

# BNP Paribas Open

Thursday, March 14, 2024

## Tommy Paul

Press Conference



T. PAUL/C. Ruud

6-2, 1-6, 6-3

THE MODERATOR: Congrats, Tommy. On to a first semifinal in Indian Wells. How do you feel right now after you got through at the end?

TOMMY PAUL: I feel pretty good. I knew it wasn't going to be easy with Casper. It never is. I was really looking forward to that match.

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

**Q. A great match. Went to the net, like you said, five times in the final game to close it out. My question is a little more big picture. Your success now, does it feel a little bit sweeter given the stuff you've gone through, the stuff we learned about you through the Netflix, the late-night calls to your mom, maybe partying a little too much younger, being a bit of a late bloomer? The fact you've locked it down and become the player you are now, does it make this success even sweeter?**

TOMMY PAUL: Maybe. I mean, I don't know what it would feel like if I broke onto the scene right away. I'm not sure.

I mean, it feels good. Obviously I have another match on Saturday that I want to win. I'm not satisfied yet. So obviously I want to end weeks with a win. You know, I want to win tournaments. That's always the goal.

**Q. Is it sweet to be able to chip in and become the American who did make the semifinals, keep that streak alive? Now it's four years consecutive we've had an American man in the semifinals.**

TOMMY PAUL: No, that's awesome. I'm pumped about that. I didn't know. I mean, I kind of knew but I didn't know I had to win today to keep that streak alive.

So, yeah, that's awesome. Pumped for the U.S. fans that we have produced some pretty good results here.

Like I said, I want to keep winning and keep going.

**Q. Tommy, where would you rate the way you're playing compared to what you've done at the Australian Open in the past, the fact that you have been in the semis of a 1000 previously? So considering those, where do you feel you are with your game and what level you're playing at?**

TOMMY PAUL: Yeah, I mean, I think that I've played really well at different times in the past couple years.

It's different, I think. I think I'm playing a different style of tennis. I think probably then I was playing -- or in Australia or in Toronto, I was probably playing a little bit better from the baseline, to be honest.

But I think I'm serving better right now. I think I'm seeing the court a little bit better, maybe attacking, and using the whole court better.

I don't know. It's different, but I think I'm playing smarter, better tennis.

**Q. Tommy, you mentioned Australia. Australia had a weird ending for you this year. I imagine that was kind of painful. I'm curious sort of what, in retrospect, do you feel like happened in the end of that match? But also how you moved beyond it pretty quickly. Your next tournament you won, and then the next one, right, you went to the final?**

TOMMY PAUL: Yeah.

**Q. That's a pretty good bounce-back from what looked like a pretty painful ending.**

TOMMY PAUL: Definitely, you know, sometimes, like, the painful endings are exactly what you need, you know. I mean, obviously after that match it hurt really bad, and I was pissed.

I flew back to the States. I stopped in LA for a couple days, and I was, like, pretty much right back to work. I was practicing, hitting up people in LA to practice, like, the day after that match. People were kind of, like, why are you



back on the court already? But I was super motivated to get back to work after that match.

I thought I had a pretty good December of practice, and, I mean, obviously it didn't really translate. I thought that match with Kecmanovic was a very high-level match, and I kind of just broke down there in the fifth set. To lose 6-0 in the fifth, it sucks. Especially having match points in the fourth set.

Like I said, I mean, sometimes it's the best thing that could happen. I came back and was really motivated to get back to work. I knew this stretch of tournaments is really important. So, I mean, that's kind of what motivated me.

**Q. In the past when you've had tough losses like that, have you bounced back that quickly, or did it surprise you at all that you were feeling, yeah, that this was the reaction that you had?**

TOMMY PAUL: I'm not sure. I think sometimes you can have, for me, I think I've had some tough losses where it's made me get back to work. Even just last week or two weeks ago in Acapulco, I lost first round there after a pretty good stretch of tournaments, like you said, with Dallas and Delray.

I called my team to come to California immediately and got back to work and was excited to get back to work before this tournament and knowing that this and Miami are very important tournaments for me.

**Q. I presume you know about the delay that's going on.**

TOMMY PAUL: Yeah.

**Q. In all your travels at big tournaments, small tournaments, can you think of either a bizarre delay or encounter with animals or anything like that?**

TOMMY PAUL: Yeah, I mean, I think in Miami there was, like -- I don't know if there was a delay, but there was the iguanas that came on the court. I don't think anyone left the court for that reason.

But yeah, this is pretty wild. I was in the locker room right after finishing my cool down, and I'm hearing them talk about bringing the beekeeper to the site. Just never heard of that. It's definitely crazy. I'm not sure what the update is, the most recent update, but that's a pretty wild one.

**Q. Do you have a beekeeper who travels with your team or...**

TOMMY PAUL: No, definitely not. (Laughter.) Maybe this tournament needs to keep one for next year.

**Q. Last presser you were talking about routines. You said you used to not be a routine guy but now you are. Can you talk about that process a bit, when you made the realization you needed to be or should be, how it's helped you.**

TOMMY PAUL: I mean, I think it's been little by little. I mean, they're not always, like, the normal routines. I mean, you see, I mean, a lot of players with very set-in-stone routines on court. It's not always that. A lot of times it's, like, off court, what I'm having for breakfast. I kind of haven't switched it up too much.

I've been, you know, eating dinner, going straight to the hot tub every night, chilling, and then going to bed. That's been, like, my routine.

But, I mean, so far it's been nice.

**Q. Why do you think it's good or why do you think it's helping you?**

TOMMY PAUL: I don't know. I mean, just like, for me, I've been watching tennis, eating dinner. You know, after the tennis is done, you get a second to let your mind kind of relax for a bit and not think about tennis. Then go to bed, wake up and get back to it.

I mean, I think that's helpful for me.

**Q. Do you watch a lot of tennis in general? If you do, what kind of tennis do you like to watch or is it just whatever's on?**

TOMMY PAUL: Yeah, I watch a lot of tennis, especially when I'm in the tournament. I watched pretty much all the matches here this week, along with some classic tennis matches. I've been watching, I think before my first round we watched Tim Henman versus Roger in Paris-Bercy, and then we watched Edberg before my second round. Then we watched Boris Becker yesterday. You know, trying to get to the net, those are all pretty good volleyers.

**Q. What was your dinner last night, and are you going to stick with the same thing?**

TOMMY PAUL: No, it's kind of like Italian before I play. It's not like the same exact meal. It's kind of stick to the Italian, lots of carbs kind of deal.

**Q. If you can watch any one player of all time, your final match, what player would you pick out to watch?**



TOMMY PAUL: I've really enjoyed watching Edberg. You know, just for whatever reason, I love his backhand volley. Favorite shot in tennis.

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