

Roland Garros 2015

Friday, May 22

Roger Federer

An interview with
ROGER FEDERER

THE MODERATOR: Questions in English, please.

Q. What have you been doing since Rome? How has been your preparation this past week?

ROGER FEDERER: Went back and went to see the family and spent some time with them. Took two days off and came here to practice on the Wednesday. I have been practicing since again, and so it's been all right. It's been good. Previous years I used to go from Rome to Paris directly, but because the family was home I went through Switzerland, which was nice, and it worked out really well by resting there actually rather than being here.

Q. What's your reaction to the draw this morning? What's your first reaction?

ROGER FEDERER: Well, I didn't like all of a sudden see the entire draw. You heard things that you play a qualifier, you hear who the seeds are and so forth. So little by little did I get to a chance to see the entire draw. I don't know. For us, it is what it is, you know. Creates more for stories than actual -- the rest of it, you know. I take notice of it, and that's about it. But clearly I look for the best first-round matches out there that maybe interest me the most. Besides that, you know, clearly having Rafa in Novak's section is the biggest of news, if you like. But you don't want to disrespect all the players that are in between those two as players. That's the tendency that has to happen from your side, so that's -- we're just aware. We, the players, are very careful, because there are Tour professionals there that are unbelievable players, and they got forgotten in the process, which I think is a bit of a pity sometimes.

Q. Because of the way the draw worked out, would you be in favor of Rafa being seeded higher, changing the seeding?

ROGER FEDERER: No, not necessarily. Total wrong debate in my opinion. The rankings reflect what happened the last 12 months. Of course if Rafa wouldn't have been injured, you know, from Wimbledon last year or French Open last year - I don't remember when he played his last, but - you know, he would be very close to the Top 4. If not in the top 4, maybe No. 1 or 2 in the world. Who knows? So from that standpoint I see the argument, but at the same time I think it was going to be worse for somebody else other than Rafa. I don't think it was going to be bad for Rafa because he's looking at defending his title whoever he has to play through. It doesn't matter who it's going to affect more that



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quarterfinal final guy. It's going to affect Novak more in my opinion in that regard than Rafa really.

Q. You're back with Stefan Edberg this week working for the first time in quite a while. I think probably the first time in the clay season. What's he bringing to the table now at Roland Garros? Is it just sort of inspirational role still or actually tweaking stuff with you?

ROGER FEDERER: Well, we did see each other in Monaco for, you know, over a week. So he came there. I did see him recently on the clay already to get his input on this surface early on. Then, you know, you move forward from there. Went to Istanbul with Severin, and also Madrid and Rome, which went well for me considering. So I'm in good shape, but it's just important that we see each other from time to time again. It's nice spending time. He lets me know what he's seeing; what he thinks needs some improvement. Here now I think all the players, not just myself, have to do a major adjustment to different playing conditions. I know it sounds a bit silly, but the conditions are totally different from what we have seen the last few weeks, because the balls are very dead, really. There is not much coming out of the balls; whereas all of the clay court season played very different. So that's why for me, of course the results what you have had in the past play somewhat of a role that can give you confidence. But at the end, I think we will see quite different tennis actually to the last six weeks, which I think is going to be a test for all of us and interesting. That's why I think the first round is actually quite important here. But Stefan, to have him around is always great and he gives me good input.

Q. Given that the conditions are perhaps a little bit slow, the courts could be quite slow, how would you assess your own chances here of success?

ROGER FEDERER: Yeah, I mean, I will take it a match at a time, you know. I feel like I have had a great last 12 months. I have had a good beginning of the season, really. I'm happy with my level of play, and that's where my focus lies, you know. I know there is a lot of good players out there that want to win the tournament that can win the tournament. Others that are dangerous on the day. Every draw is the same thing. Like I said, I just gotta make sure I adjust my game according to the playing conditions here, and then we will see how far it takes me. I think there is a chance to go very deep. How deep remains to be seen depending on the level of play.

Q. Talking specifically about the playing conditions here, how do you draw compared to your clay form from this season for any player compared to, say, years past for a particular tournament?

ROGER FEDERER: My own game now?

Q. Yeah, just your approach in the sense of do you more draw from how you're currently playing or you're looking back from your past results in Paris and how that's played out in your career.

ROGER FEDERER: What do I look at? I think I look at this clay court season more than anything. Last year it's already hard to remember exactly how everything went. I remember I played great in Monaco; I had some okay moments here. You know, it was sort of short lived. Obviously I remember also the birth of my boys, you know. That was the most significant thing that happened by far, hands down, last year during the clay court season. So, yeah, then I look back at 2009, winning that, as a motivation and something I love about coming back to Paris for. The atmosphere, the crowds, all that, the support I received back then, how nice it's been ever since, you know. I feel like how happy the Parisian crowd is, how happy I am to be back. It's like, Here we meet again. So that's kind of how I feel. And then of course all those finals I made before the win in '09, great years for me as well here in Paris. Just coming up a bit short against Rafa, you know, but many players -- well, it happened to many players throughout that period, you know. I was good enough to make the finals on many occasions, so I feel like I know that I have done well here in previous years. I hope that that can help me a little bit, but I know that's the past and that we need to focus on what's happening right now. That's where I see that actually I'm playing good tennis, and if I do string it all together, it could also be a successful tournament.

