

Nitto ATP Finals

Thursday, 14 November 2024

Turin, Italy

Inalpi Arena, Torino

Taylor Fritz

Press Conference



T. FRITZ/A. de Minaur

5-7, 6-4, 6-3

THE MODERATOR: High level of tennis today. How did you turn it around after the first set?

TAYLOR FRITZ: I mean, he played two real good games to break me in the first, I felt like. Maybe those two games I didn't serve my best, but I played well from the baseline. He outplayed me a lot.

In the second set, it definitely didn't look good for me. I kind of just fought really hard to stay in it, to get through some of those service games where I wasn't serving great. Felt like I was getting beat from the baseline.

I found a way to stay in it, get the holds. I kind of started to find the rhythm on the serve at the end of the second. I think from the end of the second I served really well for the rest of the match.

It just allowed me to take some pressure off of those serve games, start to put a little bit more pressure on his service games.

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. Do you think it's your time now? Do you feel now it's your time to change your level, to play the big finals? This target comes from which sort of improvements? Which improvements are you more proud of?

TAYLOR FRITZ: Yeah, I think I wouldn't say it's my time because of, I guess, not the landscape of who I'm playing against and who's around. I mean, it just so happens that I've been improving a lot over the last couple years and I'm playing great tennis. I'm excited about a lot of the things I think I can still improve on, that I'm working on. I feel like almost every part of my game has gotten better the last couple of years.

Definitely feeling more confident with my forehand, my serve, my return. I've been moving better, playing better defense. I've been able to come to net and finish some points, which obviously still working on. There's been a lot of things.

Yeah, I'm excited because I still think there's a lot of room for me to improve.

Q. The most likely scenario is that you will play Zverev in the semifinals.

TAYLOR FRITZ: I mean, I don't know (smiling).

Q. If you do, you beat him three times in a row, including Laver Cup. But what has changed in that head-to-head? With your improvements, do you feel you have a better game for his game?

TAYLOR FRITZ: I think a lot of the times prior to the three meetings this year, we still had close matches. He beat me at Wimbledon one time in five. He beat me in Wimbledon one time in a close four-setter. Previously I had two wins over him.

It wasn't very I guess one-sided. I feel like it was always very close between us.

Then, I mean, looking back, Wimbledon I probably should have lost. US Open, could have gone either way honestly. Very close match.

I wouldn't say it's as one-sided. I don't think it's ever really been one-sided between us. I've been able to take the last three. It's not like it was, I guess, easy, an easy three matches or anything like that.

I think our games match up well. Whoever does certain things better on the day wins. When you have two guys that are big servers playing each other, it can always just come down to a couple points here and there.

Q. Can you take us inside your head on a day like this when your big weapon - your serve - just isn't working the way you want it to be working? Certainly the first



set and a half. I'm not sure when you felt like you got your rhythm. What are you doing or thinking? Are you making adjustments? Are you fiddling around? What are you telling yourself? Must be super frustrating.

TAYLOR FRITZ: Yeah, that's the thing, I felt like my serves felt good, they just weren't going in. There's days where the rhythm is really off. Just like when I toss the ball up, I go up to serve, it's not going to go in. It didn't feel like that today. Honestly, the first couple games I was serving fine. Really the only two bad service games I had were the two games I got broken in the first.

A lot of days, a lot of matches, it's going to happen. You play a couple games where the serve, you miss some close ones, maybe you make less first serves in a game. There's games I just try to rely on my ability to play from the baseline, play good points to get me out of those games.

Very unfortunately for me today, kind of very similar to my first set 5-4 with Jannik, I didn't make enough first serves and my opponent just outplayed me from the baseline. He was playing really well, Demon, in those two games that he broke me.

At the end of those games all I can really say is I needed to serve better because from the ground I played really well and he just beat me. Happens sometimes.

I tried to just stay with it and really fight in the second set to just buy myself time because I felt like at any point it could start clicking for me, they could start going in.

From then on, I was able to just not feel so much pressure on my service games, then start to put a little bit more pressure on his service games. He starts to feel it a little bit more because now all of a sudden it's not so easy for him to hold serve when he feels like one break could be it and I'm getting more easy holds.

Yeah, I'm really fortunate I found it. There wasn't anything specific that I changed. It kind of just started clicking.

Q. You're going to be the first American player to finish the season in the top five since James Blake in 2006. It's 17 years. Consider also the fact that you reached the final at the US Open. Also the media in America, they're always looking for the new No. 1. Do you feel you are not considered enough?

TAYLOR FRITZ: I don't think anyone's going to be considered enough until, I guess, someone wins a slam. I think I've probably shown through the years that, I mean, I've had the best results.

Yeah, if people don't think I'm good enough to win a slam, then yeah, you're going to look to younger people that they think have more potential. I mean, that is what it is.

I've shown why I'm the top American for the last couple years kind of every year with my results. I kind of just let my results do the talking. If that's not enough for people, then it is what it is.

Some people prefer people with more just flashier games.

Q. Carlos indicated that he changed his backhand and tested out by feel a few weeks ago. Do you ever find yourself warming up against someone and you're like, Whoa, that looks different from what I remember? How often do you make these mid-season tweaks to your own game?

TAYLOR FRITZ: Obviously I don't notice that well because I didn't notice Carlos change anything (smiling). I mean, occasionally I'll see someone's stroke and I'll be like, That looks different than I remember.

For me, I don't change things too much. Maybe on like a specific shot, when I see a specific shot, I might change something. I guess, like, the core stroke, shot, it's best not to tinker with it I feel like.

When you start thinking about these things, you start to overthink things. For me, when I start overthinking strokes, that's when everything just gets awful.

So yeah, when I look back at times where I maybe was hitting my forehand or serve the absolute worst, I'm just thinking about all these things that I'm trying to change, it's never really worked too much for me.

Definitely when there's weeks where you change balls, change surfaces, there's certain things that might I guess feel better, whether it's like a shorter swing or you're spinning the ball more, flattening the ball more, stuff like that.

Technically I feel like it's best not to mess around too much if things are working well for you.

Q. If we roll back the years, about six years ago you played Alex at Next Gen Finals. Talk about Next Gen as an event and how important it is. Pretty much all the guys here played Next Gen.

TAYLOR FRITZ: Yeah, I mean, back then I was really excited to be there. It was still like a really new event. Yeah, I mean, I wish I could have played it more than once.

Demon beat me pretty bad.

I mean, it was a lot of fun. I think it was cool to have that kind of like year-end finals for the younger generation. Especially back then in that time, the tour was so dominated by, like, older players. There wasn't too many young people really at the top, obviously like it is now.

Yeah, during that time period, for sure it was an especially cool event.

Q. You're still alive in this event. There's a strong chance that you and Alex will be playing one another again next week in Davis Cup. Is this match today any indicator or pointer for next week, or is it because of the type of event that is compared to this, it's a whole new sheet of paper?

TAYLOR FRITZ: I mean, I think the team aspect changes a little bit. In my opinion, I feel like he typically plays better in the team environment. I also feel like I play better in the team environment.

I don't think too much is going to change. It's still going to be a nightmare to play him next week, too. We'll see. Hopefully I can make it happen again.

Q. What are you going to do tonight around 8? Are you watching the match waiting for the result?

TAYLOR FRITZ: Honestly, I'm going to go about my routines as if I'm playing in the semifinals, kind of just do what I do.

I'll be checking the scores. I don't typically watch too much tennis. I don't think tonight will be honestly any different. I will be updating on the scores. That's about it.

I'm not freaking out over it. If winning two of my matches, then losing to the world No. 1, isn't good enough to make it out of the group, it is what it is.

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