

Dubai Duty Free Tennis Championships

Friday, March 2, 2018

Lucas Pouille

Press Conference

L. POUILLE/F. Krajinovic

6-3, 6-7, 7-6

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. Much better feeling to win than lose it?

LUCAS POUILLE: Of course. I think that would have hurt a lot. I was much better first and second set, 6-3, 5-3. I think I made a mistake continue playing when it was raining. After that we couldn't even move. It was just serve and return.

But he deserved to win the second set. I mean, he put the return in the court. He was aggressive. I couldn't put a first serve, so...

Then in the third, it was very, very close. Yeah, I'm just very happy I get through this one.

Q. The second time you played the same player twice, I guess. Were you worried about turning this one around? Players make adjustments...

LUCAS POUILLE: I was not thinking about this. I was just trying to play my best tennis. I had more energy today, so I was very confident for this. I started very well, was playing great, serving well, returning well. I was doing everything good.

Then, you know, every match is tough to win. It's tough to end the match for any player in the world. Yeah, it was tough, but I was just trying to fight until the end and try to put more intensity in this tiebreak because I think every point were great, very intense.

Yeah, just very, very happy. Excited for tomorrow, as well.

Q. Is it difficult to keep focused when there's so many stops and starts?

LUCAS POUILLE: Well, it's not easy, of course. Sometimes it's rain just a little bit, you don't know if it's going to be more or not. You don't know if you're going to keep playing till the end, when you're going to stop. Even if you stop, you don't even know when you're going to come back on court. That's tough.



But it's for both players. I guess it's not a problem.

Q. Did the umpire and the supervisor give you a choice out there at any point?

LUCAS POUILLE: Well, I think during the second set, started to rain around maybe 3-2 or 4-2 up for me. I think at some point Filip wanted to stop. The umpire said, No, you can keep playing.

I think he was right. I didn't want to stop. I was feeling good. I wanted to finish the match quickly. I think that was a mistake.

Yeah, otherwise after that, they gave us the choice.

Q. Do you know that if you win tomorrow...

LUCAS POUILLE: I know. Of course, I know. I heard. I'm not watching the ranking, but so many people told me already. Of course, I know.

Well, that's exciting. Playing to reach the top 10 for the first time, of course it's something great. But obviously if I play like this every week of the year, I mean, if I'm focused like this and I'm mentally as strong as I am now, I'm sure one week or another I will be in the top 10.

Tomorrow is not going to be the most important match of my life, but definitely important. I'm just very exciting, and that's it. No pressure.

Q. Two long weeks back-to-back with quite a long journey from one tournament to the other in between. How do you feel? Do you feel weary?

LUCAS POUILLE: I feel good. Yesterday I was much more tired than today. I think it's like this, it's up and down. When you're tired, some days you're feeling better, and then the other day you can be a bit more, I don't know how to say...

Anyway, I think I'm feeling good. I'm going to have a lot of treatments, a lot of rest. I don't know what time is the final, but obviously I will be ready to play my best tennis tomorrow.

Q. When you're in this tournament, do you stay in your apartment or here?

LUCAS POUILLE: I stay here. I would love to stay in my apartment. I arrived on Monday night quite late.

Instead of going there, coming back in the morning, et cetera, I decided to stay here. It's much more easier for me. It's 30 minutes away. When it's traffic jam, it can be one hour. It's better to be here.

Q. After Melbourne, the disappointing loss there, how did you get over it? How do you explain the switch after that?

LUCAS POUILLE: Well, I decided not to play the first weeks of the year. Melbourne was my first match. Not easy to play the first match of the year in Grand Slam. You feel the pressure.

I worked very hard, so I wanted to do so well. It put me so much pressure. I was not able to play some good, good tennis.

Then when I came back in France, there was the Davis Cup where I practiced great during a few days. I got injured and decided not to play. Then, yeah, in my mind I was like, Okay, c'mon, you worked so hard, stop losing matches because you put too much pressure on you. Just try to play your game, fight until the end, you will see.

Anyway, either you win it or you lose it, but better losing with my game and playing than not playing.

Q. Will you do the same thing next year, not play Brisbane and Sydney or other tournaments leading up?

LUCAS POUILLE: Well, maybe. It give me the chance to go in holidays with my family at Christmas. That was the positive thing. Otherwise...

Yeah, maybe. It was not a bad thing. It was just I couldn't find or I couldn't be as relaxed as I am now. Before the tournament, if I'm like this, I find a way to be like this first tournament, then yeah, why not.

Q. I'm sure you've been asked before this week, but why did you choose to live in Dubai?

LUCAS POUILLE: Well, the first time I came in Dubai was with Roger. He invited me 2014 or '15, I don't remember, before the tournament. We practiced one week. One morning we were walking with my coach. I say, I feel good here.

The atmosphere is good. Practice is very nice. The weather is amazing compared to Paris. I was looking for somewhere to practice during winter especially.

So I said, Okay, why not? You could come in December, November to practice. That could be your base. Then that's how I decided.

Of course, there is also the taxes. I'm not going to put

it away and not say it. Of course, but the first choice was because I came with Roger and it was just a great experience. I really loved the way the city lives.

Q. Your potential opponents in the final, can you talk about them separately.

LUCAS POUILLE: I played them both. I lost against them both, and I won against them both. I mean, it will be very complicated anyway.

Malek is playing a great tournament. He's improving every day, as he said in the news. That's, of course, something very dangerous when a player is confident like this.

Roberto, he's a great player. He's been top 20 for many years. He's a very solid guy. I know I will have to play my best tennis in both ways.