

Miami Open presented by Itaú

Wednesday, March 25, 2026

Miami, FL USA

Jiri Lehecka

Press Conference



J.LEHECKA | M.Landaluce

7-6¹, 7-5

Moderator: Jiri, congratulations. Can you please take us through the match and how you're feeling.

Jiri Lehecka: Thank you. It was a difficult match today. I must say that I didn't really feel comfortable in the match at all, because Martin was playing very good tennis today. He was very aggressive. He went into every chance that he had. And I really fought my way through this match, and I was still waiting for the right moment to break him, against the break points. He was unbelievable. He was very aggressive, and he played very well. So yeah, I think that it's been a great match. He was really dictating the pace most of the time, but I must say that, from my side, I was serving pretty well today. That's something that really helped me through this match, and that was one of the, one of the reasons why I still had, like, free mind to, to kind of wait for my chance on the return game, which came into, in the last game of the match.

Question: When you beat Taylor Fritz in the last round, you became the highest ranked player left in the, in the top half of the draw. Do you feel any more sort of excitement or pressure when the draws opened up? You know, Alcaraz went out, obviously, in your quarter of the draw already. Just how do you keep your focus and intention when a draw is changing around you, and suddenly there is what, at least on paper, a big opportunity?

Jiri Lehecka: It's not easy. I must say that since I beat Taylor, I was pretty surprised that Martin Landaluce beat Seb Korda, because I saw what kind of tennis Seb Korda was able to play against Carlos, and it was amazing. So that was kind of a surprise for me, but after today's match, I must say that, I mean, he's playing very well. But about this, I think that we can just see that tennis is very, very strong. All the guys are able to beat the top guys. Of course, we don't see this much. I think that there have been 100 tournaments in the last 52 weeks. Let's say where this is really, really extreme to have me being the highest seed in the semifinals or in the quarterfinals. Maybe, yeah, also, yeah, top half. But I think that all the matches were played well, there was no injury, I hope in the top half. So, I think this just proves that tennis is in good hands and that the level is very good, even out of the top five, top 10.

Question: Congrats, Jiri. Great run to the semis, I know. Do you feel like you're almost all the way back from your pre-injury, back after Madrid? Do you feel like you're almost all the way back?

Question: I think that I'm a completely different player since that moment there. I kind of feel that it was one of my first big tournaments where I went far. Of course, the match against Rafa in Madrid was a lifetime experience, but still, I don't want to say I'm new on tour, but I'm new in these late stages, but unfortunately, that week is still connected to my back injury, so it wasn't anything

pleasant. For me, I wasn't even able to walk after that last match, when I needed to retire. So that was very tough. But since then, I won one more title and played a couple of finals. I kind of stuck myself, put myself into the position that I know that I can really keep myself around the top 20, and from that spot, I felt that I need to put some more work to go further and get closer to top 10. So that was my goal. I think that the difference right now is that all the players, we know each other well, know what to expect from me. I know what to expect from them. So all of us, we can prepare in a different way than if you have someone who's not been there, you know, yet. Let's say like this. So, I think that this is something new for me, but at the same time, it's something I was working towards this moment for a long time. And yeah, I think that my game is there, and I believe that I can go far on tournaments like this.

Question: Quick follow up, can you talk about possibly playing Tommy Paul or Fils? I know you played Fils recently, and Tommy a long time ago in Wimbledon.

Jiri Lehecka: Yeah. I think that both guys are very experienced. I must say that Arthur has been playing very well in the last couple of weeks. Tommy already proved that he's an experienced guy. He has the home soil advantage, so I think it's going to be good match. Doesn't matter who wins. I will try to stick to my game, and I'm really confident about the fact that if I am able to execute my game, well, I think it's going to be a great match, and I think that I have a good chance to win,

but let's see. I think it's going to be a great match, and I'm very much looking forward to it.

Question: I want to ask you about Martin Landaluce. What are your thoughts? What did you see on him today. Twenty years old, quarterfinals for all Masters 1000. What impressed you the most? Did you see any weaknesses?

Jiri Lehecka: I think that today, he showed that definitely he has the game. He has the big potential to play these matches and to really be in the quarterfinals of a Masters 1000 event. Now, of course, it depends, as with a lot of players, about the consistency, if he's able to keep this through the whole year, or if it was just like one week fairy tale. I do not want to sound disrespectful, for sure not, but I think that the upcoming weeks are going to show if he is going to continue the right way. But I do really believe that he has all the weapons needed to succeed in modern tennis, to really win a big matches. I think he proved it today, the way he played against the break points in a crucial moments. I think that that was just something unbelievable. I didn't really play badly, but he just went for it. He was very aggressive, and he played well, even in the last matches against Korda, against Khachanov. I saw a couple of games, and the level was there. So, I wish him all the best. I wish him to stay healthy, definitely. What I felt a little bit today is that his first serve could have been a little bit better. I felt that if he would have served more first serves, it would have made me, I don't want to say more nervous, but it would have given me troubles.

Commented [COM1]: the parentheses would indicate that he didn't actually say that.

Question: Yeah, there's a campaign that's going on now with a bunch of the players, especially top 10 players ATP and WTA. You've been pushing for more prize money, financial support from the Grand Slams. They're doing a social media thing about it for the last couple of days. You're not quite at that level, but you're also very much on tour level for a long time. What do you think of those efforts, and just the sort of overall state of the business of tennis, as it's concerned, for players who are like you, near top 20, I guess?

Jiri Lehecka: I think that all these efforts are, are pretty good. I think that when we see the distribution of the prize money, especially for Grand Slams, I think that we as players would deserve a little bit bigger stake. Definitely, this is what I agree. The question is that I don't actually see the full picture right now, but the follow up question is, if the small tournaments will be able to keep up. That's something that, I think, may be a problem because, of course, I think that Masters 1000 events are right now in a position that is pretty good with the two weeks format and 500s are, I think, also successful, but the 250s, there is a big question mark, in my opinion. And, even though I'm very pro pushing these efforts to increase the prize money on the Grand Slam level and anywhere else, the one thing that I am not very sure about is what is this going to do with the smaller tournaments, with the Challenge Tour, with the, with the ATP, because I don't know if it's going to be right to have big, big differences between the Grand Slams and the other tournaments. Of course, the differences are there already. But I think that if there a way to increase

the Grand Slam prize money and, at the same time, help the smaller tournaments to increase theirs as well, so the difference wouldn't be that big, I think it's going to be great. And I will be supporting this thing all day long.