

Nitto ATP Finals

Saturday, 16 November 2024

Turin, Italy

Inalpi Arena, Torino

Taylor Fritz

Press Conference



T. FRITZ/A. Zverev

6-3, 3-6, 7-6

THE MODERATOR: Taylor, congratulations. A great victory from you. Your fourth consecutive win against Zverev. You're also the first American finalist since 2006, James Blake. Can you tell us what was the key today and what this all means to you.

TAYLOR FRITZ: Yeah, I think the key in the end was really just playing some of the big points really well. Couple break points in the third where I either came up with a big serve or played very aggressively when previously I guess to be down in the game I would have maybe played a bit more safe. Yeah, just came up with some big shots, big serves in the tight moments of the match. I played a very solid breaker in the end, as well.

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. How important is it after the US Open final, two months later, to reach another big final, not a Grand Slam, but in a pretty big tournament? Do you feel like you're sending a message that you belong in these big finals?

TAYLOR FRITZ: Yeah, for sure. I think for myself, I have believed that I belong, that I'm one of the best players. It's not results-based. It's more I can feel how I'm playing.

I felt, for example, Shanghai, like I was playing very good tennis. I made the semis there. Stuff like that definitely gives you a lot of positive reinforcement that you're doing the right things.

Yeah, this week is huge. I beat three incredible players, have been playing great tennis. I feel like I've just recently in the last couple weeks made some big improvements to my game, as well.

Q. Why do you think you've got Sascha's number this year?

TAYLOR FRITZ: I mean, the thing is I wouldn't really say it like that because every match, outside of Laver Cup, which I felt like Laver Cup, the conditions were much...

I didn't love the conditions, but the conditions were much better for me and my game in that match. Outside of Laver Cup, all the matches we've played could have had different results if just a couple points were different, to be honest. It was very close.

Kind of in the key moments of US Open and today's match, I felt like just in the key moments I've been able to come out of those points and those situations.

Q. You said you were able to buckle down and play the big points well. Is there sort of different things going through your head in the points that got you to, say, Love-40, what are you going to do there? Can you talk us through that game, perhaps.

TAYLOR FRITZ: I mean, the Love-40 game, it is unfortunate. The first point I played fine. I missed a backhand that probably would have been a point-winning shot by an inch. The Love-30, I hit a good serve and missed a forehand that would have been a point-winning shot by an inch. Sloppy game from me. But I still was aggressive. Just kind of made two unfortunate errors on balls I hit very well. I've played much worse games.

At Love-40 all I'm really thinking is, like, absolutely need to get one or two of these back with, like, a free point on my serve. I've been serving well, so I have the confidence that I can do that. Sometimes I'm not serving well. If I'm not serving well and I'm Love-40, I'm feeling pretty bad about it. I am not feeling like I'm not going to get out of hole.

I have been serving well, so yeah, I got two of the points back with good serves. Then I'm thinking try to make another good serve, get a free point. If not, be aggressive when I get the chance.

I don't want to get into this, like, tight, safe point that I've been playing because he's expecting me to play those big points a bit safer. I can kind of blitz him a bit by going after



it a bit more in the beginning of the point, kind of catching him off by being more aggressive than maybe he expects.

Q. What were those changes that you made in the last weeks? Do you feel the level that you're at right now is the highest level you've played at during your career?

TAYLOR FRITZ: First off, I don't really want to give away the stuff that I've been working on 'cause I think it would just give everybody a better idea of what I maybe felt uncomfortable with that people wouldn't have realized I was uncomfortable with (smiling).

I mean, the short answer is there's certain forehands that I'm hitting a lot better than I was hitting before. That's been a big change. It's something that I've just recently started working on. It's something that I noticed was bothering me more so in particular matchups with top players. Yeah, it's something I've been working on. I'm already seeing big improvements.

Sorry, what was the second part?

Q. The level that you're playing at...

TAYLOR FRITZ: Yeah, consistently week to week, for sure. I'd say this week, every single match what I'm showing with, I'm playing very well. I'm definitely, definitely at the top of my game.

Q. Sascha was walking us through his uncomfortable and comfortable matchups. He described you as a pretty uncomfortable matchup for him. Could you walk us through that, if they have anything in common.

TAYLOR FRITZ: Again, I don't want to give away too much (smiling).

