

Rolex Paris Masters

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Stefanos Tsitsipas

Press Conference



S. TSITSIPAS/K. Khachanov

6-3, 6-4

THE MODERATOR: Questions for Stef.

Q. As the day indoor season started, you start to have better results. How do you explain?

STEFANOS TSITSIPAS: How do I explain? Well, I was not playing good tennis before and I wasn't practicing too much. I had a few changes in my team and some other things that I changed, equipment and stuff like that.

Just trying new things. I wasn't in the right mindset. I wasn't in the same frame of mind in that period, and it cost me.

But it's okay, because I had to do these changes and try things. I just feel like it's one of those moments where you practice a lot. You stick to one thing that works well for you. You don't try to find solutions and answers in too many things. You just work around your biggest strengths and the biggest assets of your game.

Eventually, I guess, little by little, you get into that zone and that area of thriving a little bit more than before, and it also brings a little bit of comfort in your day, in your everyday practice and your everyday match situations.

I think that's what has happened. There is a little bit more comfort and there's a little bit more better understanding of how I can do things when these things are given to me.

Q. Tomorrow will be a match which will feature two of the most beautiful single-handed backhands in the game. I was wondering, going back to the original concept of your game, was this more of a choice of your character, the beauty, the aesthetics, the passion, the aggressiveness that you made the choice for this kind of a stroke than going for, like, maybe more pragmatic two-handed backhand?

STEFANOS TSITSIPAS: You would consider the

double-handed backhand pragmatic?

Q. Novak...

STEFANOS TSITSIPAS: Yeah, no, I understand, but there was no Serbian player before Novak that played double, was there?

Q. Bozoljac.

STEFANOS TSITSIPAS: Oh, yeah, he did. There you go.

Look, I feel like Novak has made it a shot that you can really see from him how good that shot can be. But regarding my situation, to me, one-handed backhand always felt like the classic shot. I saw it on TV. I thought, that's the classic shot.

That's how tennis was firstly played, and that's the classic shot that Sampras, one of my favorite players, played that shot. Well, at the time I was pretty young to watch Roger Federer matches, but I do remember him later when I was about six years old.

To me, it was a shot selection that I chose at eight years old. I kind of got stuck with it. I worked on it. I tried double-handed backhand.

I remember the day where I chose to play single-handed backhand. One of my coaches came on court -- not my main coach, one of the coaches of the club -- and told me, Stef, kinda decide. You're switching every day. On Mondays you play double and then on Tuesdays you switch to single. Come on, decide it. You are eight years old already, nine years old.

I don't know how old I was. He said, You've got to decide and stick to it.

I remember that day. I was driving back home with my father. He picked me up from practice, and I told him, You know what? I'm going to stick to a double-handed backhand. The next day I switched to a single-handed backhand once and for all. (Laughter.)

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I remember that day. Yeah. I don't think a double-handed backhand would look too good on me. Can you picture me today? (Smiling.) It's tough to picture it, isn't it?

Q. Yesterday you were speaking about the changes that you have made in the last few weeks. Would it be fair to use the word that when your father was not around that you sort of felt a little bit lost?

STEFANOS TSITSIPAS: Yeah, indeed. Well, you know, we all like to have a safety net around us. What I mean by that is have people that we know and feel familiar with, especially when we travel to all these countries around the world. We tend to really isolate from our origin where we come from and from our people, because we're, quite frankly, far away.

To have that safety net is very important when you're touring, when you have your people, people that you have started your journey with and people that perhaps recognize your talents, your strengths, your abilities more than any other person.

And to kind of push them away and, to not abandon them, but put them on the side for a bit, it can cause sometimes uncertainty and maybe doubt of, like, am I going to be able to pursue all of this on my own and kind of follow up on all this on my own?

Well, it's also kind of adulthood where, you know, it's important that you take your own steps to mature more and grow, not only as a player but as a person.

It was difficult being away from him, because I felt like there wasn't as much of a structure in my tennis on a day-to-day basis, and everything felt a little bit more loose than usual.

I think the ability of my father is to really kind of get on court and fix me, in a way, if something is not really quite going the way I want it to go. Or even in failure and in tough moments, he's still able to go in and he's refusing to leave the court if what we need to work on or fix is not fixed.

I feel like you can't get that with other coaches. That's the issue. I have had my fair share of working with other people. The only probably person I would ever want to have next to me to travel with me if it wasn't for my dad, it would be my coach back home. But unfortunately his situation doesn't allow him to travel and be with me.

So these are the only two options that I ever had, and my father was there for me. He took over my coach and did pretty much what he has been doing to me since I started

tennis.

It's just to follow up from that point.

Q. We saw you today pushing your game and go to the net with big success during the first set more I guess with nine points on ten. Is it something you want to use more?

STEFANOS TSITSIPAS: To come to the net?

Q. To come to the net, and you enjoy it and you want to use it more probably in your game?

STEFANOS TSITSIPAS: Yes, I do want to use it more. Have I been using it a lot or no, in your opinion?

Q. Today in the first set, you had ten times, I guess, and you made nine points on ten.

STEFANOS TSITSIPAS: Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah. I use it a lot. It's effective. I want to keep going like this.

Q. You won three matches in two sets against big opponents. How close, how far do you feel from your very, very best level?

STEFANOS TSITSIPAS: Well, the thing in all this is, I don't know what my very best level is. I had a pretty good level at the Australian Open this year. It was good. It wasn't my best, but it was very good.

Then I have played one of my best tennis in Nitto Finals in London years ago. And I kind of feel like every single tournament or every single chance that I get to be on the court, it's a new opportunity for me to show probably my best level ever.

I can't say with confidence what has been my most high, like, highest level that I have played in my year. Perhaps Nitto Finals or maybe even my Monte-Carlo run the first year that I won it was probably one of the best. But that's clay, that's not hard.

So are we deciding overall or surface-wise? There are a lot of factors to include. So I really don't know what my best level is. Every match that I get to play very good, I'm happy with.

I guess my very best level would be beating high-ranked players without losing a lot of games would probably be my best highest level. It has happened a few times in my career, not much, so I would probably consider that a very good match.

But honestly, my aim is not just the match; it's the whole week. I would probably answer that question once my career is done in the years to come, so it's better to answer that then.

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