

# Miami Open presented by Itaú

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Miami, Florida, USA

## Frances Tiafoe

Press Conference



D. MEDVEDEV/F. Tiafoe

6-4, 6-3

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

**Q. What happened when you took the medical timeout there? What were you feeling? They said something on the TV about a stomach ailment or something? What was going on there? How were you able to come back and play as well as you did, considering the condition you were in?**

FRANCES TIAFOE: Yeah, I was struggling today. It was really hot obviously. I haven't played really during the day. But, look, I mean, always try to push. Definitely pushed myself and had some looks. I had some looks at 3-All there to go up another break.

But, yeah, it hit me hard at 2-1. Being up a break, I felt I couldn't really breathe. I felt like my heart was beating out of my chest. I was burping a lot, couldn't really settle myself. I burp a lot, haven't discussed it a lot, during these matches, but obviously today it was out of control.

So something I definitely need to really take time and try and take care of, because obviously like a day like today it hurt me.

**Q. How were you able to regroup and go out there and complete the match?**

FRANCES TIAFOE: I mean, just try to keep pushing. Obviously that medical timeout helped. They gave me some reflux pills and I made a good run. I wanted to end on a high note. I had enough respect for him to keep pushing, and obviously for myself. You're not always going to feel 100% playing a tennis match, so I was like see what I can do, and I gave it a good shot.

**Q. Talk about the tournament. You had three great come-from-behind wins. On air, Courier was saying that this was a transformational tournament for you. Just talk about the big picture.**

FRANCES TIAFOE: It was a big week, man. Obviously I wish I had more today, but it was a big week. Obviously it was slow start to the year, I would say. You know, I really turned it around. I've always, for whatever reason here in Miami, I've always produced great tennis.

Yeah, obviously I didn't even know there was a stat I made round of 16 here for the third straight year. I think I have only been seeded here once. Yeah, at least every time I have played here I have won about three matches. That's good especially in a Masters Series.

Yeah, as far as I'm competing. I felt like a lot of matches I played good, but, you know, too loose, in and out, really dig down and compete. Even if you're not playing well and if you're down, you know, see it through to the end and see if guys are gonna crack. That's what happened.

Guys, they don't want to see you battling so hard all the way through. Everybody has a breaking point. I was able to find that this week. And then obviously as the match went along, I started playing better.

I just really wanted to push myself and see where I could go. A lot of guys are able to do that and win a ton of matches, and that's what I did this week.

**Q. Switching gears, after you won the Humanitarian Award, you wrote that incredible letter to Arthur, so moving. I just wanted to ask you, when you said, Hey, this guy could have been president, what was your thinking there? What was your thinking about that?**

FRANCES TIAFOE: He was just so influential that, I mean, from obviously what he did with Apartheid and everything like that, going to South Africa and things like that. I mean, he was just so big.

You know, pretty much what I meant by saying you didn't know Arthur Ashe because he played tennis. It was so much bigger than that. Just as the same as LeBron James. You don't know him just because he plays basketball. So many things he does off the floor. That's what it's kind of about.

I mean, you know, what you do should be avenues for



other guys to be successful, and you want to be able to be an example for other guys. And he was someone special and someone I wish to be half of.

**Q. Just watching your matches so far this tournament, I just want to know how happy you are with not just the way you're hitting the ball but the way you're playing these matches. I even saw back in Australia when you were playing Djokovic, I thought like when they threw their best stuff at you he or he threw his best stuff at you and there was a breaking point or a tight point in the match, you stood up to the test and you didn't let the pressure get to you. I thought you did that again really well in this tournament, just in the tight moments you were like the steadier guy. That's harder for younger players to do. I just want to know how proud are you of that side of your game, the focus side, just being clutch in the big moments?**

FRANCES TIAFOE: This week was big, man. This week was big. Obviously I dug deep. The goal was to not beat myself. Be a nightmare for the other guy across the net.

Guys gonna bring it. Guys are good, man. On paper I should have pretty much lost every match obviously. I had a slow start to the year, man, but I rose to all the occasions and I just wanted to be a problem for each guy.

I was down set and breaks, down, down breakpoints for these guys serving for the match, but I was, like, I'm just gonna keep comin', gonna keep comin', keep pushin' and make guys beat me. And if you do, I can look at you, like today, obviously I wasn't feeling amazing, but Medvedev beat me.

I battled and I can look at him, Hey, man, congrats, and keep going. A lot of times I feel like I have left something on the table. I don't want to have so many more of those. Obviously everyone is human, but this week I can kick me feet up and say I battled from the first round to the last.

**Q. I'm assuming this gives you confidence going forward and makes you probably look forward to the next time you get to get back out there?**

FRANCES TIAFOE: Yeah, I am. Definitely hungry to get back out there. Definitely more excited to get some rest (smiling).

But, yeah, I'm happy to try to build more weeks like this, because that will make me even more match tough to be able to just keep coming like this, right?

**Q. The success of the American players this week, there were four guys in the final 16 at Miami which**

**hasn't happened since 2004, a long, long time. Can you talk about the successes of Americans this week? And Sebi Korda is playing right now and took the first set from Schwartzman. Can you talk about that, his promise as a player?**

FRANCES TIAFOE: Yeah, start off with Sebi, Sebi is a guy who is going to be special, man. Obviously with his dad in his corner, Dean. I love Dean Goldfine. I have known Dean for a long time, great guy. Really good coach, great tennis IQ. Those two guys, his work ethic, his commitment to the game, student of the game, he's got size. He can do a lot of things. He has all the shots. I'm a fan of his. He's a great guy. I want the best for him.

As far as all the American guys, look, man, everyone is capable. All the Americans, top to bottom, everybody is capable. It's a matter of just putting it together. This week we kind of buckled down. We are in Miami, first time we played in the States in a big tournament. Americans were able to come up with some good stuff.

Not too surprising. Obviously it's been a really long time, but Fritz is playing great, Isner if he's serving well he's a problem anywhere. Obviously when I'm playing well and competing well, you know, I can do some great things.

It's a good group, but there's a ton more players that can play at a high level. I was happy I was able to do that. Unfortunately three out of four losses today, so hopefully Sebi can get it done tonight.

**Q. Careers are based on a series of decisions that you make, the roads you take. If you had to say like what was the one or two real key decisions that shaped your career, what would that one or two be?**

FRANCES TIAFOE: I mean, so far -- obviously I'm young, but don't forget how young I am. I've been on tour for a while. I broke through early, so I have played a lot of tournaments for a long time.

But as far as going into my career, I made a choice that I was going to be top 100 player early, kind of made that commitment and that was kind of always the focus. I had one focus, and every day I had one plan. That kind of flew up.

Then I think the second-best decision, I kind of rode that wave, now rankings has dropped a little bit, now it's kind of like a rebuild more or less, trying to create a new me.

I think hiring Wayne Ferreira was probably the second-best thing I ever did. I went through the process. Most good young players kind of do this, they kind of fly up and go up

and up and maybe hit this little plateau. But guys kind of know you more, kind of figure out. But then you deal with expectations, and then maybe you don't handle that so well and you start doubting yourself.

I think Wayne has been a great help. Not only for my game but from the mental side, trying to bring the best out of me each and every week. And this week too. Obviously I went back to even doubting myself a little bit and kind of kept things pretty simple this week. Worried about the competing part of the game. You're competitive first and athlete second.

It paid off this week, man. I think hiring him -- obviously my boy Zack, that's a brother, he's been great for me for years, but hiring Wayne and having those two co-work together is big. So far I really like it, and hopefully this partnership goes on for a while.

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