#### 28 February 2012



R. FEDERER/M. Llodra

6-0, 7-6

An interview with:

#### ROGER FEDERER

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

## Q. Restarting can sometimes be a bit difficult after a three-, four-week break. Were you pleased that it went quite well?

ROGER FEDERER: Yeah. I mean, it's always great to start off a tournament winning the first set 6-Love. I don't know when that's the last time it's happened to me.

After that, I really had to sort of make sure I controlled Michael as much as I could because I know he's a dangerous player. He likes to move forward, and he obviously started to serve a bit better.

I think I was solid. I could have served maybe a touch better. But still, I was never really in a whole lot of problems. Tiebreakers, as we saw, can go quickly either way, especially on a quick court like tonight.

So it's great start for me to the tournament. I hope it back it up day for day now. We'll see how it goes.

## Q. You were winning a lot of points at the start, and then finding yourself set point down, did that create extra pressure?

ROGER FEDERER: Sure. I was hoping at 4-3 to be looking at 6-3, and I was down 4-5 and a mini break all of a sudden.

Yeah, that's how these matches can go sometimes, especially the best-of-three sets. You know, you don't even necessarily have to a bad spell of five minutes, but the other guy just clocks some returns and serves well, next thing you know you've lost a set and you're a break down. Then things are a whole lot different.

So in this regard obviously I'm very happy to have come out of this match and not still be on court playing right now.

## Q. Would you like there to be more tournaments on the tour with surfaces as quick as this?

ROGER FEDERER: Sure. I mean, I just think a variation, you know. Not all of them, but some of them. I just think it's good for the game. It allows a serve and volley player such as Llodra and other players to move forward. I think my next round opponents also like to come forward, like Mahut and Lopez.

It would maybe also then make, let's say myself and Murray and other players move forward, too. You know, if we knew that it's actually something we can play more often and more frequently on, you get the habit and more confidence as well moving forward.

Surfaces are 95% of the times rather slow. You just get in the habit of playing so well off the baseline that you just feel it's better to stay back than coming in actually.

### Q. Do you players try to make your voice heard?

ROGER FEDERER: Well, there's not that many players, I don't think, who want it much faster. So there you go. We got what we want, the players, I guess. (Laughing.)

But we can have some influence with the tournament directors. Just talk to them. But they are, at the end of the day, the decision-makers and not us really.

#### Q. How do you find Dubai as a place to play, and where would it rank in terms of your top destinations?

ROGER FEDERER: Look, it's nice. I've seen it grow obviously over the years. This is my ninth time here, so maybe my first time here was ten years ago. I'm not sure.

So I've seen how more people have attended. I've seen how the marquee tents have grown and everything has become even more profession.

It deserves a great status in the calendar. But as you might expect, I have many great destinations, you know, where I love playing in. In some ways, ever center court, every place is something unique for me.

That's what I enjoy about the tour, that no city, no state is the same. But Dubai,



because I do spend some time here, or more time than in other places, feels very good coming just out here and playing some.

#### Q. Is it in your top ten?

ROGER FEDERER: It's hard to say. It would be unfair to any tournament, you know. It's a very good tournament. It's a fantastic one. That's why I'm playing.

#### Q. You play Lopez next.

ROGER FEDERER: Oh, so he won. Okay. I didn't know that.

### Q. How do you look ahead to that match?

ROGER FEDERER: Look, it's somewhat similar to Llodra, so I don't have to adjust a whole lot, I don't think. At the same time, I know the danger of Feliciano. He's had a great season. I think he's ranked within the top 18 or even 20, so...

#### Q. 15.

ROGER FEDERER: 15, so there you go. That's a tough second round right there. I've played him I think here in the final years ago, so I can he can play well here. I think he's made the finals on another occasion here before and might have even won the title. I'm not sure.

#### Q. No.

ROGER FEDERER: No, he didn't. So this a definitely good hunting ground for him, so I won't take anything lightly. Try to play my game again, make sure I focus on my own serve, and then see what I can do on his serve.

But we've had one really, really tough match in Madrid where conditions were rather quick, and that was three tiebreak sets. See how that goes tomorrow.

## Q. Could you confirm something about your position on the tour in South America, opponents, countries?

ROGER FEDERER: Not yet, no. We're trying to put a nice tour together in South America at the end of the year. Still looking at which countries and which players actually at this point. Some are sort of confirmed, I think, and some are not, so still some talks going on there.

So I hope I can play sort of as many as I can. There are many countries I haven't been yet in South America except for the juniors back in the day. I hope we can make it a special down there.

# Q. Your first set was a very dominating affair. Do you think this was your best first set this year considering Llodra a not a pushover?

ROGER FEDERER: Look, I mean, it was 17 minutes. So I don't know if that's better, a set like that, than winning a match in one hour ten where you play some amazing shots.

I definitely think Llodra did serve a few too many double faults in the first set. He did come from a trip, so he was definitely looking for his range on all the shots.

But I definitely played well, I returned great, I was serving solid, so things were going well. It all happened at the right times. The good returns came at the right time; the good serves came at the right time. Then all of a sudden everything happens very quickly.

I was just happy that things went so well so early in the tournament.

# Q. Lopez a enjoying a career-high ranking now and he's 30; Mardy Fish as a well. Do you find it a bit surprising that these players are doing so well later on in their careers? A something happening on tour?

ROGER FEDERER: Not sure. Maybe, you know. I definitely think Feliciano has improved his backhand over the years, and Mardy has lost a lot of weight, you know.

So they're definitely -- I guess as you grow older you have a lot of time to think your life and your career through, what do you not want to waste until you're done.

So some start working harder, some change their techniques, some lose weight, some change their playing styles. I think they have done just that. They took the right decisions and had a good mindset.

I hope they don't have too many regrets. Important a that you leave the game with almost no regrets, even though we'll all have some. You could have always done something better earlier in your career. Maybe it's all just part of sort of the a plan that's out there for you.

It's important to learn quickly I think, because unfortunately you only do have one career. I'm happy I learned early, but it's great seeing Feliciano and Mardy, for instance, playing really well at their age now.

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