

# Dubai Duty Free Tennis Championships

Wednesday, March 1, 2017

## Evgeny Donskoy

Press Conference

E. DONSKOY/R. Federer

3-6, 7-6, 7-6

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

**Q. Congratulations. Admit you surprised yourself.**

EVGENY DONSKOY: Yeah, of course. Surprised everyone I think today. Whoever win against Roger surprises himself, I think.

**Q. Just talk us through when you saved those match points and how you managed to fight back and also down 1-5 in the tiebreak, fighting back? What do you tell yourself?**

EVGENY DONSKOY: You know, I was leading 6-5 with break and start to feel a little bit tight. And you could see that.

I mean, I didn't do anything, like, very bad. I mean, some double faults, but he played well. I mean, he always play well.

So, yeah, in this moment I start to feel, like, energy and mentally down a little bit. Then just trying to do -- and my friend, my coach today was telling me -- actually, coach is not here today, but guys who was with me today, they was telling me move your legs, trying to do every point, every next point. That's what I had in my mind, and 5-1, as well.

**Q. Who was the guy that filled the role as coach tonight?**

EVGENY DONSKOY: It's my friend who is helping me. Mikhail Youzhny (smiling).

I mean, yeah, he's really -- no, yeah, when I was 200 ranking, he's trying to, he was like saying to his coach, I want to help this guy. He's a nice player. He start to help me and I became 200, and I get injured last season, and I'm out trying to play again. Not trying. Like, I'm playing better now.

My coach is Boris Sobkin. I guess you know him? I don't know. They just great people. Just trying to help.

I know that he's -- I mean, his career is not in the top



right now, but he's just a nice person, which is trying to do something for, like -- he's not traveling with me, you know. Like he's just saying to me, like, if you need any help, just let me know. That's it. I mean, he's nice guy.

**Q. This is what he was telling you, but what were you telling yourself at 5-1? And was there anything from the crowd spoken in Russian that motivated you?**

EVGENY DONSKOY: Yeah, and it was like more and more. Since the beginning, it was, like, Oh, Russia, like, Davay, Davay, in Russian. "Come on" in Russian.

Then since I won second set, they start to scream more and more. Then I only hear Russian. Like, this city from this city. It's helping sometimes. You feel like you're not playing only for you, that someone is also want you to win.

**Q. What were you saying to yourself?**

EVGENY DONSKOY: Yeah, to myself. I was -- it was really, really tough in the beginning. If you say about, if we talk about all the match, it was really tough in the beginning, because it was too much pressure. I mean, I felt it on myself, because it's Roger, and I never even practice with him. So it was tough.

And that many people -- I used to play on center court and many people, but Roger is different moment. And then, like, when you winning some games, you getting -- then you start to think, like, okay -- I mean, I was saying to myself, like, do your legs lower, because if I stand up I getting so much mistake. That's what I said to myself.

**Q. Did you feel that you have been playing not only against Roger but also most of the fans in the main court? They like Roger? Did you feel like you were playing against all the world?**

EVGENY DONSKOY: Not against, but I mean, you always enjoying, because Roger is the kind of person that, I mean, everyone love him. Everyone love him. Everyone just, you know, like -- I think it's like nobody don't like him and don't supporting him. When you see everyone support him, you feel it, like --

**Q. Logic?**

EVGENY DONSKOY: -- yeah, logic, and it's fair. I didn't feel I was against the world. I was just against

myself, trying to be focused. That's it.

**Q. Can you just go down to the third set? You're 5-1 down in the tiebreak. Looks completely gone. What did you feel at the time? How did you make such a good comeback?**

EVGENY DONSKOY: I was not, like -- you know, I was tight and down, mentally down. But physically, and the rest was okay, you know. My shots was -- it was all right. I made this good wide serve, I guess. I don't remember. I'm pretty sure. It was good serve. Opened the court. And then I make a winner. Then very nice two points, and I'm like very good return.

You know, when you do this 5-4 -- when it's 5-2 and he's serving, you don't really feel confident, and when you win this point you start to feel, so this came back to me. These two point, three points, which was important as well.

**Q. I believe Roger is nine years older than you. A lot of players say when they play him, they think, oh, we're playing someone who we idolized when we were younger. Was he like that for you? Who were your idols growing up?**

EVGENY DONSKOY: No, he was not my idol, I can't say, because when -- really, when I was so, so, so young, like I loved Russian players, like Marat Safin and Kafelnikov, but they was never my idols. I'm different. And like Roger have one-hand backhand, so I cannot copy him. And not my idol, but it is like there is no doubt that he's a legend so everyone respects him. He don't have to be your idol to understand that he's unbelievable player.

**Q. I guess, where does this win rank in your career?**

EVGENY DONSKOY: Person, yeah, Roger. But I beat Ferrer, I don't know which ranking he had at that time.

**Q. I think it was on match point. Did you save match points against Ferrer?**

EVGENY DONSKOY: Yeah.

**Q. It's kind of a habit?**

EVGENY DONSKOY: I think so. I don't remember. But maybe he was top 10 at that time but maybe not. I don't know.

**Q. How does it feel for you? Not just by ranking.**

EVGENY DONSKOY: No, it's different story about Ferrer and Roger. Unbelievable. Of course, I was so happy with Ferrer, but now, it's just, like, I mean, I can say it's dream come true, but, you know, the sport, I don't like this, because you always want to win, even if it's Roger.

You come to Grand Slam, you know there is Djokovic, Murray, Nadal, and you're like, okay, I want to win. I understand that I'm 100 ranking, but you always have this ambitions to be No. 1, always.

**Q. Pouille tomorrow. Can you just tell us how you feel you're going to recover from such a good match today? Have you played him before?**

EVGENY DONSKOY: Yeah, I played him US Open 2015, but he was not that Lucas like he is now. He's nice guy. I know his play. He know my play, how am I playing. And so just gonna talk to my coach and just find some holes in his game, you know, if he have them (smiling).