

# Citi Open

Wednesday, August 4, 2021  
Washington D.C.

## Steve Johnson

Press Conference



S. JOHNSON/A. De Minaur

6-7, 6-4, 6-2

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

**Q. Tell me about your composure out there today.**

STEVE JOHNSON: Yeah, I felt like I was playing well. Just didn't have the tiebreaker go my way. Didn't get discouraged and get down on myself.

Came back, played a good second set. Got out to an early lead in the third. Had a big hold at 3-2 in the third, was able to get that second break, which was awesome, at 4-2. I was able to serve it out.

All in all a good day of tennis.

**Q. Given the start to your season, I believe you're 8-5 since the French Open, what is clicking for you so well right now?**

STEVE JOHNSON: There's a few things. I've never been a quick starter by any stretch of the imagination in any of my years. I just need matches. I need to kind of get in that rhythm and routine. So for me it was definitely longer just with the COVID, didn't play much at the beginning of the year, with our daughter and everything. Didn't want to kind of get stuck in the situation that happened in Australia this year.

Now that we're in the States, the crowds are back, we've all been kind of itching for this moment. It just feels like I'm hitting my stride at the right time.

**Q. Is it a comfort level just having fans in the stands, the energy? Is that what was missing for you, and may be one of the factors?**

STEVE JOHNSON: Yeah, 100%. I'm not somebody that -- I love the game of tennis, love the sport. Without the fans, it's a bit dull, it really is. Good, bad, indifferent... For a lot of the guys probably, but for me it's a big thing having

the fans. Seeing the crowds full here at Citi Open is a welcome sight for me, that's for sure.

**Q. You played Ramanathan yesterday and in the Newport finals. In Newport he won the first set, closer in score. Your assessment of his game? What is it like playing someone who is constantly serve-volleying on every point?**

STEVE JOHNSON: He plays a different game compared to most of the guys now. It takes a while to get kind of used to that because he just plays an unorthodox game for today's standards.

But he's very good at what he does. Put me in some tough positions. I thought he played really well. Just I was able to kind of definitely get a good start in that breaker and kind of run away with it. That was good composure by me after losing serve for the match yesterday. Was able to regroup and take it in two.

**Q. Do you enjoy that type of player?**

STEVE JOHNSON: Yeah, I enjoy it. Not saying that it's something that I'm very good at, but when you know a guy is going to serve and volley a vast majority of the time, you can kind of play a little differently. With his hands and skill set at the net, it doesn't make it any easier by any stretch.

**Q. A couple of young guys in their early 20s, Brooksby, Nakashima, what are they going to be going through here? What is that experience like when you're doing a lot of things for the first time, trying to get your feet wet on tour?**

STEVE JOHNSON: Yeah, I think it's great. These kids, they're good. They're very good. Speaking from my perspective, the first year there's a lot to learn but there's also a lot to enjoy about it. A lot of firsts, for that matter.

I think the second and third years are definitely always the hardest years just because you're defending. You've done well at tournaments, now you're going back to them expecting to do well, both personally and people on the outside.



I'm excited for these young kids. Both great kids. Don't know Jensen as much as Brandon. Brandon is a stud. Happy to see him succeed. I think he plays Denis tomorrow so that will be a battle.

**Q. The USTA announced qualifying for the US Open would be closed to the general public in order to protect the athletes. Three days later the main draw is at 100% capacity. Do you believe that's protecting you? Do you think it's fair?**

STEVE JOHNSON: I'm not the arbitrator of what's fair and not fair. Me, my perspective, look, we've had a lot of confusing COVID rules the last 18 months, especially last six months. I've stopped really trying to guess because half the rules make absolutely zero sense, it's strictly an optical thing that I think is absolutely asinine really.

I mean, I'm the right guy to probably get a quote from, but I'm the wrong guy to give an impartial decision.

Look, I think there should be fans at every stadium. I think we've shown in the States that you can do it and it's safe. There should be fans. Everybody knows the risks. Everybody is willing to do what they want to do. That's what makes America America. Everyone has their own choice to do whatever they want.

If they want to come watch tennis, they should be allowed to. If they feel unsafe, they shouldn't. There should be fans there the entire time. Again, it's one of those questions why week one and not week two? Why is it any different?

I've stopped trying to get those answers because it just makes me more confused than anything.

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