



Press Conference

28 July 2019

with **NIKOLOZ BASILASHVILI**

Basilashvili – Rublev 7-5, 4-6, 6-3

QUESTION: Niko, congrats on your win. You did something that Roger Federer did, Rod Laver did, Medvedev did and as far as I remember last year you came as a qualifier and then something happened with you at Hamburg. What was it that happened?

BASILASHVILI: I think first of all defending title is something we call defending the title for me it's another title, you know, and especially an ATP 500 title means a lot to me. And yes, I think maybe the clay is different here or something is different on the Centre Court, I can see the ball much better than at other tournaments but, yes, it looks like I'm playing my best tennis here. And, yes, I didn't know that Roger and Medvedev and a lot of players won defending titles but just to see my name next to them means a lot to me for sure.

QUESTION: Congratulations Niko. I'm curious to know how nice it is that you had your trophy with the match point from the last year?

BASILASHVILI: I think it is a good idea. And I think every year it is going to be a different trophy. So, I think it is a nice kind of idea from the tournament. I like it.

QUESTION: Last year, you won the title as the first Georgian on the ATP Tour and now what do you think is now going on in your home country? Is it still something special if you win a title like that or will they just take it as normal?

BASILASHVILI: Just in general when you have achievements people want more and expect more. But same what happened last year. Everybody is writing to me, everybody is happy. So, I have a lot of support from home and it is a great feeling for sure.

QUESTION: Congrats on your third title. I was wondering if you played better yesterday against Sascha or today against Andrey?

BASILASHVILI: I think I played good in the third set against Andrey, against Sascha I had some moments where I was playing good and then bad, I had a lot of ups and downs in Sascha's match, but both matches I was really happy how I stayed mentally stable and did not give up in some moments you know. And I think that both matches were ... tennis-wise I played a very good third set with Andrey and I had some moments also during the first set, and I think both matches were good.

QUESTION: I think it is fair to say that you always try to be a perfectionist on court which is I guess not always easy to handle given your let's say temper. Is it maybe your coach? Is it fair to say that he might have tamed you a little bit? Are you now easier on court or is it still difficult for you?

BASILASHVILI: Just in general, this is my biggest weakness at this moment that I'm trying to make perfect shots always technically and that is what is holding me back a little bit. Sometimes I am not playing the game and I'm trying to make good shots and this is not tennis, you're not playing anymore. We are working on this, and that is something we're going to learn a lot from this tournament because actually on this tournament I was not that prepared. I had some time off and I just played. I just tried to beat players, whatever I had, and that is something which is really interesting how I will manage these kinds of feelings in the future because I think from the baseline and tennis, just playing tennis, I think that I'm on a very high level but this kind of emotions what I have that I'm trying to make the perfect shot, sometimes holds me back. So, we are going to work a lot on this.

QUESTION: As I mentioned before you came into the tournament as a qualifier last year and now after winning Hamburg, I didn't do all the math but it seems like you are knocking on the door of ATP Top Ten players. Is this like your main goal, your main motivation to finish the year Top Ten?

BASILASHVILI: So my goal is, I don't know, I want to win something big just in general in tennis. I think I have enough skills to do it but also to be in Top Ten you need some kind of different mentality. It's not only about tennis, and it's not about playing good just in tennis. So, I will continue working on that part. We are missing this. Sometimes I play more on the score than the game. The score is really affecting me and this is not a good habit to have on court and I think tennis-wise I have enough skills to win something big but Jan, my coach Jan, is helping me a lot off court and on mental parts, and let's see, I didn't have that good season this year, I also had some personal reasons but I'm not looking forward to having some kind of ranking where I want to end. I'm just trying to become a better player. So, let's see.

QUESTION: Do you remember how you celebrated last year after you won?

BASILASHVILI: I flew the same day to Kitzbühel and played the next day.

QUESTION: What about today?

BASILASHVILI: I have two days off. So, we'll see.

QUESTION: Next year, due to the Olympics the schedule will be a little bit tougher if you want to play in Tokyo. So, what about your plans next year? Are you planning to come back or are the Olympics your main focus?

BASILASHVILI: I would like to play Olympics. If I have a chance to play I will play. That's something I'm looking forward to. So, let's see. I have to play some Davis Cup matches to be able to play in the Olympics. So, I will try my best.

QUESTION: Just a follow-up because you just said Jan helps you a lot, not only on court but also off court. Can you get a little bit more into details in which way does he help you?

BASILASHVILI: It's what I told you. It's to play the game and not to play on the score. That's something I have problems with and that's something how I grew up as a kid. So, to change this completely is very difficult but you have to take steps and learn. We'll see. It's not such an easy process to change this. And Jan is a very good coach. He's telling me every day. I'm complaining every time. It's not easy for him sometimes, but I grew up as a player in the last one year, one and a half years working with him. So, I keep improving. So, let's see.