

Mubadala Citi DC Open

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Washington D.C.

Taylor Fritz

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. Welcome back to D.C. Congratulations on Atlanta. Last year you had to retire in your match because of the heat and the humidity. Just wondering what you have done differently to prepare for the conditions here in D.C. this year.

TAYLOR FRITZ: I mean, it's not so much what I have, I guess, done differently. Last year I had like a stress fracture in my foot, so after Wimbledon I had to put myself in a boot for a couple of weeks. Then I just, like, figured I'd come here and play and kind of try to play myself back into shape.

Even though I had been trying to do stuff, like, in the gym, I just didn't have the reps of, like, playing on court and the tennis just, like, fitness.

So it was really hot last year in that match, and it's not that surprising, I guess, that my fitness wasn't there kind of just after not being able to do anything for a bit. So this year obviously I have been able to play continuously. I did a lot of big emphasis on like the cardio and fitness and just normal training and was able to play last week. Last week was extremely hot, as well, in Atlanta. I think that I'm in just a much better place, for sure.

Q. Congratulations on Atlanta. You mentioned a little bit last year when asked about kind of the state of American tennis that everybody has kind of got their own lane and their own career to worry about. This men's field this year is much more packed with Americans than it was last year. Even though you've got to play your own game, is there something about having guys that you see both here Stateside and on tour that you're more familiar with than some of the other international players? Does that give you an advantage at all knowing their games a bit more?

TAYLOR FRITZ: I wouldn't say that. I don't think there is necessarily an advantage if I'm playing the other American guys. I think it can always go the either way, because the same can be said about they know my game really well

too. So it is what it is.

There is maybe always a little bit of added pressure when you're playing the guys, because we're friends. At the end of the day, we do want to beat each other (smiling).

Yeah, it is what it is, but it is cool to kind of see I guess the improvements from last year, you know, where coming here with Frances and I both in the top 10. We weren't at this time last year and a lot of other guys that are ranked significantly higher than they were this time last year.

Q. Congrats on Atlanta. I thought the final was played at a really high level against a guy, Vukic, who's played a lot of challengers, a lot of quallies this year. Chris Eubanks has obviously ascended playing a lot of challengers. Does that speak to the depth in the men's game, or do you think there are just some players at that level who have a particular game to trouble guys on the main tour?

TAYLOR FRITZ: I mean, in tennis, like, confidence is just a really -- I think people underestimate how much of a difference it can make. People can just start playing really well, and a lot of people that are ranked 50 to 100, which I guess you said Banks previously to I guess Mallorca, that was his ranking range, and Vukic as well last week, I think he came into the week ranked around 76, something like that, so a lot of these people are very capable of playing that level if they kind of just get going and get some confidence.

I mean, Banks is a great exactly. He won Mallorca, and the way he was playing at Wimbledon just off the confidence, he was playing insane. He was playing easily, easily top-10 level. That's how it happens.

Same thing with last week. Vukic was playing with a lot of confidence. He beat a lot of good players, and the court definitely suited his game well. He was serving incredibly well and playing at a much higher level than the ranking.

It's just confidence. Once you get a couple matches going, you just start playing, like, a lot better.



Q. Congratulations on your win in Atlanta. What would you say you kind of want to take from that win in Atlanta and kind of apply it towards this week as far as your game goes?

TAYLOR FRITZ: I mean, I'd say just like the confidence of winning, you know, back-to-back-to-back matches. It feels good.

I think one thing I did well was in a lot of matches I won big points, I played big points well. Especially in quarterfinal, semifinals, I thought I did that well.

Just the whole game is completely going to change this week, because we're switching balls to a ball that, like, nobody has ever used before, so it plays entirely differently. Last week I could just bunt my backhand and it would shoot off the court. This week it's a much softer ball that requires a lot more injection of pace. So I feel like the forehand is probably going to be more important for me this week as opposed to last week it was the backhand.

Game-wise, a lot of things are going to change, but mentality-wise, just like the feeling of winning and playing the big points well I think is something I can kind of bring in from last week.

Q. I think this is your third straight year coming to this tournament. What exactly is it about this tournament that you love and the players embrace?

TAYLOR FRITZ: It's awesome. It's obviously part of this US Open Series. It makes a lot of sense to play, because, you know, we're going to stay on the East Coast pretty much for the remainder of the schedule up until US Open. I want to get used to the heat (smiling).

Yeah, they do a great job here kind of just making the players feel welcome. Yeah, as long as the heat doesn't get too crazy, I always enjoy being here.

Q. You mentioned Frances. This is his home turf. This is his home city. What have you seen from him in terms of growth? Obviously you're both in the top 10. You probably build off each other in a sense of helping American tennis.

TAYLOR FRITZ: Yeah, I mean, Frances has improved a lot. Obviously the results he's having is, like, I guess I have always expected it. He's, you know, since last year has shown that he deserves to be a top-10 player and that's his level.

Yeah, he's just become a lot more, I guess, consistent, like, week in, week out, beating people he's supposed to beat,

beating high-level players consistently. Yeah, it's kind of what I have always, I guess, expected and known he's capable of.

Q. When you're preparing, do you prepare ever, kind of develop a particular weapon to go against a particular player?

TAYLOR FRITZ: There's certain matches where I know that I'll be using, I guess, certain patterns maybe more than others. It's a thing that I'm able to do, because I do feel like I'm solid off of both sides, forehand and backhand, so I can kind of use maybe one more than the other in a match based on the matchup, you know.

Someone doesn't have a very good backhand, then I'm probably going to be more okay with just kind of playing my backhand cross and working that pattern. If someone has a really good backhand, I'll probably be looking to change line, be aggressive with the forehand a bit more, stuff like that.

I try not to change too many parts of my game, because at the end of the day, if I'm serving well and being aggressive, none of that stuff really matters, but I guess specific point structure, instances, I might be working with different parts of my game based off of my opponent.

Q. Just coming off Atlanta, I think you answered this a little bit, but you talk about the importance of the confidence and the habit of winning. At the same time, do you often feel like, well, I should be winning a 250 in Atlanta?

TAYLOR FRITZ: Yeah, I mean, I'm happy, really happy to win a title. It definitely felt great. But, yeah, it's not the same feeling as winning, like, Indian Wells or winning Tokyo. You know, it's not.

But there is a lot of confidence you can take away from being the 1 seed, having that expectation and still being able to win with the expectation, because that's also never easy when you're playing with all the pressure on you to come through. So there is a lot of positives to take out and obviously feeling confident and coming into this week.

Q. There was a lot of speculation before the Netflix series came out whether it would expand the fan base for tennis. What has your experience been? Do you have the sense people know who you are, you're getting more attention based on being on the show?

TAYLOR FRITZ: I think that it's helped grow the fan base. I think, you know, there has been times, more so when I'm in the U.S., where I'm definitely not used to anyone



recognizing me ever, and if they do, I assume that person is a really, really big tennis fan (smiling).

There has been times where people have obviously not been tennis fans, and they don't know me as, I guess, the tennis player. They know me as the person that's on the show. So I think that's cool, because that's all people that, you know, might pay attention to tennis or get into tennis now that previously weren't.

So it's been cool to see and have some of those interactions, because it's telling me that there are maybe people being converted into tennis fans, which is great.

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