

Mubadala Citi DC Open

Friday, August 2, 2024

Washington D.C.

Ben Shelton

Press Conference



B. SHELTON/D. Shapovalov

7-6, 6-6 (default)

THE MODERATOR: First 500 level semifinal since Tokyo, an event that you won. How are you feeling at the moment?

BEN SHELTON: Yeah, I feel good. I'm happy with the way that I've been playing, competing, managing my body. Just happy to be through to the semifinals.

Thought I did a lot of great things on the court today. Yeah, to straight-set match wins in a row, can't complain that much.

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. Can you tell us what you were thinking with the episode with Shapovalov at the end of the match, what you thought was going on. Did you know what was going on?

BEN SHELTON: Yeah, I don't really have anything to say. It's unfortunate that a high-level match like that, such a great match that was highly contested, just an all-out war, ended like that. You never want to see it.

Yeah, past that, I don't have anything to say.

Q. What are you thinking in that moment as everything is going down with him? Did you realize what was happening?

BEN SHELTON: Yeah, I just wanted to make sure that I was ready for the next point if I needed to hit serves. Wasn't really sure what was going to happen. I don't want to just be sitting around for a bunch of minutes, then we keep playing and I'm not ready to go, so...

Q. It seemed like you wanted to keep on playing. What were you saying when that was happening?

BEN SHELTON: No, I mean, it is what it is. I think it was a

tough situation all around. I don't really have any other comments on that situation.

Just looking forward to the semifinals. Love to talk about the tennis or the tennis that's going to be played tomorrow. I just kind of want to let it rest.

Q. You've had an eventful week from the late night to the heat yesterday. How are you feeling going into the semifinals here?

BEN SHELTON: Yeah, I'm happy. I think it usually just takes one, two, three matches to get rolling and feel confident in a season. Two out of my last three tournaments I've made it to the fourth round of the tournament, so to speak. The more matches that I'm able to string together, the better I play.

I mean, I saw that at the end of the year last year. As soon as I started having tournaments, winning four, five, six matches in a row, then my best tennis started to come out.

I'm happy with where I'm at right now but not satisfied. Hopefully I can keep it going this week and keep that momentum into the next four weeks, as well.

Q. The one match prior against Flavio going back a couple months ago. Thoughts on facing him tomorrow?

BEN SHELTON: Yeah, I'm excited. That match in Geneva, I ended up losing in three sets. I was up a set and a break, in the driver's seat. A tough one to lose.

But we're good friends. We'll look like twins out there tomorrow, wearing the same clothes. He's been playing great this week. I'm excited whenever I get to play someone who's in good form. I think the better the person that I'm playing plays, the better I play.

I'm ready to go tomorrow and happy that I have another opportunity to play here in DC.

Q. You've played a lot of tennis, a packed couple of days. Did you feel any fatigue during today's match?



BEN SHELTON: It started to go away. Definitely felt it yesterday during the match. It's weird, I'm getting through the tournament, but I'm getting better and better as it goes on. The first two days were the toughest. Now I feel that I have the time to do the right things after every match to get my body right, which is usually the case in most tournaments. Lately it hasn't been the case.

Wimbledon, French Open, here, I've been in tough situations where I'm playing in the middle of the night, coming back the next day, or playing, then doubles, singles the next day at a slam. I've had a lot of situations like that lately.

I feel prepared. I think that's kind of come out this week with the way I bounce back.

Q. You talked earlier about wanting to use this tournament as a steppingstone for the US Open. Have you found the game you wanted to?

BEN SHELTON: I don't think I've ever found the game I've wanted to yet. A work in progress. I have a lot of things that need to be refined.

I think I've taken some positive steps this week in terms of my execution percentage at net, how I feel about my volleying. I thought I've served extremely well. I'm putting myself in position to break serve.

I've certainly had a lot of opportunities go by in this tournament, 15-40s and 30-40s that I could have broken. I think the number of times that I'm getting into the return game is a number that I like.

Q. How are you feeling about the tennis aspect of your game, the aspects you are looking to improve? You're feeling good about the net and the tactics that you've been doing thus far. Could you expand on that a little bit more.

BEN SHELTON: I think for me it's important that I have a clear game plan going into each match, but I don't let the other guy's game or what I want to do against him consume me.

At the end of the day I'm attacking player. I need to use my strengths, not always focus on the other side of the net, try to defend what that guy has, but make him defend what I have. I'm doing a better job of finding that balance.

You have to do both in tennis. You can't redline all the time or just be defensive all the time. Neither works at the highest level. I think that's something this week I can

continue to improve on.

All the individual stuff is getting better. There's times in matches where I think I'm fighting a little bit what I should be doing or what I could be doing to make it easier on myself.

Q. You played Shapovalov twice. Different conditions here and Wimbledon. Looking at both the matches, can you compare what was similar or different?

BEN SHELTON: Yeah, I thought this match, the court is jumping a lot higher. It's more live. I'd say the average rally ball is more around ribcage to shoulder height than between the waist and knees at Wimbledon, which totally changes the match.

The heat is a factor here. We're sweating a lot, trying to cool down on the changeovers.

I thought I did a great job of using my serve effectively. You can serve 140 miles an hour fairly easy here - or I can (smiling). It's a little bit different at Wimbledon.

There's things that I actually did better at Wimbledon. But I managed myself better here to win the first two sets. I could have let the first set slip away pretty easily, which is exactly what happened in the first set at Wimbledon. I was able to bounce back.

It was kind of a back-and-forth war, trying to find my rhythm there. Here I just did a little bit better job of keeping it together.

Sorry I didn't answer the questions you guys wanted (smiling).

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