

Western & Southern Open

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Cincinnati, Ohio, USA

Taylor Fritz

Press Conference



T. FRITZ/A. Rublev

6-7, 6-2, 7-5

THE MODERATOR: Congrats a lot. It's your first quarterfinal at Cincinnati. How do you feel now?

TAYLOR FRITZ: Feels great. I feel just with how the race is and the rankings, I'd say I think a lot about that. It's really tight. I needed to have a good result at one of these tournaments. So quarterfinals helps a lot.

Obviously I want to go even further, semis, finals, win the title. But to put another Masters quarterfinal on the record for the year helps a lot.

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

Q. How do you find the balance between wanting to improve your ranking and...

TAYLOR FRITZ: I think people talk about not thinking about that because it makes them nervous, and maybe they don't perform as well. I think I perform just as well or better under the pressure of it.

So when I look at the rankings today and see that, you know, Rublev was dropping points and if I win this match then I can go ahead of him and it kind of has a lot of impact on the rankings, on the current rankings if I win or lose the match against him, I don't think that bothers me at all. I think it motivates me even more.

Q. How does that play in when you drop that opening set? What happens to your mindset at that point?

TAYLOR FRITZ: Well, you know, once I'm in the match, I'm not thinking about those kind of things. I'm just thinking about the match. I mean, mindset-wise, it was just about analyzing why I think I lost the set, what things I need were working that I did well that I actually don't need to change in the next set, and what things I wanted to change.

So mindset-wise, I'm just in the match and I'm analyzing kind of what went wrong for me, you know. And not that

much went wrong for me. I played two bad points in the tiebreaker, but I feel like I got a little bit passive, because he was making some errors so I started playing a little safer, and I think that wasn't the right place.

So strategy coming out in the second was just kind of keep doing the same things I was doing on my serve, keep holding serve and just be a lot more aggressive on shots, not let him get so much time to get set up and feel comfortable in the rallies. That's kind of where my mind was at.

Q. This time last year you were outside the top 40. You had a few first-round losses coming into the US Open. How different do you feel as a player and as a person as well?

TAYLOR FRITZ: I mean, I was playing pretty bad this time last year (smiling). It's weird, because last year, up until -- I kind of just started playing really good tennis around when we played that late, late in the year, like October Indian Wells is kind of where it all started changing for me.

I started gaining confidence, playing really good. Up until that point, my ranking had dropped a ton. I was like 40 in the world, but I actually didn't think I played throughout the whole year was playing that bad. I actually put myself in more, like, deep positions in tournaments than ever.

You know, I had made some round of 16s at Masters, put myself in a lot of semifinals of 250s, and I just kept kind of losing that next match that would have helped the ranking would have helped me a lot.

So it was like I was just kind of losing a lot of important matches, but I felt like I was giving myself more opportunities than before.

So, you know, luckily, since that Indian Wells last year, I have just been capitalizing and gotten so much better at kind of playing those matches. I kind of approached this stretch this year as in like I have played really bad this time of the year in past years, but I just feel like a different player.



Q. The Wilson balls, I know you played mixed doubles when you were younger. Did you play with the women's balls then?

TAYLOR FRITZ: I can't remember, but, I mean, what is it you want to know?

Q. Well, just like if you have ever played with them.

TAYLOR FRITZ: Yeah, I have played with them before. They are lighter. They fly more. I can serve like 150 miles per hour with the girls' balls.

Yeah, they fly a bit more, they're a bit lighter. It makes sense, to be honest, I think the balls we use, Wilson, I think they are pretty heavy.

So like I think they can be, whenever I'm using the ATP or the Dunlop balls we use most of the year, and then I switch to the men's Wilson balls, they're heavy. It doesn't feel good on my arm, so I can't really imagine how it would feel for the women's players as well. I don't know.

Q. Swiatek was in here and she said she wishes she plays with the men's balls. She thinks it's too light.

TAYLOR FRITZ: I'm sure it's going to be different based off how people hit the ball, people's strokes, whatever. I just know that when I switch from the ball we normally use to the men's Wilson ball, it doesn't feel good on my arm, so I feel like if I'm saying that, then maybe some girls would also have the same issue playing with the balls. To each his own.

Q. When you are playing in an event like this, do you actively look for things away from tennis during the week to get out and do things?

TAYLOR FRITZ: Just don't have time. I just don't have time. I spend probably more time like doing like table work and stuff like outside of the court to make sure that I'm ready to play than I'd say like -- I wouldn't think there is many players that spend more time.

I do an hour on the physio table before every practice, before every warmup, 30 minutes in the gym. Just an hour and a half of stuff goes in to me even stepping on a court. And then I will do another hour and a half after the match, after the practices, ice baths.

There is just not enough time in the day for me to be able to go do stuff. Even if there was, I'm so exhausted, like I just want to sit in my room. If I get an hour of free time, I just want to play video games.

Q. Wondering what you have learned about going deep in these big events and what you have to do on and off the court to make sure you can do that consistently?

TAYLOR FRITZ: I mean, it's a couple of different things. You know, I have grown a lot as a player. I'm actually a much better player than I was before.

I think it also helps that there is not these roadblocks in the way, like when I was, you know, 18, 19, 20, when you win two matches at a Masters and you are unseeded and you are pretty much guaranteed to play Roger, Rafa, Andy, Novak, and they are pretty much unbeatable at the time (smiling).

So I think it makes it a little bit easier that, like I said, a combination of I'm a lot better of a player and these super-human players aren't in the draw (smiling).

Q. Knowing that these draws are more open, then, does that feel good?

TAYLOR FRITZ: Yeah, I mean, the thing is maybe they are not more open. They just seem more open to me because those guys at their peak were so, so good.

Just the way it worked was I wasn't, you know, I wasn't seeded before, I didn't have the ranking, so you're kind of just guaranteed you're going to run into one of those guys at some point. It definitely makes a difference.

There are still so many amazing players, so maybe it's just because I kind of grew up with them and I have known some of these guys for a long time like Rublev, like Zverev, like Medvedev, maybe they just seem more beatable to me than the guys that I idolized growing up.

You know what I mean? It's a mental thing maybe.

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