

«Play a Rafa, un Nole or a Roger at my best ? Yes I'm like a crazy person and as motivated as ever! I've always loved playing Top Gun!!



Photograph credit : Christian Wilmes

Henri Leconte and tennis have always been one. Explanation by the main interested party of this passion pegged to the body.

Why tennis and not another sport ?

Because in my family we played tennis ! My mother was a teacher, my father played doubles, my brothers and sisters were good in tennis. We breathed tennis, we went to the club every weekend. I was **passionate about this sport when I was a kid**. But I also played soccer and I was good at handball.

What did you like about tennis ?

Everything! I had idols like all kids: **Björn Borg, Ilie Nastase, Jimmy Connors, François Jauffret, Patrice Dominguez...** I was crazy about tennis and I loved the idea that I was the one who decided on the court.

« I was a fan of Roscoe Tanner, I wanted to copy his serve! »

What's your favorite shot ?

The service. The most technical, the hardest shot in tennis. But also the most important. As **Roger Federer** says, **you decide** what you want to trade with that shot. It all depends on the serve. Mine was very different from the others because I took it up the ball like **Roscoe Tanner**. I was a fan of him, I wanted to copy his serve, hence my gesture !



Roscoe Tanner

What was the role of your parents during your career ?

They saw that I was fan of tennis (I wanted to be a tennis champion when I was 12 years old) and that I didn't like school.. So they pushed me, motivated me; my parents have **always supported me**. I was an atypical player at the time, I was attacking too much! I went pro in 1980, it was the Borg years, many were playing in the baseline. I was always at the net, **I had a high-risk game**.

« You give me a Rafa, a Nole or a Roger, I'm highly motivated to play them! »

Would you like to be pro now with **Federer, Nadal, Djokovic** ?

Yes I would have loved to have faced them ! **Rafael Nadal** would have been hell for me, a bit like **Sergi Bruguera**. **Novak Djokovic** would have been complicated, I would compare him to **Andre Agassi**. As for **Roger Federer**, he is the most complete but surely the game I would have liked the most. Like **Pete Sampras** but more complete. I have always been motivated to play the best in the world. Facing a guy who wasn't ranked very high didn't really appeal to me. **I loved playing perf** ! You give me a Rafa, a Nole or a Roger, I'm highly motivated to play them !



What do you think about the future of tennis ?

It's going to be complicated. The Covid 19 changes a lot of things in our lives but I think for the former players it's a bad for a good. They can prepare themselves better and will gain a few more months in the spotlight. The **experience will be essential**, they will certainly be more lucid.

We really have to make the most of **Roger Federer, Novak Djokovic** and **Rafael Nadal**, they are not forever, soon they will leave the circuit. At each time immense champions but there we were really lucky with three champions of this level ! They are unbelievable !!

Who to take over ? **Stefanos Tsitsipas, he is very talented, has charisma, a look. Dominic Thiem** who has already won Grand Slam tournaments but also **Félix Auger-Aliassime, Daniil Medvedev, Andrei Rublev, Alexander Zverev, Denis Shapovalov**. I am a fan of **Frances Tiafoe**, a very spectacular and generous player. And of course I hope to see the French !



Stefanos Tsitsipas

« Tennis has given me a lot, I wanted to pass on my passion »

You're President of the tennis section of the Levallois Sporting Club since 2010. Why did you accept this challenge ?

Because tennis has given me so much in my life and I wanted to pass on my passion. The notions of **transmission and sharing are very important** to me. I'm lucky to have a top team, very competent at my side, which I'm very proud of, led by **Sofiane Guetatfa** and **Robert Asator**. The LSCT is the **3rd biggest club in France with 24000 members**, it's a lot of work but also a lot of happiness to see all these young people playing tennis !