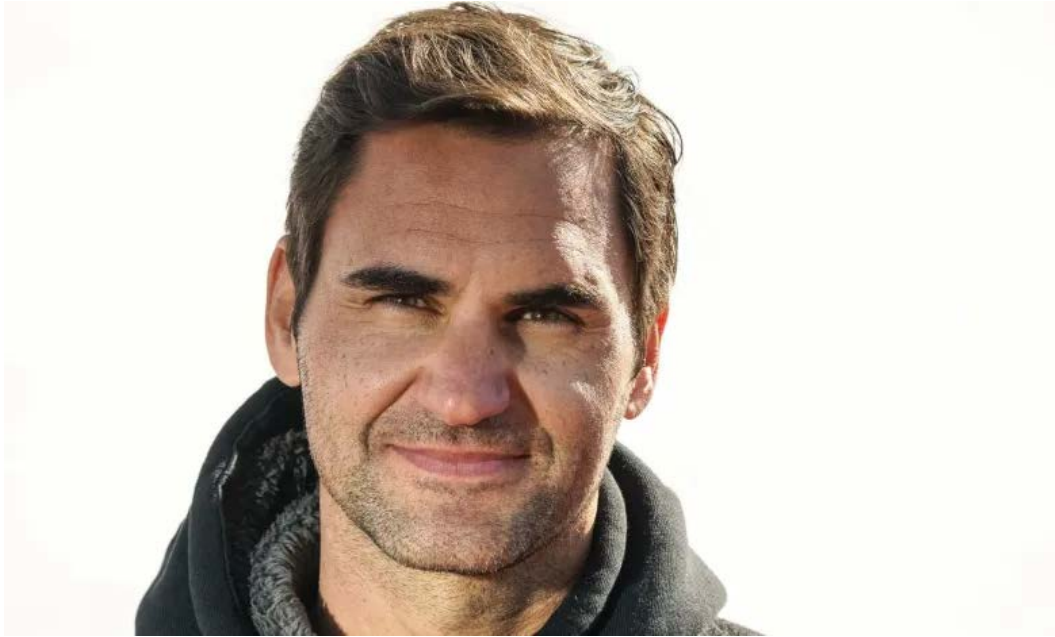


from the hothead Federer to the gentleman Roger, the construction of a legend

👤 Gabriel Moss · UK Daily News, September 16, 2022



Dear parents, if your child or teenager has an inveterate taste for questionable hair choices and a strong character, do not despair. He could well become like Roger Federer. The image may make those who see the Swiss a model of sobriety and class smile. The future retiree has not always been this champion dressed to the nines and praised by all for his irreproachable behavior. Roger was not born Federer, the immaculate tennis legend. He has become.

Young, Roger Federer had everything of the rascal. Not a brat, even rather respectful say of him his first trainers. But a hyperactive boy, crazy about the yellow ball and already very ambitious. *"I remember a cheeky and free kid told to The Team Mathieu Aeschmann, one of his partners in Swiss tennis-studies at Ecublens. He was very nice and funny. He was simply natural, with a rebellious character, annoying and endearing at the same time."*

This assertive temperament could then quickly turn into great frustration when everything did not go as he wanted on the ground. Roger Federer is emotional – a trait he will retain throughout his career, evidenced by the tears he shed after his major titles – and struggles to control his nerves. *"At one time, I used to swing my racquet a lot, and at 16, I even got kicked off the court for it."*, he confessed to *Daily Express* November 21, 2017. To the point of having to call on a specialist, Christian Marcolli, a former football player converted into a mental performance specialist. *"When I was 17, my family decided that I had to go see a psychologist, I was so nervous when I played."*

"Defeats were real disasters for him evokes his father in the book Roger Federer, the quest for perfection. And when he didn't like something, he could get very aggressive. The dice and all the board games were flying across the room." The Swiss must work on his attitude because the talent is there, and is starting to get people talking about young Roger.

"He had come to Geneva to serve as my sparring partner" remembers former player Marc Rosset in the newspaper *Time*. *Usually, the little youngsters are a bit nervous at the idea of playing with the Swiss number one, but he was more than relaxed.* A relaxation which does not prevent him from revealing himself by winning Wimbledon among the juniors.

When he arrived among the greats on the ATP circuit, Roger Federer stood out with his style. Peroxidized hair, messy cut and surfer necklace, then ponytail matched with a three-day beard... Federer was then a young man of his age, with his stylistic eccentricities. His game is polished, his first exploits are not long in coming, such as his victory over one of his idols, Pete Sampras, on the London lawn in 2001. But his bloodshed has not completely disappeared. The trigger comes a little over a year later. In the middle of the Masters 1000 in Toronto, his trainer Peter Carter, who shaped him from the juniors, died in an accident. Confronted for the first time with the loss of a loved one, Federer is *"pissed off than he's ever been in his life"* says the Swiss journalist Rene Stauffer in the book *Roger Federer, the quest for perfection*. *"Unfortunately, I believe that this death marked a break in his career."* explained Marc Rosset to *Time*. *After this drama, he ceased to be nonchalant, as if he had to succeed."*

Federer the tempestuous begins his mission towards the heights, but above all towards his fulfillment. *"I was caught in a mix between fire and ice, he explained in a promotional video for one of his partners, in November 2018. The fire of desire for victory, of joy after a good point, and the coldness to calm myself down and accept defeats, bad shots, crowds, bad circumstances... I found my balance after three years on the circuit. I thought about the long term, I wanted to play 15 or 20 years, and I decided that I would behave like that on the pitch. And that way, I won't lose a game anymore because of my mentality."*

The consequences are immediate. First Grand Slam title in 2003, five titles in a row at Wimbledon (2003 to 2007) and at the US Open (2004 to 2008), an astronomical number of coronations, 237 weeks of rank as world number one (from February 2004 to August 2008)... Enough to cement his place in the history books of his sport, or even of sport itself. But also in the hearts of tennis fans. Because facetious Federer has become a kind of ideal son-in-law, his hair cut without the slightest strand sticking out, a model family man thanks also to the balance brought to him by his wife Mirka, who has accompanied him everywhere since their meeting in 2000 and masterfully manages his career.

The rascal who shared his room between trophies and lavish posters of Pamela Anderson now has the cantor of fashion and "good taste" Anna Wintour in his entourage. The purity of his technique is complemented by his pace off the court, which is always impeccable. His good nature makes him one of the most agreeable and sympathetic people in an interview. On the circuit, everyone highlights his availability, his kindness or even his playfulness. Good in all respects without being smooth in sum. Even his number one opponent, Rafael Nadal, refers to their rivalry as *"an honor and a privilege"*. Long gone are the days of blonde locks. Federer the gentle rebel has made his transformation one of the most beautiful stories of his generation.