

BNP Paribas Open

Wednesday, March 13, 2024

Tommy Paul

Press Conference



T. PAUL/L. Nardi

6-4, 6-3

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. Tommy, you had the heartbreaking loss on Stadium 2 last year. Tell us where your thoughts were on getting back to Stadium 2 for this one.

TOMMY PAUL: Yeah, I mean, I did not know I was going to be playing Nardi. So I wasn't expecting to be on Stadium 2.

Then as soon as I saw he beat Novak, I requested Stadium 2. I wanted to get back on that court and have a little redemption, I guess.

I thought I played pretty well throughout the whole match.

Q. Can we look ahead, Casper is next. Last three went his way. A lot of battles.

TOMMY PAUL: Yeah.

Q. I want to get your impression what it's like facing him and maybe what you might need to do differently.

TOMMY PAUL: I would be very surprised if I won that match easy. He's a great player, and we've had some serious battles. Like you said, the last few haven't gone my way. Some pretty big matches, also.

I'm definitely looking for a little revenge there. I'm excited for that matchup.

Q. Do you feel you're in a better position to face him now than you ever have been?

TOMMY PAUL: I feel like I'm playing some really good tennis right now, and I feel like the way that I'm playing should match up well against him.

Q. Last time I was in here talking with you, asking about maybe taking your game to the next level, you

mentioned being more aggressive. I was curious about if you could elaborate a little bit more. I know it's been a project with you and Brad for a while. How do you feel it's coming, how is it evolving, and how specifically are you working to do that?

TOMMY PAUL: It's pretty simple. It's just, like, getting to the net more overall.

I'm not sure, I haven't looked at the stats yet, but I think it was, like, something like 17 times in the first set today, which I would love to have that amount every, like, every match, you know. That's when I'm playing my best tennis.

Q. Casper is a guy where it's not as simple maybe as it would be against other guys. It's more of a pick-and-choose game. Is that really the challenge increasing the way you play at the net?

TOMMY PAUL: Yeah, absolutely. I mean, for me, I think it's important to play kind of force my game on opponents. Like you said, it's hard because he plays such a way that makes it tough to come in, but I want to play an aggressive way coming forward and making him uncomfortable.

Q. You said on the court that you watched the whole match the other night.

TOMMY PAUL: Yeah.

Q. What were you thinking as you were watching the match? It was a crazy night. Watching that unfold, I imagine you're thinking a bunch of different things, but also scouting out this guy that you have to play. What do you think how he looked playing against Novak and what was going on there?

TOMMY PAUL: Yeah, I mean, it was interesting. You know, I mean, I think all of us kind of felt like after he dropped the first set, we were, like, Okay, we've seen this a million times. Like, we've seen Novak come back and win a million of those matches.

I mean, that's kind of what I was thinking also. But Nardi was playing awesome tennis. I mean, I really, I love the



kid's game a lot. I think he's going to be a really good player.

He was just, like, ice cold out there. He didn't show any emotion, he didn't look nervous. I thought that says a lot about him. That's such a big moment for him, and he was absolutely ice cold. That was really cool to see and I knew he wasn't going to come out nervous to play me if he wasn't nervous serving out the match against Novak.

Yeah, I mean, it was kind of funny, I thought his backhand was unreal in the match against Novak, and then today I thought it was the opposite. Like, his forehand is hurting me way more than his backhand.

So, yeah, that was kind of my takeaway from the match.

Q. First time in a quarterfinals here. A pretty big win for you. What does it mean to get to a quarterfinals in this event?

TOMMY PAUL: Yeah, I mean, I love, absolutely love playing on home soil, playing in the States. Nothing really makes me happier than playing in front of the U.S. crowd, so it's super exciting. Not just for me but for U.S. tennis. Obviously we've had some good results here in the past. I think Fritz has made quarters like four or five times and won the tournament, made semis last year, I think. And Foe made semis last year.

We've had some Americans play some really good tennis here. I think it's exciting for the fans here. I think last year, or maybe it was the year before, it was, like, when I really started feeling, like, crowds following us around and really supporting us. I mean, that makes it so much more fun.

Q. Just a general question about the state of the tour and just wondering your thoughts on the guys that are 35 and older still out there. Novak 36, Andy 36, Monfils playing really well at 37. Do you get excited, or how does it make you feel, these guys are 10 years older than you or even more still out there playing?

TOMMY PAUL: I mean, it's impressive. I'm 26. My feet hurt to walk on. (Laughter.)

Yeah, I mean, I was talking about it this morning right before I went on, with Monfils, I didn't realize he was 37 years old, turning 38 this year. It's so impressive.

Obviously shows how much they take care of their body. I mean, that's what we're trying to do. You know, we have to take care of our body. I think it's something that we've all invested in, getting physios that are full-time with us on the road. It's a huge help for us to extend our careers to

that age.

Q. Could you see yourself being out there in 10 years at age 36?

TOMMY PAUL: I don't know. I don't know (smiling).

I mean, hopefully my body is not what forces me to stop playing, you know. I want to feel good throughout my whole career, and hopefully at some point when I do want to retire it's because I want to retire.

Q. You're starting with more experience on this end of these tournaments. Does your brain shift at all? Or is it now just treat it like any other match? Do you have to go into some sort of mode of Novak or all those people talk about gotta raise your level as you get going? Have you started to experience, now that you have been down this road a few times?

TOMMY PAUL: Yeah, I'd say the biggest thing for, I mean, a lot of the players is winning -- like, when you want to go deep in a tournament, winning the earlier rounds quicker. I mean, that helps a ton with your body.

I wouldn't say, like, I played better today than I did in my first round or my second round. I thought I actually came out of the gates pretty hot this week. I'd like to continue playing really good tennis.

But yeah, it's definitely a whole different vibe at these tournaments now. Before, you can't even sit in front of your locker there's so many people in the locker room, you're waiting in line for food. Now it's pretty much you roll around wherever you want and there's nobody there. It's a different vibe. It's where you want to be.

Q. Do you think differently or prepare differently or anything like that?

TOMMY PAUL: No, I try and stick to routines. I haven't always been a routine guy but I'm trying to work on it.

I have basically just been chilling at the house watching tennis. It's been nice having the last few matches I've been second up, so I've been going back and hanging out, watching the later matches. You know, my girlfriend has been cooking up food, we've been barbecuing some nights, and just hanging out.

Q. Speaking of watching matches, I'd love to get your take on what you think of the way Jannik is playing, the way he took out Ben last night.

TOMMY PAUL: Yeah, he's been playing awesome tennis.

My fitness trainer taught me a term that they use in Argentina. When somebody is playing unbelievable, it means, like, they say they're playing naked, and he's absolutely playing naked right now. He's playing awesome tennis.

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