

Mubadala Citi DC Open

Thursday, August 1, 2024

Washington D.C.

Frances Tiafoe

Press Conference



F. TIAFOE/A. Kovacevic

7-6, 4-6, 6-3

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

Q. Tested again. What was ultimately the difference in the third set?

FRANCES TIAFOE: Again, good serving. I served well, put good serving pressure on the other guy. I played a great game at 4-3. That 4-3 game was kind of everything. I upped my tendency there a little bit, started making some returns, made him play. I played some tough ones there. I hit an unbelievable shot to break there.

After that I was able to open my shoulders and close the match out. Could have been a little easier there after the first. I had a lot of opportunities there in that second set. How the game goes. But ultimately happy with my performance.

Q. Crowd sensed that moment, the opportunity to break in the 4-3 game...

FRANCES TIAFOE: Yeah, yeah, crowd was definitely with me. The momentum was definitely there. It was definitely time to get a break there. Happy I did. Happy I made it and move on.

Q. Looking ahead to tomorrow, just the setting, Friday night, quarterfinal. Are you looking forward to the opportunity, maybe third time is a charm, to change the narrative?

FRANCES TIAFOE: No question. No question. I want that really bad. Let the best man win out there, whether Rinderknech or Andrey. I don't really care who I'm playing, I just want to win.

If it's an Andrey, great. Play a good match, win against a quality player in Andrey, that will be really big for me, especially right now. Every win is huge.

I really like these two last wins, two tough wins. I want to go deep here and get over that quarterfinal losing Friday night. I've had some tough ones. Lost to the last two champions the last two Fridays, so...

Yeah, hopefully that changes tomorrow.

Q. Your conditioning in the third stood out. Would you say that's the case, that you were able to get to every ball he was trying to paint deep in the corners?

FRANCES TIAFOE: Yeah, I was just trying to make it tough. I was like, Let him beat me. I feel pretty good physically. It didn't feel so hot. I don't know what the temp was at the time. Humidity is definitely up there.

Yeah, I'm trying to just get as used to the heat as possible. That's why I play these two weeks, to try to get used to it.

Yeah, I mean, I back myself and my fitness, for sure.

Q. I think Alex trained at JTCC in high school.

FRANCES TIAFOE: Yeah, I've known him for a long time. He was at JTCC for a little under a year when we were young, 13. Obviously in New York a lot. Trained a lot in Florida. We know each other pretty well. All the American guys hang out.

We know each other pretty well. We don't practice all that often. Probably practiced two, three times. Yeah, he's a great player. Just coming out of college. Really getting a lot of headway. He showed it tonight. He had some brilliant stuff tonight.

Q. At the beginning of the week you talked about really wanting to string together victories. How are you feeling about where you're at two matches in?

FRANCES TIAFOE: Yeah, look, I mean, I kind of like that it was two tough matches that I won not playing incredibly well, just finding ways to win. That's what it takes to be one of the better players in the world. That's what I've been doing the last couple yours.



Feels good to kind of just get through these no matter playing unbelievable or not. Doing a great job of using the crowd, doing a great job of competing and staying in those moments, staying tough in those moments and backing myself.

It's celebrate those wins more of beating guys you're supposed to beat rather than looking for the popcorn matches with the best guys in the world. You got to beat these kind of guys to get to those popcorn matches. This is pretty big.

Q. Tournament social posted a photo here when you were 16. If you could tell that 16-year-old anything right now, what would you tell him?

FRANCES TIAFOE: I would tell him that he's done some pretty cool stuff in his career. I would also tell him that he can do a lot. He's pretty special and he can do a lot in this game.

Never get too satisfied probably. There are times in my career where I've definitely gotten satisfied and complacent. That's probably the biggest thing I'd tell him.

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