

Miami Open presented by Itaú

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Miami, Florida, USA

Jakub Mensik

Press Conference



J. MENSIK/A. Fils

7-6, 6-1

THE MODERATOR: Nice match. How did you feel out there?

JAKUB MENSIK: Yeah, I was feeling really great. Of course for me it was the first match on the stadium which for me was important to get into the rhythm.

Of course I didn't play for two days, so the rhythm was the key, actually, and also the physicality, because I know that Arthur was playing yesterday very tough, long match with Alex. Yeah, he has less than 24 hours to recover, so it was completely opposite.

Yeah, for me, it was really tough. Yeah, Arthur was playing really great. He showed good performance these past weeks and also here. So I'm glad that the rematch and the revenge was sweet (smiling).

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

Q. Congratulations on making the semis. I wanted to ask about your serve. You have one of the best serves on tour, have played multiple matches where 25% of your service points have been aces, and you hit 13 aces today. What do you think is the key for you having such a consistent delivery on that serve week in, week out, match in, match out?

JAKUB MENSIK: Yeah, my physicality, if you look at me, of course, I'm tall guy. So if there will be guy who is 180 centimeters, it's not going to be that good obviously, but yeah, when I came from juniors to the professional level, we did a lot of work, just serve plus, plus one release and everything, like exercises, so we were focusing a lot on these, like, game style in the beginning of my professional career.

So of course it's hard work and a lot of serves, a lot of, you know, like, these drills which right now, of course, during the match I feel pretty confident, and it's my big, big weapon.

Q. Was there, like, a coach in juniors or someone who helped you that you would credit for your serve?

JAKUB MENSIK: Yeah, I started with actually a close cooperation with my coach, Tomas Josefus, who was during the juniors, when I started juniors, so of course he has big plans with me.

I was trusting him all the time, and of course when you're in the juniors, you need some kind of different things and some kind of different game style when you are playing against juniors and right now with the best players in the world.

So of course it was the journey, and I'm glad that I have him next to me and all the time with me, so it's great that, you know, we did a great job and it's paying off.

Q. Did you feel sorry for Arthur? Was that your game plan going in, running him side to side, dropshots, and you could see his legs weren't there? Did you notice that? Was that the game plan going in?

JAKUB MENSIK: Yeah, with Arthur, we are really good friends, but, you know, when it comes to a match, no, you don't have friends anymore on the court (smiling).

So of course you are doing everything to win. Of course, you know, fair play is on the first place. But, yeah, today I knew that Arthur is really good in the rallies. You know, he's running so fast. So it was really, really important to keep him moving and to play aggressive, you know, baseline tennis.

Q. You got Berrettini or Fritz next. What are your thoughts on either matchup?

JAKUB MENSIK: Yeah, of course every match is different. It's like, you know, past days I played against different players, so Matteo and Taylor is different game style than Arthur, for example, today. So of course it's going to be different.

Yeah, my strategy base will be the same, but of course I



will prepare myself, do some scouting reports, and let's see who's going to win today. Of course I'm excited for the next match, and that's it.

Q. It was a little more than a year ago that you had that first sort of big run in the Middle East. Did you think you would be here in the semifinal of a 1000 sooner once that happens, or do you sort of feel like, okay, finally I'm here, or maybe this was the right time for it?

JAKUB MENSİK: I mean, everything is happening in the right time, so of course last year I had great runs on some of the tournaments. This year as well.

So everything is happening for a reason, and it's all the time the right time. Never is too late; never is too early. That's it (smiling).

Q. You beat I think three players all in the top 20. What has been your mindset for these matches?

JAKUB MENSİK: Just go, win. Not win, but just go and to -- every time when I'm stepping on the court, I'm feeling like that's the match. I will play, I'm always trying to play my best tennis, to show best performance.

Of course I don't mind if there is a guy who is top 100 or top 20. Of course it's a difference. You can see it in how is he playing, but still, for me, my mindset is always the same.

Q. You just talked about the transition from junior to senior, the professional, and of course your country has a huge history of the big culture of tennis. So I was wondering, what kind of environment, what kind of circumstances you are growing up when you were junior or like a kid. Is there any player you looked up to or player who inspired you from your country?

JAKUB MENSİK: Yeah, I came from very small city in Czech, or not small. In Czech, every city is small compared to United States, but in Czech, it's like average.

Yeah, the town is known for, you know, like, that we have the biggest National Tennis Center in Czech Republic, so of course when I was growing there, I watched a lot of kids out there, you know, playing tennis. I wanted to try as well.

In these days it was, like, I don't know if it was the prime of Tomas Berdych and Radek Stepanek, but they were playing there, practicing there. I don't remember that much, but of course because of them, I started to play and tried to as well compete in tennis.

So of course it was the thing that they were playing there,

so I watched them. Of course when I started to play more and more, of course I started to see the tennis in different spectrums. Yeah, that's how it started.

Q. There has been all the talk about Jannik and Carlos. Now there is all the talk about Joao Fonseca. In one way do you think the three Czech players that are doing so well at the moment, even Arthur Fils, are not getting the recognition that really you should because of the outstanding level that you guys play at but the fact is that the other three have had all the attention?

JAKUB MENSİK: Yeah, of course if we are talking about Jannik and Carlos, no wonder, because, I mean, right now they are the best players in the world. So of course we are hearing a lot about them. They achieved already big things in tennis.

And of course when there are some, you know, new guys on the tour that they are coming up, of course last year it was for me the first year. I didn't have that much, like, attention, like, for example Joao is having this year. So of course it's, like, talk about the new player.

Yeah, I mean, all the players like you are saying also, like Tomas and Jiri from Czech, they are really, really great players. Yeah, I don't have, like, really the answer for that. It's, you know, maybe it's also because we are from Czech, you know, which is small country.

Paying a lot of attention also because I feel like here in Miami, I feel like I'm in South America, you know. I didn't hear one guy speaking English when I was walking, you know, on the city. Everyone is speaking Spanish, so I'm like, Oh, my God, I feel like I'm somewhere in South America.

So of course when you are seeing here Learner Tien was playing against Joao, a Brazilian and an American, we are in U.S., the attention and the crowd was cheering much more for Joao. So it's saying a lot also from which country you are.

But it's great, you know, the new names are coming up in tennis and of course we are here to follow the steps of Jannik and Carlos. At the end, you know, the attention will receive the one who is the best player in the world.

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