

Miami Open presented by Itaú

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Andrey Rublev

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: We have our No. 4 seed Andrey Rublev joining us. We'll start with questions.

Q. A couple years ago we were sitting in that stadium, you were a qualifier, you were 99 in the world. Did you think at that point, did you imagine you would be able to climb as quickly as you have?

ANDREY RUBLEV: At that time I was trying not to think about general how is going to be or where I'm going to be because the previous year I was top 30 in the world, or exactly 30. I think I was even the youngest 30 at that moment. I was seeded, as well. Everything also was going well for me. Then injury on injury. I went outside of the hundred.

Next year I was playing here quallie. That's why I stop to think how is going to be, what to expect, because I was doing this maybe a bit before. The previous year I was I think thinking maybe if is going well, soon I'm going to be top 20 or soon I'm going to be even higher. In the end, no, I was injured, outside of top hundred.

Since that moment, I start to think how is going to be, or let's try to imagine. In these things now I have exactly clear block that I'm not thinking how is going to be. I'm thinking about now what to do to be better, and that's it.

With some other things, I still learning to don't think about how is going to be. But in this position, because of injuries and all the situation, it helps me completely here to be completely, like, clear.

Q. You've won eight of the 10 finals you've contested. Extraordinary record. To what do you attribute your mental fortitude and your physicality to win that many finals you've contested?

ANDREY RUBLEV: To be honest, I don't know the answer I'm afraid. I'm afraid to say something because I don't want to lose if I will have my next final.

But, I mean, I'm happy is happening this way, that most of the finals I won. I remember the challenger level, I lost also so many finals. I lost maybe three, four finals. I don't

know exactly, maybe I'm wrong. For sure I was couple of finals in challengers, and I win only one out of these four, three, I don't remember. So I lost more finals than I won.

I'm happy that here happens different story, that I won most of them. So we'll see. But, of course, if I'm going to play well, of course there will be some matches that I'm going to lose, semifinals, finals, because this is normal. This is part of the sport.

Q. Your relationship with Daniil, you're friends, competitors. Talk a little bit about that relationship.

ANDREY RUBLEV: With Daniil, I mean, I'm really, how you say, relaxed in this way. I don't like to compete. I don't like to compete with others. I don't like compare myself to others. I'm a bit on the side of this.

I don't like this because I know some guys, they like to compete just because it's like extra feelings, extra emotions. Me, I'm a bit opposite, I don't like to compete. I just try to focus on myself, and that's it.

We have great connection with Daniil. We always have fun outside the court when we spend time together. Yeah, I mean, most of the times we spent time together is on tournaments or if we play something like Davis Cup where we have to be together, yeah. Something like this. We have great friendship I would say already build because of tennis.

For example, if we don't talk one year for each other, he knows he can ask me something and I will do for him. And he know I can ask something and he will do the same for me. It's already like a long-term friendship, I would say.

Q. Obviously you have a very high standard for yourself. You talked before about trying to get better. What do you think it is that you need to do in order to get to the point where you have this very high ranking but you obviously desperately want to go deeper into the Grand Slams, win 1000 level tournaments? What is going to allow you to make that next step?

ANDREY RUBLEV: We'll see. I think I have enough level to go deep on the 1000s. Grand Slam already I did -- last



three Grand Slams I did quarterfinals, so I went deep there. I have level to play. I have level to win matches.

In the end, we'll see. I need to keep working, to give my best. Now here is going to be great challenge for me to see how I can play, how I can compete again.

In the end, every week we have chance. It's a really great from our sport that even if we do something bad, next week we have one more chance. It's not like other sports that you have to wait maybe three, four months, or even longer, to have one more chance.

Yeah, like I said many times, to improve, there is still so many things. I think it's great that I still have so many things to improve, to be a better player, knowing that I'm already playing good. Now my ranking is inside the top 10. We'll see how the things is going to be in the future.

Q. I didn't mean to criticize making the quarterfinals. You want to win finals. You're not in this to make quarterfinals, right?

ANDREY RUBLEV: I didn't took it like criticize. Everything is okay (smiling).

Q. In these awkward times in which one sees great players deciding not to choose to travel to America, or in your case go for it, what are the drivers that lead you to roll one way or the other, in this case go to the U.S., then going back to Europe?

ANDREY RUBLEV: I mean, I think about top players, they have already completely different things that they are playing for. They're playing for the records. They're playing for the Grand Slams. They been playing Miami Open, I don't know, for 20 years.

For them, it's not about one tournament. For them, it's about legacy, records and everything. So they want to be as fit as they can, as best as they can, for the final Grand Slam tournaments that is going to come like a records. I didn't spoke to them, but that's what I'm thinking.

In my case, I'm just starting to play. In the end for me, now, like I said before, I did all good on the ATP 250s and 500s. Even if I do well, the finals or semifinals or winning, I'm not going to get extra points there. To get extra points and to go higher in position, I need to play big events.

Now here without top players, of course I have better chances to win maybe one extra match or, I don't know. Of course, I can still lose second round because everyone can play good.

But, yeah, I have my other things why I'm coming here. I want to be a better player, I want to improve my ranking. Now on the Masters, I don't need to defend nothing. I can only earn. I didn't do well here last year. So that's why.

Q. Bearing in mind what you said, the great results that you achieved at the end of 2020, now the beginning of 2021, what are your expectations towards the end of this year? When you see that you tried to play day in, day out, compare to others, they choose what to play, have you set higher expectations for your results for the end of this 2021 season?

ANDREY RUBLEV: I mean, of course. When you're doing well, even if you don't want to think about it or something, inside you start to expect more from yourself. Also people who's watching, they start to expect more. For them is also not enough if you do one more semifinal. They think this is something normal. They don't think that it's still really tough to do. They start also to expect more.

Like me also. Even if I don't want to think about it, because I'm doing well, I start to expect more, I want more. But I really try to focus to be on reality and to stay in reality to understand that I start to do really well this season. I win a title. The rest I did semifinals. I did quarterfinal in Grand Slam. My level for the moment is really consistent. I'm really happy about it. Never happen before to me.

I make improvements. There is still things a lot I need to improve and to focus on now, not try to think about what to expect. Sometimes you start to think about expectation, you don't focus on these details that you need to improve in reality, then you don't even come to these expectations. You don't arrive to them because you lose faster.

I try to completely put blocks in my head to don't think this way, just to focus on the things I need to improve to be a better player as I can, to be a better player as faster I can, to improve as fast as I can. We'll see.

Q. You were sort of talking about how at Masters 1000s you really only have points to gain at this point, which is true. How do you avoid making that put more pressure on you knowing that you have such an opportunity Masters 1000s, at an event like Miami?

ANDREY RUBLEV: I mean, because in the end of the day, I cannot control if I'm going to lose second round or not. So in the end is like doesn't matter which pressure you have. You cannot control. It's like if you win, you going to win it anyway. If you lose, doesn't matter what you going to do or how much you going to think about it, you still going to lose.

In the end is just to try to focus on yourself, on the things that you need to improve, to do your best, and that's it. Then if you lose second round, at least you know that you did your best. Then maybe next time, it will be three rounds or four rounds or even further.

So this is it. I understand if it was only one time, only one tournament, then yes. But even if I don't do well here, I still have in couple of weeks Monte-Carlo. After Monte-Carlo I have Rome, Madrid, Roland Garros. I will have chances, and we'll see. Even if I don't do well in all of them, I still have next year, I still have the end of the year.

In the end all of us have pressure. All of us, we feel pressure. In the end, I don't know, is nice feeling to see how you deal with this. I don't know.

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