

Rolex Monte-Carlo Masters

Principality of Monaco
Friday, 14 April 2023

Taylor Fritz

Press Conference



T. FRITZ/S. Tsitsipas

6-2, 6-4

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. Just your thoughts about this win in two sets? It's quite easy?

TAYLOR FRITZ: I thought I played really well. I guess I had like a strategy in mind of how I wanted to play. In order to I guess implement that strategy required me to be playing well, I guess, you know, changing backhand line and going for, I guess, some line changes that I normally wouldn't go for, so it required me to play well.

But I was able to do that, so I was able to I guess play exactly the way I wanted to play and hit the shots that I wanted to hit and kind of put -- you know, how I kind of saw my game plan working out in my head I was actually able to do on the court.

Q. How much important is the game plan for you in general? And especially on clay.

TAYLOR FRITZ: It's so different, I guess, just with depending on who you play. There are some people where the game plan is just as simple as make sure I'm serving well and I'm being aggressive, which is normally always my game plan (smiling), and then there are some matches where it gets a little bit more specific.

You know, Stef, for example, he's super dangerous when he's running around, he's in that backhand corner and he's controlling with his forehand.

So a big key was going, you know, big backhand line and stuff like that to get him out of that corner and probably a shot I wouldn't normally hit so much. I love to go backhand cross with people, but if I did it with him, he would get around and he would be able to dictate.

So it's definitely specific to the person I'm playing kind of how much of a game plan I'm going for versus how much

I'm just gonna play how I normally play.

Q. What do you think about the notion of Tennis IQ?

TAYLOR FRITZ: What about it?

Q. Being smart on court, I don't know how you can describe this, but...

TAYLOR FRITZ: I mean, I think that, you know, it's very important. That's why I have always been a big fan of the no-coaching rule, because I think it's a big part of the game that you figure it out by yourself and make adjustments by yourself.

I think Tennis IQ is part of playing tennis, but, you know, personally for me I feel like I have always -- it's always been one of my stronger aspects of figuring things out for myself, coming up with strategies by myself, I guess understanding people's strengths, weaknesses, what they like to do under pressure, stuff like that. It's always been I think one of my better assets.

Q. I remember your first one here last year. It was very difficult for you against a player not so strong at the ranking.

TAYLOR FRITZ: Yeah.

Q. How would you explain where you are now in this tournament? And also, last year you played very well here and sometimes we are wondering is clay a difficult surface for you? But it seems like now you're mastering it?

TAYLOR FRITZ: Yeah, I mean, I never really know if I'm good on clay or not. Like honestly, I don't know, but I think, yeah, I mean, the first match I had last year here I came in, I played Houston so I came in from Houston, didn't have a lot of time to adjust here.

It was, I remember, extremely, extremely windy day, so I wasn't able to, I guess, pick out the specific shots I wanted to pick out. I had to play much safer. I think wind is a big equalizer when it comes to levels. It makes it very tough to



play. I felt like my opponent was playing very well, so I was very lucky to get through that match (smiling).

As it is every year for me on clay, it's not natural for me. Obviously I have not spent a lot of time playing on clay, so I can't just come to it and play well my first match or two. But I feel like I always, after a couple of matches, play much better.

For whatever reason, I do think center court plays much better, different than the other courts, and I have always felt like I play a lot better on center court as opposed to the other courts here.

Q. You're playing tomorrow against Andrey Rublev. A few minutes ago he said it doesn't matter the surface for Taylor because with his serve at 220 and his forehand, it doesn't matter. Do you agree with him?

TAYLOR FRITZ: To some extent. Yes, I think that at the end of the day, like, you can win a lot of matches by just serving well and holding serve and putting balls in the court and giving the other person the opportunity to just play a bad game on their serve, give you a break, and you hold serve and you win. I think you can win a lot of matches like that (smiling).

But, you know, maybe it's not quite as effective on a clay court. Maybe not, you know, as many free points. Maybe a couple more of the forehands come back that wouldn't come back.

So, yeah, of course if you serve really well and you're crushing the ball, like, it can work anywhere, but on clay I do have to be a bit more patient sometimes.

I mean, Andrey, it's the same thing, he's going to serve big and he's going to be ripping forehands as well.

Q. On the camera you wrote "USA clay" with a question mark. It was an insult to Stefanos?

TAYLOR FRITZ: No, I wouldn't say -- no, no, no, not insult. Yeah, let's talk about this before people get -- I don't want people to, like, think there is some crazy like beef or something. Like it's more just like a joke, like what he wrote the other day...

Q. It was not easy to understand what he --

TAYLOR FRITZ: I mean, what I take from it is he's just saying like clay courts in the U.S. aren't very good or they don't make sense, which is totally fair. I think maybe people think I write something back on the camera because I'm offended or I'm upset. Not at all (smiling).

Like I don't care at all. I guess people don't know me. I'm like the hardest person to like offend or upset. Like I don't care (smiling).

I just thought that like kind of saying something back -- obviously he knew that he might play me. I thought just writing something back was funny, like there is no, like I'm not trying to insult him. I just thought it was funny (smiling).

Q. You prefer the green clay?

TAYLOR FRITZ: No, absolutely not. I hate it. I can't stand green clay.

Yeah, I obviously played a lot on green clay in the U.S. when I was younger and I hated it. First time I came to Europe and played on red clay, immediately I was like, Oh, my God, this is so much better (smiling).

Q. It's a real surprise playing so well now in the season or not for you?

TAYLOR FRITZ: I think -- yeah, I didn't know what to, I guess, expect coming on clay. Like I said before, it's like I don't know if I'm good on clay and I don't know if I'm bad on clay.

I remember, I think it was -- I don't know if it was '18 or '19 but I had a very good, at the time for myself, I had a very good clay court season. I started thinking, wow, maybe like clay, maybe clay is one of my best surfaces, and at the time I was having really bad results on grass.

Then the next year I did really well on grass, so it's like -- I never really know what I'm better on, what to expect. But I do know that in the past I have played well here. I'm glad that I have been able to kind of find that level that I have felt in Monte-Carlo in the past, and it's not, I guess, too surprising to me that I'm playing like this because I know that I can, but I guess I'm just happy that I am.

Q. Rublev now.

TAYLOR FRITZ: Yeah. Obviously very good player, very consistent. He's good on clay. Good friend of mine, as well.

It will be fun. We have played a lot. We have had a lot of really close matches. Yeah, we'll see what, I guess, you know, playing on a clay court kind of changes and brings to the matchup.

Q. The key maybe?

TAYLOR FRITZ: I don't know what necessarily the key is. I think it is somewhat similar to today where he's the most dangerous when he's attacking with the forehand, so I think the key is probably not to let him be dictating me and be the aggressor in the points with his forehand. Anytime I'm on defense running around a lot, it's normally not good for me.

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