

Citi Open

Wednesday, August 3, 2022

Washington D.C.

Frances Tiafoe

Press Conference



F. TIAFOE/C. Eubanks

6-3, 7-6

THE MODERATOR: Last year you played Eubanks in the US Open. You got by in four sets. Tough match. This year, seems you are still keeping this record and making progress. How do you feel about coming back to play and win this match again?

FRANCES TIAFOE: No, Chris played really well against me in the Open last year. I was actually playing really good tennis going into the Open. He served exceptionally well. My first time playing him, so I didn't really know his game that well.

Plays a lot on the challenger circuit, so I haven't really seen him play so much. Yeah, he showed up and played a high level last year at the Open.

Today I was much more ready and knew kind of how he played and shots he likes to hit. I thought I came out playing really well.

Second set he served really well, and I was lucky to get out of there in two sets. Happy with the win. Happy I get to see another day.

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

Q. I have noticed you have been playing some more doubles. How does doubles play help you in your singles game?

FRANCES TIAFOE: I think pretty good. I mean, coming to the net. Yeah, I mean, serving and volleying, kind of all those kind of things.

Returns, helps me sharpen the returns up a little more. It's good. Coming to the tournament, I didn't play till Wednesday here. Play doubles on Tuesday. Get used to the courts rather than just practicing on the practice courts and kind of get that feel and get to be in pressure situations. I think it correlates, for sure.

I'm happy with it, happy we got a big win yesterday, and, yeah, me and Demon still alive.

Q. The other day you referenced the pressure, the expectations, some of the distractions that could come with playing here. You mentioned you want to be locked in this week. Do you feel so far it's been a business week?

FRANCES TIAFOE: Yeah, it's definitely a lot. I had like 56 tickets coming today. I keep telling my agent, Yeah, this is the last one, last one. Someone comes out of the woodwork.

It's good. I had 56 reasons why I wanted to win today. A lot of people came to see me play and hopefully win.

No, I love being here and love playing. Yeah, it's never easy. It's definitely easier to play other places than here.

Q. A quarterfinal birth in this tournament has been elusive to this opportunity. What would sort of a continuing on and a deep run mean for you?

FRANCES TIAFOE: Huge. I mean, I think the closer, closer you get to the business end of the week, I think big points, big opportunities. Playing here in D.C., honestly, I mean, it could be if it was a 250 or whatever, it's here in D.C., 500, I mean, to win this tournament would mean the world to me. I have been coming to this tournament since I was four years old. To have my name around the stadium would mean a lot to me.

Q. I was just going to ask you if you have a memory of the first time you came to this tournament. But you just said you were four. So I can't imagine you remember. But what is your first memory of coming here as a spectator in the stands?

FRANCES TIAFOE: I'm seeing young Lleyton, Agassi, old Agassi (laughter) at that particular time. Legends. I mean, I saw Delo when he was super young winning '08, '09. Nalbandian. So many great players that I looked up to.



It was super cool. Even, I mean, current, I'm pro now but even having Rafa here is pretty crazy for Rafa to play the tournament one time. I mean, I see a lot of people coming and playing the tournament and enjoying my city.

Everyone says how great the city is every time they come. That means a lot to me. This is a great event.

Q. I want your thoughts on the interaction with fans here at the Citi Open. Seems like there is a decent amount of access fans have to players. Is it fun, too much, overwhelming, cool? How would you describe?

FRANCES TIAFOE: It's good and bad. I mean, I'm used to it. I know that's just how it is and whatever. But, yeah, like for tonight, me trying to come here was quite a lot from the locker room area over here.

I mean, for me, it's different. I'm a hometown guy. Super excited. Oh, we got to watch you play and you're all over.

But, I mean, maybe, I mean, soon they are probably going to have to make it a little easier for the players, because having better and better player names coming here and they want to feel like they can come and go as they like. The fanfare is great, but being on the flip side, being a kid, I love the opportunity to be rubbing elbows with every pro that walks by. You feel so close to them. It's really cool. I kind of get both sides of it.

Q. You are on a nice run, obviously Atlanta and going back to Wimbledon and this week of course. Curious how you gauge where you are at going into the US Open.

FRANCES TIAFOE: Yeah, I'm finally starting to play really well again. I was struggling there for a little bit. Injured earlier this year. I was struggling. Wasn't playing terribly, but wasn't playing to where I was at the end of last year.

From Wimbledon on, I thought I was playing really good tennis, having a lot of great wins. To get those kind of big momentum things again. I think Wimbledon helped me, getting fourth round at Wimbledon, and then playing two good matches last week at Atlanta, get in the semis, I feel confident going into here. We will see how tomorrow goes.

Q. You get this question, you and the other Americans all the time, obviously it's cliché about Americans and men's tennis in terms of a major, it's been a long time. Curious, outside of the big three obviously, is there anything you would put that down to, or do you feel like the window is kind of coming up for you guys at this point?

FRANCES TIAFOE: Yeah, again, that question is asked so much. It's like I don't think it's a flag issue. I think it's a Novak, Rafa, Federer issue. You know, I mean, I think they are a big problem for everyone.

You know, Fritz won a Masters Series, Reilly made final of a Masters Series last year. Those two guys are in the top 20. Fritz should have made semis at Wimbledon, beating Rafa. I'm making good runs in slams.

I mean, I don't think we are very far off. I think we are all playing some great tennis. Tommy is playing some great tennis, as well. It's only a matter of time. I mean, draws are opening up more and more. You know, I mean, I see someone making semi, final, maybe winning one next couple of years. Why not?

Q. Speaking of Americans, Christopher obviously a guy you know pretty well. You guys seem to kind of build off of each other's play, leveling up, especially in that second set. His growth, how important has that been just kind of like rounding out this stable of American guys fighting and challenging to move up the rankings?

FRANCES TIAFOE: I want to see him get in the top 100. I think his game is so much better than what his ranking says.

I think he's got a great serve, really great forehand. He's struggling to get in the top 100. I want to see him do well. I really like Chris. Talks a lot, but, no, I really like the guy.

Hopefully he can start playing some really good tennis. He definitely has a good level. You saw today. I thought he played a good level. It's all between the ears.

Q. Feels like you have been trending towards this level of consistency for the past season and a half or so. Other than health, would you attribute anything else to this consistency you have been able to maintain?

FRANCES TIAFOE: I'm just more locked in, and also I'm enjoying it a bit more. For a while there, yeah, I mean, just kind of like I was like I want to do well right now. I'm kind of letting the game come to me, just playing, and I know what I'm able to do.

I think it's just going out there and doing it. Wherever the chips fall, they fall. I feel sometimes you try to force the issue. That's when you become your own problem.

So yeah, I'm just kind of doing me, and, yeah, let my racquet kind of do its thing.