I mean, I wouldn't say Sascha's an uncomfortable or a comfortable matchup. I'd say there's a lot of matchups where I feel pretty neutral and it's just going to depend on certain things.

Carlos is uncomfortable. When I played him at Laver Cup, it was really, really high level. Carlos had a really high level. It felt pretty unplayable. That didn't feel good.

US Open against Jannik was pretty uncomfortable. I felt not too uncomfortable in our match earlier this week. It felt fine.

Demon, pretty uncomfortable.

I think I'd have to say Novak is pretty uncomfortable being 0-10 (smiling).

Oh, you know what is a weird one, is Yoshi just owns me. I got him once, but he's not fun for me to play (laughter).

Q. What has he done?

TAYLOR FRITZ: I have no idea. He's just really good. He seems like the best player in the world when I'm playing him.

Q. Tomorrow will be one of the most important matches of your career after maybe Indian Wells final and US Open final. If you look to the US Open final, what did you learn in terms of emotion management, even in terms of tennis? You said against Jannik was an uncomfortable match.

TAYLOR FRITZ: Yeah, I think conditions are very different here as opposed to the Open. One thing I said in the interview after I played him here already was just US Open felt like I was kind of just trying to keep myself in with my serve, stay alive, win points by hitting big shots or playing off of his errors. Kind of just like not repeatable, consistent ways to win points. I was just trying to, like, stay alive.

The match we played here, I felt like I didn't feel like that. I felt very, like, much more comfortable from the baseline. I had my chances in that match. I had chances to break him in both sets. He had an equal amount of chances, and he took his. He played the big points better than I did in the group stage match.

It didn't feel anywhere near as one-sided as the Open. I felt like the match for me felt closer than just like 4-4. Like I said, he played the big points better. He's the best player in the world. He's playing with a lot of confidence. That's something that you have to expect from him, to play the big points really well.

I've made a lot of improvements in my game. For me at the US Open, the biggest thing was, like, I just didn't honestly play great. I didn't serve great. If I don't serve well, it sets up the rest of my game for failure, I'd say.

Q. If you play Sinner, in the history of the Masters eight times a player who had lost in the round-robin won in the final. Why do you think that may have happened? Do you think it's difficult because two top players to win twice in a row or because the strategy of the player who lost changes? What could be your case?

TAYLOR FRITZ: It could be a bit about the strategy. Obviously the person that wins is going to go into the match playing exactly the same way they did to win.

You're not going to win and then change your strategy. Obvious the losing player is going to know that and understand that, maybe know what to expect a bit more.

It also could be a bit of a psychological factor as one person feels like they are the underdog, one person feels like they are the big favorite. Sometimes when you have that dynamic, the person that's the favorite will play the match a little tighter. The person that feels like they have nothing to lose will play the match a bit looser.

Also a big part of it is just coincidence and luck as well.

Q. They are leading you with head-to-head, both Ruud and Sinner. Are you going to talk with your team and try to come up with something new or you're just going to go with your typical routines?

TAYLOR FRITZ: I mean, I think I would keep doing everything the way I've been doing. I think head-to-head with Casper is just 1-1.

Q. 2-1.

TAYLOR FRITZ: Two for Casper?

Q. Yes. But the last one you won.

TAYLOR FRITZ: I'm trying to think of when he beat me the other time. I'm trying to think of the other time. If it's on clay, it doesn't count (smiling).

Q. French Open.

TAYLOR FRITZ: French Open, yeah. My bad.

No, I think the way I've been playing is fine. I think the way, like I said, if it is Jannik, the way I played against him in the group stage was the correct way to play.

I think if I serve a bit better in the two games I got broken, literally play one or two points better in the return game where I had my chances, it could be a different match. Obviously that's a big ask because he's playing the big points incredibly well.

But I wouldn't change anything. I really believe the match in the group stage was closer than you might think by just looking at the score.

Q. It seemed like you had a lot of crowd support out there today. I think it was in particular from Jannik Sinner's fans. What did you make of that?

TAYLOR FRITZ: I mean, it was cool. I felt like all week

I've been getting a lot of love, which is great to see, just being an American playing in Italy. It's been awesome to just feel the love from the Italian fans.

If I'm playing Jannik, then all good (smiling). But even when I played Jannik the first time, I thought the crowd was very respectful towards me.

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