

Dubai Duty Free Tennis Championships

Thursday, March 2, 2017

Fernando Verdasco

Press Conference

F. VERDASCO/G. Monfils

6-3, 7-5

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. So what are your thoughts on that match?

FERNANDO VERDASCO: Well, I think I played almost perfect match. I mean, maybe I could be a little bit more aggressive on my serve, but of course if I look more for an aggressive serve, my percentage will go down and play with second serves, and I think against him, playing with second serves, I will be like defending on many points.

So I bet more for a big percentage on the first serve and tried to play with my forehand almost as much as possible.

You know, like very happy, I think, like really complete match, in general, in all the ways that you can imagine.

Yes, a little bit of course disappointed after, like, Love-40, I didn't take, and after that, he went back to 5-All after the rain delay. So it was not easy, but I tried to be focused, to go down, you know, just looking for the next point and keep doing the same as before the rain delay, and I have been able to break him back and finish the match with my next serve.

So just that, small points that of course without that would be a perfect match, but it's not also very easy to do that against players like Gaël, guy that is No. 6 or No. 7 or 8 in the world. He's a super-solid player. And the last game I knew that he was going to put all the balls in and high and deep, and it was not going to be easy for me to dictate the point.

So, you know, very happy, anyways, and I'm in semifinals now. Try to recover and get ready for tomorrow.

Q. Did the rain delay bother you?

FERNANDO VERDASCO: Well, I think a little bit, yeah, because I was in a really good path. Even if I didn't get that chance with Love-40, that it was for the double break, and maybe, you never know, but maybe that will



be almost the end of the match.

You know, after that, I lost that game. I still won my serve, but, you know, having one break against a player like him, that he runs and put all the balls in, and I knew that it was not going to be easy. Of course, that 15 to 20 minutes that we stop, I got a little bit cold, and even with that plus the pressure of winning is not easy to just make the perfect game and win, no?

But, you know, I cannot really complain, because I think I played a good match.

Q. Are you aware of the fact that you could have made a successful challenge on the point which you were broken?

FERNANDO VERDASCO: Well, it was Love-40, anyway. But, I don't know, I think it was a close backhand crosscourt. If it was out or maybe touching a little bit, was really close one.

But of course it was one serve from him to the T that the mark was out, like -- I mean, the mark was out, and that's why I called a challenge, and then the challenge was touching the millimeter. And is what I said to the umpire, Go down and see the mark, because, I mean, we are used to see marks, and we know -- and that mark was clearly out.

But the challenge said that it was in at the end. The challenge has the last decision. It was a bad decision for me to take, because that made me with zero challenge, and if the match, if the second set was going to a point like it was, I didn't have a chance to call one more.

Q. We think your next match, it's been a while since you played?

FERNANDO VERDASCO: We played last year in Paris-Bercy, not really far away, last tournament of the season, first round. He retired after I was, I think, 6-2 up on -- I don't remember beginning of the second set, maybe 2-1, something like that, because I think he -- well, he told me -- he's a good friend, one of the players that I have a best relationship out of the court, and I asked him what happened? He told me the day before he already felt a little bit, if I'm not wrong now, in the calf or somewhere around the leg, and it was one ball that I made an angle with the backhand, and he

just run all over, like, outside the court, almost hit with the side of the court. He told me that he hurt himself in that movement, in that point, and that, you know, it wasn't worth it to take the risk to hurt himself more.

So that was the last time we played each other. We played each other I think five times, more or less, few wins for him, few wins for me.

He has a good serve and good forehand. You know, it's going to be a nice match, and, you know, semifinals, never easy. But, you know, I'm very happy to be here, and I will try my best to win one more match and try to be in the finals.