

BNP Paribas Open

Friday, March 18, 2022

Taylor Fritz

Press Conference



T. FRITZ/M. Kecmanovic

7-6, 3-6, 6-1

THE MODERATOR: Another win for you. You are the first American player in the Indian Wells semifinal since Andy Roddick.

TAYLOR FRITZ: That's amazing. This being my home tournament, obviously. There's no place I'd rather have these results than here. It's, like, the place that I grew up coming to. It's definitely really special to kind of achieve that back to back.

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. There's these moments after you win here the last two years, I notice you do that thing where you turn around and put the arms out. There's a look on your face, a real joy. What are those emotions like?

TAYLOR FRITZ: Yeah, it's awesome. Obviously a lot of it is just the crowd is so on my side here, always kind of going for me. I just want to, like, arms out, smile, just kind of like take it all in.

Those are the moments, the reason why I play tennis, the reason why I wanted to be a professional athlete as a kid. It's the reason why I do it, is that moment when you win, you can just kind of finally relax, let it all out. Especially with the crowd, I'm taking it in.

Q. A little different than other places?

TAYLOR FRITZ: Exactly. Exactly. That's what I mean. Just the energy is completely different. I'm just kind of enjoying the moment, taking it in.

Q. You have a lot of other great things happening in your career, getting past the third round, top 20, top American, Davis Cup, coaching situation. Do you think you're getting to the top? Do you think you're making some good progress?

TAYLOR FRITZ: Yeah, obviously things are starting to

come together. I said it my last press conference. I feel like my level as a player has gone up a ton. I've served really well this week. But outside of my serve, from the ground and everything, I haven't played amazing, I definitely haven't played bad either.

It's a really good feeling getting to where I am in the tournament, having such a good result, kind of just playing pretty solid, not having to play amazing tennis like I did last year.

My level, my average level, has definitely gone up. I think that's what defines a lot of us as players, is how we do when we're just playing our normal level.

I've put in a lot of work. I think I need to keep working. I'm excited because I have a lot of things I can still improve on. Kind of just see where that takes me.

Q. What was the situation with the three double-faults back to back? Has that ever happened before?

TAYLOR FRITZ: What are you talking about (smiling)? I don't know what situation you're talking about, honestly.

No, for real, I have no idea what that was. I've never done that in my life. Like, I actually have no idea. I literally forgot how to play tennis for a game.

I really could have easily let that bother me a lot, let it affect me in the third set. I kind of just tried to laugh it off and forget about it. Kind of embarrassing. I think a lot of people saw that (smiling).

Yeah, I just regrouped in the third. I just told myself it was a fluke, that's not going to happen again. Told myself I had lots of chances to break serve in the second set. He only had the one where I literally forgot how to play tennis.

I told myself to regroup, do the same thing I did in the second set, take care of my serve, win those break points. That's what I did.

Q. What are your thoughts of coming up against Rublev? Conditions are so different than Paris.



TAYLOR FRITZ: Yeah, of course. I did win that last match. But conditions are so different. The one other win I have over him is here. So long ago. You can't even think about it.

He's been hot lately. He's been on a long match win streak. I always feel like I play really good tennis when I play against him. I hit, I don't know, well off of his ball. It's a lot of big hitting back and forth. I know I'm going to have to serve like I've been serving. I'm definitely going to have to step it up from the baseline.

Q. Can you briefly talk about the evolution that both of you guys have gone from 2018?

TAYLOR FRITZ: It's crazy. I mean, especially me and Andrey have so much history playing each other in the juniors so much. We had several meetings in the juniors. He took me out on grass one time. I got him in the finals in Mexico one time. He got me in the finals of the junior masters. We've gone back and forth so much.

It's crazy just to think back. You go back to 2018 when we played here. I'm thinking back when we were 17 years old playing in the juniors, just like before either one of us were having any kind of professional results. It's really cool to see how we've come up together and the kind of results we're producing now.

Q. Even though you are still young, I think you have gone through ups and downs in your career already. If you pick one or two big wins or big tournaments as a turning point, what would that be?

TAYLOR FRITZ: Maybe it's too early to say but I'd say the turning point was Indian Wells for me last year. I was kind of struggling on the year, a lot of semifinals on the year. To kind of break through, get a higher ranking, I was going to need bigger results. I kind of just kept losing, kept losing that next match that I needed to win throughout last year. I was struggling.

Just kind of out of nowhere, really good week here. Semifinals. Started putting a lot of things together. Game started clicking. A lot of things started clicking for me, especially my forehand.

Since then it's easily been the best six, seven months of my career, since Indian Wells last year. I'd definitely say that was the turning point.

Q. If I have it right, you've been down here three times for events since October. What do you like best about the Coachella Valley?

TAYLOR FRITZ: I mean, like I said, I have a lot of family here. I played a lot of tournaments here when I was younger, just like southern California tournaments. I played Easter Bowl here when I was a kid. A lot of history. My dad is the coach at College of the Desert here. I'd come here when I was a kid for the tournament.

Just a place I'm really familiar with it. It feels like a second home really.

Q. Did you seek autographs?

TAYLOR FRITZ: Absolutely. I wasn't into tennis, to be honest. I didn't watch any matches. If someone was carrying a tennis bag, I tried to get their autograph.

Q. Whose?

TAYLOR FRITZ: I remember watching Andy Murray's match when he was younger. They had him on, hard to believe, one of the side courts. I remember that, getting his autograph.

I specifically remember in the grass area my dad calling over Tomic. He came over, he was super nice. He came over and signed my ball and my friend's ball, which I thought was really funny. Now obviously I'm on tour and know Bernie.

Q. A question about the match. First set breaker, you were up 5-1, quickly it was 5-5. Do you see that as an example of your ability to overcome adversity?

TAYLOR FRITZ: Yeah, yeah, for sure. I think what kind of happened in that breaker, I was 5-1, I hadn't really done too much. He made a lot of mistakes at the beginning of the tiebreaker. I played 5-1, 5-2, 5-3 points very passively. I just didn't want to give him anything. It was like if he's going to make mistakes, maybe I should just let him make mistakes. He played really solid points and I didn't do too much.

5-All I kicked it back and said, I'm going to have to make it happen here. After a long point, I got a look at the backhand line which I really like, so I pulled the trigger on it.

6-5 I didn't serve body the whole entire set. He was standing pretty close, so I thought this was a really good opportunity to use it, give myself a safer serve that I had a chance of getting him on. It worked.

Yeah, I kind of had to change up the strategy after he showed he was going to not give me the breaker, like he

was making mistakes in the beginning. I had to adjust tactically. Absolutely, it's something I've been doing a lot better lately, turning it on and making it happen when I needed to. Same thing at 5-All, down 15-40, in the first set I played some solid points as well.

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