

Miami Open presented by Itaú

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Miami, Florida, USA

Arthur Fils

Press Conference



A. FILS/A. Zverev

3-6, 6-3, 6-4

THE MODERATOR: Arthur, how do you feel after the match today?

ARTHUR FILS: Feeling great. Feeling great. A bit tired but feeling quite okay for the match on tomorrow. I did a great match today, long battle, but very happy about the win.

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

Q. I was wondering, reading a little bit about you, could you take us back to your beginnings? There was some description of a court you would play on with your dad where you would bring your own net and everything. Your dad was a basketball player, I believe.

ARTHUR FILS: You could ask him. He's right there.

Q. He was a basketball player, right?

ARTHUR FILS: Yeah, he played some basketball until he was 18, and we start to play tennis together on the terrible courts. But, I mean, it's working, you know.

So, yeah, we was bringing the net. I mean, no more lines on the courts. Some grass on the court. You don't know where it's from, but there was grass (smiling).

The court was terrible, but it makes me what I am now.

Q. Did you ever imagine when you were playing on the court that you'd be playing on this type of arena, this type of stage?

ARTHUR FILS: My dad did; I didn't. Of course you're still young. Of course you want to be No. 1 in the world or whatever, but you don't really think about it. It's just a long process.

But to be honest, I was enjoying my time on the court.

Q. How old were you when you were on that court?

ARTHUR FILS: Oh, from 6 probably until I was 13 years old.

Q. Where was it at, what city?

ARTHUR FILS: In Saint Michel Sauvage. It's like in the south of Paris, in a small neighborhood. Was nice (smiling).

Q. What is it about you? I think you've won 11 of last 14 against top-20 players, I believe. Just brings it out of you going against the best in the world?

ARTHUR FILS: Yeah, always nice matches when you play against the best in the world. You have to be ready, have to play your best. That's what I like, you know, to play on the big stadium, I guess the best player of the world. For now I'm doing it pretty good.

Q. Down 3-1 in the third set, talk about what was going through your mind.

ARTHUR FILS: Yeah, I was down 3-1, but I was still feeling good. I was still feeling okay. I can make it. Just have to play my game and trust the process.

Okay, if I don't make it today, it's all right. If he wins 6-3, it's okay. But if I make it there and then I won it, it's very good as well. I was thinking -- I mean, I can make it. I don't know if I will, but I can do it. And it worked.

Q. You have played so many top players now, and you have had a lot of experiences in this rivalry with Sascha. I'm just wondering if the loss you had to Daniil in Indian Wells, did that teach you some valuable skills that you took into a match like this, using more slices, variety, mixing it up?

ARTHUR FILS: Yeah, okay, the two of them are not the same players, but, you know, it's, like, one similar way. For sure if I play in their rhythm, that will be probably better than me because they are playing very, very good.

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So I had to mix a little bit. In Indian Wells I did, in a big way, like, I was really mixing. Today a bit less, for sure.

But the thing that's help me from Indian Wells is at Indian Wells I was a bit nervous or too much, you know, I lost a lot of energy with saying, "Come on," "Let's go," and everything. Today I was much more calm on the court, and I could feel the energy always, you know, feeling great.

Q. I wanted to ask you about Gael Monfils. Is he someone you idolized? He's still out there, 38, 18 years older than you. Can you just talk about his influence on you and your game? And what is your relationship with him?

ARTHUR FILS: Very good relationship with him. Very good. He helped me a lot. He helped me a lot about -- I mean, on the tennis court but also out of the court, you know, how to be a good man and how to grow up, and he's a very nice guy.

Of course when I was young I was looking at him, watching him, you know, on the court, how he was doing his unbelievable points.

You know, he's such a legend for us in France. Now to be on the tour with him, to share the same tournaments, to share the same locker rooms, it means a lot, for sure. I wish him to play a little bit more. I mean, we all can feel like he can play two, three years more. Let's see.

Q. Mensik, you played him NextGen, but obviously that was a weird time of the year for you. How do you evaluate him? What do you think of that match coming up?

ARTHUR FILS: I mean, he's in the quarters. He's playing very good tennis. Going to be very tough opponent, for sure.

He has almost nothing to lose. Serving great, playing fast. I have to sit with my coach, with my team about how we gonna do the match tomorrow. But first I have to recover, you know, because it's been two tough matches, a long swing since Dubai now, but I'm going to talk with the coach about the tactics. But for sure he's a great player, so it's not going to be easy.

Q. What do you think the most important thing that Gael taught you or told you is?

ARTHUR FILS: Man, I don't know. The best thing, I will say -- I don't know. I don't know (smiling). I don't know. I don't know.

Q. Arthur, the fact that you'll be playing back-to-back days, I know these things happen often on the tour, do you think for you that might be a benefit going into the match against Mensik?

ARTHUR FILS: A benefit to play back to back?

Q. Yeah. Do you think it will help you because he's had the day off, in fact he's had two days off because he had a walkover? How do you think that will pan out or work out?

ARTHUR FILS: I don't know. I don't know. For me now physically it's a bit tough, so to play back to back, I mean, doesn't really bother me, because I have to play. You have to step on the court and to do what you can.

But him, I think he's feeling fresh, feeling good. He went to the NBA basketball yesterday. The guy is good now (smiling).

No, but let's see tomorrow, I think he will be fresh and have to be ready to have a long match.

Q. Did you go also?

ARTHUR FILS: No, I didn't. No, I didn't. Not yesterday.

Q. Speaking of basketball, did you ever, with your father's influence, did you play, did you like basketball as a kid or no?

ARTHUR FILS: I mean, I tried to play. Didn't really work out. I mean, I was not really good, and I was playing better in tennis. So my dad said, Okay, we play tennis. You're better in tennis. We'll play tennis.

Then I did soccer as well. I was still better in tennis. So I kept tennis.

I did a lot of things, but the tennis always was, I mean, I was just better. So I keep playing tennis. But we did some basketball a little bit.

Q. Are you a fan of basketball? Do you know about March Madness, the college basketball tournament?

ARTHUR FILS: Yeah, they are talking about it in the locker rooms, something about there are 60 teams?

Q. There are 64 teams, and they have a bracket. Everybody picks who is going to win.

ARTHUR FILS: That's what they are doing in the locker

rooms, physio rooms. But I don't understand anything. I'm just saying, okay, they're playing good, they're playing bad. You want to bet on this one? Yeah, we bet. But that's it. (Laughter.)

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