Q. How would you describe the clay here? What makes it special compared to others?

ROGER FEDERER: Well, they all play a bit different depending on, you know, the sort of sand you use or what the base of the sand is and how it reacts to, let's say, rain and wind and humid weather and dry weather, you know. This one keeps adjusting like all the surfaces, as well. I find here probably sand is the most fine in terms of the grain with Rome. So it feels a bit different to then the clay we have, let's say, in Switzerland. Monaco feels similar to what we have in Switzerland more or less it seems like. It's a nice court. Obviously they put in a lot of effort. You can feel it. It's a nice court to play on. Yeah. As you would expect, it's a good court.

THE MODERATOR: Questions in French.

Q. You saw the draws. Nadal, Murray, are not in your side. What is your reaction? Nadal will be playing Djokovic if everything goes well in

quarterfinals.

ROGER FEDERER: Yes. Well, they are not on my side of the draw, but they are, because at the end of the day I think we are all playing the same tournament. Whether it's in semis or in the finals, if you lose, you lose at one point or another. So my objective is to not lose. You know, I may not play these players right away, but I may have to play them later. It will be interesting to see Rafa play Novak. There is no big difference. Rafa is ranked between 5 and 8, so I knew that I could play him in quarterfinals or semifinals. But it makes no difference. He's very difficult to beat unless you can prove me the contrary. Except for Soderling. I don't really know who else can do it. I'm waiting to see. We will see how things go. As I was just saying in English, I think the playing conditions here are very, very different, so I think we have to adjust. Making the right adjustments will be really important. Then of course it's important to stay focused. Again, the draws, I think they are interesting for the media. They may be important for certain players. But once again, at the end of the day, I take it as news. It's just news, but here I am focused again on what I have to do. It's interesting to, you know, keep an eye on the draws, of course. It's not something that I monitor very closely.

Q. Nadal and Djokovic are receiving most of the attention. You were used to getting a lot of attention. Is it nice in a sense to be less in the spotlight compared to before?

ROGER FEDERER: Well, it makes no big difference. I prepare for the tournament. I train. I have to talk to the press. So 99% remains the same. It really depends on where you put the focus, you know. Novak gets a lot of attention. He's trying to win Roland Garros for the first time. He's been playing very, very, well. He could have lost 20 years in a row and still win once. He's just been incredibly successful, and I think he really deserves the attention. Rafa, what can I say? He's an incredible player. Rafa, it took everything for him. You know, it took me eight years. Took him nine years, you know, nine victories. It's normal that he should get so much attention.

Q. I am from Iraq. What do you think about Roland Garros this year compared to last year? Do you think you can make it to the semifinals or finals?

ROGER FEDERER: Last year there was a real momentum for me. I was playing better and better. The beginning of the season was very good for me last year. My preparation for Roland Garros last year was very good. I trained a lot in Switzerland; no more back pain. I did very well in Monaco, as well. I really had the impression that when I arrived here at Roland Garros I really tried to pay attention to each of my balls instead of just unleashing. I tried to stay focused. It was a good experience. And then I decided to play more aggressively, hit the balls. I got used to my new racquets. And my team also with

Edberg, having Edberg was very helpful, and then Wimbledon and all the rest. So it has been a very good year. Now, this year things are going even better, which is not a surprise for me. 2013 cost me a lot of energy. Things were not easy. But I think we now have a good momentum; 2014 and 2015 have been good. I feel much better, but that doesn't mean anything when it comes to results. You know, I'm taking things game by game, and of course it depends on my opponents as well and how they play. We will see. I have good sensations and we will see. We will see how it translates on the court.

Q. Listen to you. You don't really think Rafa is less good compared to previous years? Last year we had similar questions. Do you think the situation this year for him is the same? The tournament is now starting. You also mentioned the clay being very different. Yes, the balls are different. Why do you think that this could serve him more than other tournaments do?

ROGER FEDERER: Well, I think that when it's a little slower it's better for him. That way he is even less impressed by big servers. Same thing is true of me. Typically we play more on the baseline. He's a baseline player. That's where he's just really strong both physically, and mentally he knows how to find the right angles, the speed. With five sets he has even more leeway and margin and the confidence that no one else has here at Roland Garros. I think the players are fully aware of this. I think that's why, you know, this is really serving Rafa. But of course every single time he's back he has to prove it again. His record is very incredible.