

# Dubai Duty Free Tennis Championships

Friday, March 3, 2017

## Fernando Verdasco

Press Conference

F. VERDASCO/R. Haase

7-6, 5-7, 6-1

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

### Q. What do you think you did well today?

FERNANDO VERDASCO: Fight. Fight and stay on the match mentally after losing the second set and even pushing a little bit harder after that. After that second set, I start thinking to hit the ball a little bit more, going through the ball instead of going back, try to be more aggressive, not making mistakes, of course, but trying to be a little bit more aggressive and play on top of the baseline or trying to be even inside the court.

And with his serve, just trying to put the ball in and defend. Once I defend, then, of course, again try to be aggressive again.

But he was serving really good, I think, the whole match. Great directions, around 190 to 200 all the time, and it was not easy. Even the second serve, it was with a lot of spin and tough to go through the ball and put a good return.

So very happy in general with everything. He might not have the ranking as Monfils or Bautista, but I think his level of tennis today was same or even better than Gaël yesterday, kind of like same as Roberto two days ago.

So it was a really tough match. Needed to be there, of course, till the last point, and I think that game of course with 4-1 coming back with my serve, recovering that break points I had, gave me a push of confidence and energy. And the next game, with his serve, I just played unbelievable.

So I'm really happy to be in the final, to win this match, and just will try to recover and to be as ready as possible for tomorrow.

**Q. I saw a quote from you in one of the papers over here the other day about how it's getting harder and harder, guys like you and Feliciano and David still manage to keep on. What is it that keeps you**



### going?

FERNANDO VERDASCO: Motivation, and I think the keys -- there are many keys, of course. But motivation is one of them, because motivation is what keeps you by waking up every morning with motivation to practice, with motivation to get better, with motivation to win matches, and to stay on the top of the ranking. Without that, I think you don't have anything.

So that's the first step to stay there with 33, 35, 34 years old. And when they ask me how long you will be playing, I think, like, I always said, Or till my body shuts down and I have an injury or something that doesn't let me play or till my motivation comes down, and then, of course, the level of practice will go down, the level of tennis in the matches will go down, and ranking will go down, and everything will go down.

So I think that's the key to keep doing what we are doing with our age.

### Q. Do you set a goal to get back in the top 20, the top 10?

FERNANDO VERDASCO: My goal is to try to be the best player as possible. Sometimes you have physical problems. Sometimes the matches doesn't come your way. It's not easy to be mentally as I was today, for example, because the second set -- I mean, the first set he couldn't win it with the break up. Second set he was break up, and then I came back and then I almost win it but at the end I lost it. I mean, win it because I had, like, break points, if I'm not wrong, with 5-5 or 4-4 or 5-5 and he made unbelievable lob, forehand to the line.

So sometimes these kind of matches just break your kind of, like, mind a little bit. But today that's why I said that I'm so happy with my mentality and with my fight and spirit and just looking for the next ball, for the next point. And, you know, I just want to do that. I just want to do that as many days as possible. And if I do it more days than less, I will be in better ranking than worse ranking.

So just with this tournament, it's already 300 points for me, and I will make a good jump in the rankings. I think it's going to be -- I hope it's going to be a good injection of energy and motivation again and see myself making good things, making good results.

And why not coming back again in the top 20? Then after top 15, then maybe after, top 10, as I was. It's a hard way, I know how hard it is, because I have been already No. 7. So I will just try to keep fighting as much as possible, and hopefully I will reach the highest ranking as possible.

**Q. When we spoke in Doha, beginning of the year, you were saying you just want to try and get back to winning several matches in a row. Why do you think things are coming together for you this week in Dubai?**

FERNANDO VERDASCO: Well, at the end, you do the right things. Some weeks you have, I don't know, like better feelings, better -- how you can say? A little bit of everything. For example, in Montpellier, my feelings were not really good with the ball. I couldn't control the ball for the first three, four days. And then I didn't never find myself comfortable there.

So here, I felt comfortable since almost the first day. Sometimes the conditions, they just, they are just better for you. Sometimes, no.

Of course, you want to do it good in all the weeks, but at the end, also, all the weeks, maybe one week you are more tired, maybe you have a personal issue, maybe -- there are many things. We are not machines. We are human beings. And at the end, is really difficult to give your 100% every day.

**Q. Can you talk about Murray or Pouille, talk about them separate?**

FERNANDO VERDASCO: Separate? Andy is No. 1 in the world. What can I say about him? I only beat him once. If we play tomorrow, hopefully, too (smiling).

And he came unbelievable yesterday with the match against Kohlschreiber, seven match points. I didn't see the tiebreak, but I was following since I was having dinner outside of the hotel. Unbelievable, of course, but you know how is Andy. He have not seven lives; he has 700 lives. That's why he's No. 1 in the world, of course.

I don't know. I mean, I respect him so much, but if I play him tomorrow I will try to do my best to win.

And against Lucas, he's talented young player. We play already the finals in Bucharest last year. He's just coming from the finals in -- yeah, Marseilles. Yeah, because Metz, Marseilles, Montpellier, they are all the same for me, they are all so close. So from Marseilles.

He has a great potential, and, you know, I think it's going to be a good semifinals to watch tonight. But of

course we're not going to lie. The favorite is Andy. I think he also beat him the times they played each other kind of pretty easy, at least the scores.

So if I have to say, or bet, I would say Andy. But Pouille has a good serve, good shots, and he lives here, he practice here. I think that he can do a good match.

I think he won also 7-6 in the third set yesterday. So, I mean, I don't know how he's going to be physically. But I think that, you know, both opponents, I respect them both so much. I will just try to keep doing my job and be focused on myself, no?

Let's see what happens. But of course I'm very happy being in the final, and I will try, now that I'm in the final, I will try my 100% to win the tournament.

**Q. Just to change the subject a little bit, you have known the Nadal family all your career pretty much. How surprised were you to hear that Toni will be dropping off the tour at the end of this year and Rafa is going...**

FERNANDO VERDASCO: They already asked me this question, and, yeah, at the end, they are always asking me about Nadal. And I really love him, but it's really tiring. I know that it's Nadal, but whatever decisions they have to make, it's their decision. Maybe it's the best for them.

I completely respect Rafa, I completely respect Toni, they did unbelievable things together.

Toni doesn't like, as they said, Toni doesn't like to travel and to fly so much. Maybe they find Carlos Moya, in Carlos Moya, the perfect person to change and to play like that the last years of his career.

I don't really know. I mean, I really love him, but it's about his career and his business and it's not my...

**Q. Were you surprised?**

FERNANDO VERDASCO: I mean, surprised? I don't know. Surprised? Maybe. I mean, in certain point, because they were together all their life. They did unbelievable, I mean, something unreal together, like winning nine Roland Garroses. So when you are that good or you reach that many unbelievable results, I don't know. I don't know why you have to change.

But if they feel -- like I said, if they feel like they need a change from both sides, it's maybe the best for them.

I think that, you know, it's going to be a decision from both sides with all the love that -- they are super united and super close family, they love each other so much, and if they do that, it's because everybody feels good

with that.