

# Western & Southern Open

Wednesday, August 18, 2021

Cincinnati, Ohio, USA

## John Isner

### Press Conference



J. ISNER/J. Sinner

5-7, 7-6, 6-4

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

**Q. Three sets, two-and-a-half hours, packed crowd. Let's get your thoughts on the match and how you were able to pull it off.**

JOHN ISNER: Yeah, a good question. I really think the crowd helped me a lot. There was a time in the second set where I was pretty tired out there and wasn't feeling too great. But I also know that's when I'm actually sort of most dangerous, too, luckily because I have my serve.

Even if I'm sort of dragging out there, I can at least keep the match even and just give myself a chance. That's what I did today, and the crowd helped me a lot. It was a good match. I'm very happy with how I competed and of course happy to get the win.

**Q. When do you feel exactly the match turned, you felt, okay, I've got a good chance of winning this match?**

JOHN ISNER: Well, I think it turned at 4-2, him in the tiebreaker. He missed a dropshot that, you know, he didn't have to cut it so close, because I was behind the baseline. I wasn't going to get to it.

Then I had two serves. Then I was up 5-4, so that got me to 5-4 returning in the tiebreaker, and I felt really good at that moment in time.

**Q. After such a difficult past couple of years, COVID and everything, how did you feel having that crowd, feeling back to normal a little bit?**

JOHN ISNER: Great question. No, that was awesome. It's what we missed last year, for sure. It's what this tournament brings, as well, a great crowd, great enthusiastic crowd. It was really special.

**Q. Now you've got a very tricky opponent, Benoit**

**Paire. How do you prepare for a match like that, not knowing what you're going to get? He's kind of tricky, on and off, you see how he reacts on court. How do you prepare for a match like that?**

PLAYER NAME: Well, yeah, look, he's definitely a tricky player, a mercurial personality out there. He has the ability to play unbelievable tennis. He hasn't done that this year, for the most part, but maybe he is this tournament.

So he's an incredible talent and has so much variety in his game. He's super fun to watch.

The last time we played on a hard court, off the top of my head, if I remember, couple years ago, he beat me. He's a great player. He does so much, so many things very well. It will be a very good match.

**Q. Do you feel maybe like with the results that you're getting that you'll be maybe able to finish in the top 15, top 20 by the end of the season?**

JOHN ISNER: Well, we'll see. I have only this tournament, US Open, and Indian Wells, that's it. I'm not playing any other tournaments after that.

I told myself I was going to focus on the big tournaments this year, and that's what I have done, by and large. If that's the case, then I think this is only my maybe ninth or tenth event, I'll only end up playing 12 events this year, sort of like Roger Federer's schedule.

But I'm definitely playing well. If I don't end up in top 20, top 15, whatever it is, I definitely know I am top 20, top 15 caliber. So I don't worry about rankings right now. Just happy to compete.

**Q. I was just wondering if you could elaborate on what you think the margins for Jannik Sinner are? How do you see him? What kind of player do you think he can become?**

JOHN ISNER: That's a good question, because I was just telling my coach about 20, 30 minutes ago that he has everything. He has all the tools to do amazing things in



this game.

He's got a great head on top of his shoulders. He's icy out there. He doesn't get too high or too down. He keeps his head throughout the whole match. That's something pretty special for someone who just turned 20 years old.

He hasn't even come close to reaching his peak. I expect him to be winning some very, very big tournaments in the future. I know he hears that, right, and it's a lot, there is a lot of pressure on him, but he seems like someone that can handle it well and definitely one of the bright young stars of our game and one of the stars that is going to carry our sport for many years to come.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports