

Dubai Duty Free Tennis Championships

Sunday, February 25, 2018

Grigor Dimitrov

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. How is your fitness after Rotterdam? Have you fully recovered?

GRIGOR DIMITROV: Yeah, almost. Almost. I'm getting out there. It's still been a little up and down. I came here a little bit earlier to acclimatize to the conditions. I'm still talking a little nosy here.

But I'm better, overall better. Pretty much been practicing every single day. That helps me just push through days. Hopefully with each day, I'm going to be better and better.

Q. When did you actually get here?

GRIGOR DIMITROV: Here I got Wednesday night almost, yeah. I just came earlier. It was just important for me to get out here in the heat. In the past days it's been warm. Obviously today is different weather.

I like it. I like the heat. Plus I think it's going to help me speed up the recovery process and all that. And, yeah, of course playing outdoors, I've been playing indoors the past weeks. It's nice to get back inside.

Q. With all due respect to the other players, it's not the strongest of draws. What are your thoughts on potential matchups?

GRIGOR DIMITROV: I think always those kind of draws are creating very big opportunities for everyone to do their best, to do better, to push themselves more.

But as I said, even in the past weeks, one of the most important things for me has been to really focus on myself, to start to build up again. From each tournament, as soon as I enter it, is to be better with each match. This is what I did the last week, the week before. I feel like this is the kind of key for me that I really need to focus on.

Yeah, with regard to the other players, as I said, anyone can come out and play unbelievable. Maybe it's their day. On any given day they can just produce a different tennis.

In a way also players have nothing to lose when they play against a higher seed. They're a bit more loose, a



bit more freely swinging. All these things are adding up to the occasion. That's why I think you have to be ready. You should never underestimate an opponent you play.

Q. You haven't played this tournament in a few years. What is bringing you back?

GRIGOR DIMITROV: I don't know. It's always nice to mix and match a little bit, I think. I always like my routines. I played certain tournaments throughout all the years.

There comes a time that it's good to improvise, to try something new. It's a big tournament. It's a 500 event. I mean, I'm here to play, to win. I need points. I need everything (smiling).

It's something that I like to take into consideration. Also it's warm conditions, outdoors. It's great also to prepare for Indian Wells, Miami. Yeah, there are just I think a lot of components coming into the game right now.

Q. The way you finished last year, did it make you sit back and look at your career again, reassess, refocus?

GRIGOR DIMITROV: I think every week can make you do that, to be honest. Yes, what had happened last year, it happened. It's in the past. It's a great memory, for sure. It's something nice to feed off.

To really look back now and think, Okay, this is a new start, new year, new beginning, yes, that's the case. In the same time, for me, I'm just trying to be very positive and good. Like everything in life goes through ups and downs, right? So I just don't want to, as I said, be too high, be too low after that kind of success.

When I started this year, I already had a different goals, different mindset. And, yeah, now is the same thing. With each tournament that I'm playing, for example, last week in Rotterdam, I did well. I'm like, Okay, let me reassess how the tournament has gone, what else I need to be doing, what else I need to do in order to be better. Things are just coming into play every week.

You never know, you might get another injury, you might get another cold. Automatically you need to reassess the whole schedule that you have already

planned and is ahead of you.

Q. What do you know of your opponent, your first-round opponent?

GRIGOR DIMITROV: Malek? We've known each other for a really, really long time. We played a lot, even before we both got on tour.

Yeah, absolutely, he plays well. I know he has good results out here. He likes the conditions here. He's been playing well.

For sure I need to be ready. As I said, every opponent that you play, you just don't have to underestimate, that's all.

Again, right now I'm just really, really focused even a bit more on myself, on the way I'm going to recover, just position myself this week.

Q. How is the shoulder?

GRIGOR DIMITROV: Good, good. Things are coming along. I'm talking again with that nosy voice, a little bit of a cold here and there. It's what you have to go through. Whatever it is, it is. It's behind me. No excuses. I'm going to play.

Q. Can you tell us a bit about your impact as a player in your country.

GRIGOR DIMITROV: Yeah, it's interesting. I think the past I would say two, three years everything I think has developed pleasantly in Bulgaria. I've heard a lot of clubs have a lot more kids. They're more and more excited to play tennis. This is something that I love. I mean, if that was one of the main ways I can contribute to this, that's great.

Of course, I wish I could do sometimes more. Unfortunately, this is the circumstances. I'm still in the middle of my career. I want to give something back to the country, kind of help out in ways that I feel I can. But I need to definitely postpone that a little bit for the time being. But every time I'm able to help or do something, I think I'm doing the right things.

Q. Why do you think there are so many good players from Balkans now, you, Cilic, Halep, Tsitsipas is coming?

GRIGOR DIMITROV: That's a very good question. I've thought about that many times. I guess there's something in us, that fighting spirit that always, like, keeps us going, also propels us to be better. There's just so many I think dreams. You have so many dreams as a kid that your will of power becomes way stronger than anything else, than the ideas in your head.

I mean, we all come from such small little towns, it makes me appreciate what we all have achieved so much more.

Why? I cannot answer. Really, I cannot answer. I can only speak for myself, describe for me being better, wanting more and better in life. It's always been, like, one of my first lists. I always wanted my parents to live in a better place. I always wanted to have a lot of everything so we don't have to worry about things. Also I know what we had to go through as a family.

Yeah, I guess all those things, when you put them in, it's where you feel that you can just fight. Everything else doesn't seem like nothing to us any more. I think this is what makes it even more special.

Q. With regard to Rafa and Roger playing into their 30s, are players now looking at 30 being over the hill? Do you look at yourself playing long?

GRIGOR DIMITROV: I don't know. If my body keeps on going healthy, there's nothing major with it, major like injuries, why not? Just keep on playing.

I would say the longevity of a player can be extended a little bit more with the physios that we have with us. Everybody is taking a better care of their body, their team. Of course, longevity, you have that bigger gap, so why not?

I just believe in doing the right work. It's as simple as that. If you do the right work, if you're putting enough hours of, let's say, injury preventions, just little formalities, like time in the gym, those extra 30, 40 minutes, whether it's every day or on certain days, you just give yourself a better chance every single day. Automatically you give yourself a better chance for your career.