

The Myth of Effortless

Effortless is a myth. I mean it, I say that as someone who has heard that word a lot. Effortless. People would say my play was effortless. Most of the time, they meant it as a compliment, but it used to frustrate me when they would say, 'He barely broke a sweat,' or, 'Is he even trying?' The truth is I had to work very hard to make it look easy. I spend years whining, swearing, sorry, throwing my rackets before I learned to keep my cool. The wake up call came early in my career when an opponent at the Italian open publicly questioned my mental discipline. He said, 'Roger will be the favorite for the first two hours, then I'll be the favorite after that.' I was puzzled at first, but eventually, I realized what he was trying to say. Everybody can play well the first two hours. You're fit, you're fast, you're clear, and after two hours, your legs get wobbly, your mind starts wandering, and your discipline starts to fade. It made me understand I have so much work ahead of me, and I'm ready to go on this journey. I get it. My parents, my coaches, and my fitness coach, everyone had been calling me out. And now, even my rivals were doing it. Players, thank you. I'm returnly grateful for what you did, because you made me work harder. So I started to train harder, a lot harder actually. But then I realized winning effortlessly is the ultimate achievement. I got that reputation, because my warmups at the tournaments were so casual that people didn't think I've been training hard, but I had been working hard before the tournament when nobody was watching.