

Nitto ATP Finals

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London, England, UK

Stefanos Tsitsipas

Press Conference



R. NADAL/S. Tsitsipas

6-4, 4-6, 6-2

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. A tough match out there tonight. You said this was the one you were most looking forward to in the preview press conferences. What did you learn about your character and the way you played tonight against Rafa?

STEFANOS TSITSIPAS: I played very hard in the second set and played with the right intentions, which gave me lots of opportunities. Quite disappointed with the third one. It didn't go as planned. I was rushing.

I don't even know what I was trying to do, honestly. Trying to be way, way too much aggressive. I was giving him free points without really, you know, himself doing much or hurting me from the back.

I should have handled it a little bit more clever and patiently, but it didn't happen. My serve was not there when I needed it, and these guys, you just have to be there. I wasn't fully present. I wasn't playing in the moment. Quite disappointed with that. But that's life.

Q. This is the last match of the season for you. A quite different season because of the pandemic. What would you say was "the" most difficult thing to cope with during these times of tournaments, in bubbles, sometimes with people at the stands or not?

STEFANOS TSITSIPAS: The bubble life itself. Why? I mean, it gets tiring after a while. Think of yourself sitting in a hotel room waiting for your match all day long, not having the ability to go anywhere.

Of course they try to entertain you with some things they put in the players lobby or players lounge. But people need space. It's difficult to be in your hotel, room service all day long. Not having the opportunity to see your friends or because of all these differences or -- you know, I have

lots of people that I connect with when I play tournaments.

It feels very -- to me, it feels very dark, and honestly, I'm not a person who sees the dark side of things. But this whole thing was very difficult to handle, to be honest with you.

I'm very happy that I didn't break down, and I'm sure if you ask other players they are going to respond the same way.

Technology obviously helps us connect easier than ever. We all know that. I think I'm grateful for that that I'm able to be with the people that I love every single day by giving them a call or FaceTiming them.

Nonetheless, it was what it was, and I think it's still going to be a thing for a while. It's a different world, I would say. I will describe it as a different world and we are very lonely.

Q. In the first and also at the beginning of the second set, it seemed like you had a lot of problems with your return. You won hardly any points. Afterwards you broke him two times in a row. Did you change anything there? What was your mindset like? It seemed to me like you were changing some things and it made him a bit nervous.

STEFANOS TSITSIPAS: What did I think? Just on my return, started thinking perhaps that I have broken better -- sorry. Rafa is not a bad server. He's a good server. But I have broken guys who are taller, stronger, have a way faster and more accurate serve.

I thought about this a little bit. I think it changed my mind. Had the opportunity to have few second serves and few serves that didn't hurt that much. Stayed in the rally. It all came at the right moment, at the right place at the right moment, and I'm gonna work on it.

I feel like I can break more times, to be honest with you. I feel like I can create more opportunities, and I'm going to keep growing for that and learn. I really hope fight more next time, because I was not happy with the way I fought today.

I was just too easy when I had to stay hard. Too easy to break.

Q. Last year you said that you played very calm at these championships because you had no expectations of how you would do there. You thought you'd do the same thing this year. Did you in fact play as calm or were you too tense?

STEFANOS TSITSIPAS: Good question. I was calm. I wanted to be pumped, as well. Certain moments of the match gives me that extra boost, you know, perseverance.

I think it was different atmosphere last year. Let's admit it. It wasn't the same.

Yeah, we were also playing with a crowd. We had the crowd by our side. I think the match can change a lot when you have the influence of the crowd.

Yeah, it's strange. I don't know. I wasn't able to maintain my game in the third set. What was different, I did try to stay calm and concentrated, but I seemed to make easy unforced errors when Rafa was persistent, and I could see that he's ready now to face me 100%. And I just gave it away. My focus wasn't there. I did try to stay calm, but how calm are you going to stay?

I think there were a few moments during the match where I felt a little bit annoyed. My shots were not working, and things weren't going as I wished for.

But overall my attitude was good. Moving on (smiling).

Q. Obviously this has just been the craziest and weirdest of years for everybody, but if you had to look back on 2020, how do you feel about the year for yourself? Then as you look forward, too, what will you be doing now that the season is finally over?

STEFANOS TSITSIPAS: For me, 2020 is going to be a very, I would say, unfulfilling year simply because of the situation that we had to face.

I will kind of see it as a huge gap in which we had to wait to come back and we were given the opportunity to play from September and on.

So I don't know. You know, only now I do realize that crowd creates more adrenaline when I'm out on the court and gives me, I think to every single player, just gives bigger purpose. It's just so elevating when you have people watching.

I tried my best. I tried my best. I never have timed a

match because of reasons like this. I'm playing for myself, after all.

2020, you know, I had some good results. Some bad losses. Some new things that happened to me that I didn't face in the past. Some really annoying things and some beautiful things, as well. Things that brought me a lot of joy. Also allowed for me to, despite the pandemic, to connect with certain people and have some fun, as well, you know.

Yeah, there were a few positives I can take from that. I will try and forget the negatives, because who needs negativity in this world? Just looking at the bright side of it. Trying to get to the end of the tunnel and see something better in the near future.

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