beginning of an incredible career. What's your take on what transpired?

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: Yeah, congratulations to Mensik and his team. Never really happy to lose, but he's one of the very few players that I would be happier to lose to, to be honest.

I have seen him play when he was 15 or 16 and invited him, we had some training blocks together. He was training at my club in Belgrade, and, you know, to see his development and evolution is really great, amazing.

I could see back then already that three, four years ago that he's going to be, you know, one of the top players of the world. I'm super glad that he's using the potential that he has, because he's got the complete game. Obviously his serve is incredible, powerful, precise, wins a lot of free points with the first serve.

Backhand, as well, you know. Czech school, they always have a great backhand (smiling). But forehand, he's improved a lot. And movement for a tall, big guy like that, he slides and moves well.

He still can improve, of course. So I'm sure we'll be seeing him around.

Yeah, it's unfortunate for me. Two tiebreaks, just very weird match, weird day with rain delay and all the things that is happening. Honestly, yeah, I didn't feel my greatest on the court, but it is what it is. Nothing to take away from his victory.

Q. It was the most humid day of the tournament. I think it was 80 out there. You must have went through

10 shirt changes. You looked pretty exhausted. Did you have a sty or something? Did that affect you?

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: I really prefer not to talk about -- there is quite a few things, but I prefer not to... just congratulate him. That's it. I don't want to sound like I'm giving excuses here for my loss.

Q. What did you see in this kid? That Australian Open, I think 2022? Final, cramped up, amazing match. What did you see in this kid that you wanted to mentor this kid?

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: Well, I loved the fighting spirit, you know, when he was down in that finals I saw in Australia, and obviously big game. Seemed like a nice guy, Eastern European. I gave a call through management, my management, his management, and we found, yeah, a connection. He accepted to come.

Yeah, so we had, like, three training blocks together. And actually, his physio who is with him now was my physio, Serbian guy. There is a lot of connecting things that we have in common. So as I said, you know, big game, big potential. I'm sure that he's got a bright future.

Q. You're considered as the greatest tiebreak player in men's tennis, in history, percentage-wise. Jakub this week went 7-0 in tiebreaks. What do you think he has in his game that makes him elevate in those really big moments?

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: What do you think?

Q. I mean, I think he's just got amazing ability on the really big points to just...

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: But what do you think? Which shot decides?

Q. The serve. The serve.

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: If you have a big serve and he's been serving consistently 20 aces a match, I mean, in the tiebreak, each player serves two points, and he puts so



much pressure. You make one mistake, two, you're down mini break, and then he starts serving big and it's gone. Tiebreak is gone, basically.

Q. You had called it a weird day. What was the five-and-a-half hour delay like for you? Was your vision okay on the court?

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: As I answered before, I don't want to get into details, but just it is what it is. You know, it's same for both players. You have to accept the circumstances.

I tried to make the most out of what I had or what I was facing, but yeah, it was quite different from any other day of the tournament for me.

Q. You just went through and explained all of the various improvements in Jakub's game. Was there any one thing that really stood out today compared to when you played in Shanghai five months, six months ago?

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: I mean, the serve consistency, I think he was serving even better than he was serving in Shanghai, and there he was serving really well.

I think game was similar, but my level was not like it was in Shanghai.

Q. Obviously from the time period of you being away from this tournament, what's your final word just being back to it now? Short but the overall feeling overall from it.

NOVAK DJOKOVIC: Yeah, I mean, overall obviously now bitter taste because of the loss, but Miami, as I said on the court, really brought me a lot of joy and really good sensations on and off the court.

I was very welcomed very nicely by people and supported. Incredible again tonight, great support from the stadium in the match. They were pushing me on and trying to give me strength for a comeback.

Very grateful. Just enjoyed my experience overall. It was amazing run. Unfortunately ended with a loss in the finals, but I played some really good tennis up to today.

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