

SUN CITY, NOVEMBER 2003

Rafa has been invited as a VIP to the Nike Juniors International Masters Tournament organized in South Africa and has been kind enough to ask me along. The organizers have prepared a tempting program for our entertainment. On the second day, we present ourselves at the departure point for a short safari on elephant back. Rafa is not at ease with these pachyderms and quite frankly, nor am I. Anyway, I shouldn't really be taking part as there are a limited number of places. In the end, once everyone else is mounted, there's only one elephant left and Rafa calls me over: "Luca, if you don't come with me, I'm not going". Once astride the creature, Rafa confides in me: "I feel more at ease with you here, even though I know that if something goes wrong you won't be able to do a thing about it!" The ride goes smoothly until we arrive alongside a waterhole where several rhinoceros are quenching their thirst. Our guide asks us to be quiet in case the rhinos should take fright, or worse, decide to charge us. The tension goes up a notch and I can feel that Rafa is really uneasy. As we go past the "beasts", Rafa discretely turns to me and says; "let's hope everything will be ok, I don't want anything to happen to me because I still have to win Wimbledon". Two years before winning the Musketeer's Cup and five years before making an impression on the All England Club center court, this reaction speaks volumes about his motivation.



ADVICE

Ambitious objectives can only be achieved by taking one step at a time. It's crucial to program short, medium and long-term targets.

Rafael Nadal has always wanted to win on the grass courts of Wimbledon. He achieved this in 2008 during an historical match against Roger Federer.

