

Mubadala Citi DC Open

Thursday, August 1, 2024

Washington D.C.

Ben Shelton

Press Conference



B. SHELTON/B. Nakashima

7-6, 7-6

THE MODERATOR: Ben, what was the key against Brandon?

BEN SHELTON: Yeah, I think it's really important against Brandon to serve well 'cause he has such a great serve, hits his spots well. He is solid from the baseline. Just good all-around player. Tough guy to play against.

I was really happy with the way I managed the match today, managed the tiebreak as well.

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. Your match in the previous round ended this morning. What did you have to do to get yourself prepared to play two long sets in the heat?

BEN SHELTON: I mean, you just try to get down as quick as possible, get to sleep. It's not easy. Finishing at 2 a.m., I was probably asleep at 4. It's pretty unfortunate getting scheduled as a day match after finishing at 2 a.m. But it is what it is. It's tennis. I asked to play night again, but it wasn't possible.

I came back here and got ready as best as possible, went out there and fought. Nothing's ever going to feel perfect on the court. You're not going to feel 100%.

It's important to just take what you get and go out there and do your best. I thought I did a great job managing my energy levels today and managing the match.

Q. In your post match you referenced family in the region, some history with the region. What is your background with this area?

BEN SHELTON: Yeah, my dad's older brother has lived here most of his adult life. His wife was working in DC for 30 years. He has five or six kids who all have young kids. My little cousins were at the match yesterday and today.

That was pretty cool for me. There's a lot of newborns and kids under five, kids that maybe I've only met once or haven't met.

To be able to be around them for the first couple times, them to watch me play, was cool.

Q. Past their bedtime last night.

BEN SHELTON: I can't believe their parents let them stay and watch. Family...

Q. Shapovalov next. Rematch of a pretty good meeting. What are you looking forward to?

BEN SHELTON: I'm really looking forward to playing Shapo again. We had a pretty epic five-setter on Court 1 at Wimbledon. He's an explosive player, electric player. Left-handed, which brings a lot of challenges.

I'm looking forward to the matchup. He's definitely going to be coming after me. Same with me.

Q. The quick turnaround and the heat, those are two challenges you're dealing with. Which is the tougher one for yourself?

BEN SHELTON: I think it's a combination of both. Last night had to deal with the humidity, playing in the middle of the night. Today was a quick turnaround and the heat. A lot of challenges thrown my way.

Like I said, it's part of the sport. I grew up in Florida. I'm used to this type of weather. Yeah, I did a great job of recovering as best as I could and managing my energy out there.

I never expect to be at 100% when I go out there on the tennis court. There's just too many variables. So it's important to know what you have on the day when you go out there to compete, do your best to use those tools that you do have.

I thought I maximized what I had today. Yeah, just happy with the way I did that.



Q. You're obviously a really explosive player. You have a good serve as well. As you look to try to improve, what are some ways you're trying to improve your return, your break percentage?

BEN SHELTON: What is my break percentage?

Q. I think it's 15.1% for 2024.

BEN SHELTON: Yeah, okay.

I think it's something that I consistently try to improve on. I was talking to Reilly Opelka, and the biggest servers on tour with the best stats are usually around 7% or 8%. That's something that I'm improving, working on. Yeah, I'm out there on the practice court just as much as anyone else.

I want to work on my volleys, coming forward, attacking game style, my forehand. My movement is something that's improved a lot this season. The return is a piece that I'm working on as well.

If I'm at 15%, there's definitely a lot of room for improvement. I think it's getting better every year, so...

FastScripts by ASAP Sports