

BNP Paribas Open

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Stefanos Tsitsipas

Press Conference



S. TSITSIPAS/M. Berrettini

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THE MODERATOR: Stefanos, congratulations on another great victory. Can you just describe your mindset recently and maybe how you're approaching these matches differently than maybe before.

STEFANOS TSITSIPAS: I'm approaching these matches with determination and willingness to just leave it all out there on the court.

I've seen improvements when it comes to my mindset. I just don't want to take anything for granted. I fight for every single individual match as a different chapter, different story, regardless of what I have done before.

I just feel like I want to get out there on the court and be a gladiator, and that's how I approach every single match I get to play.

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

Q. Matteo said you played the perfect match today. Do you agree with that?

STEFANOS TSITSIPAS: I played a good match. There is no such thing as perfect match. I have only probably played twice in my life a perfect match, if that's a definition of something that nothing goes wrong.

I don't know. Perfect match doesn't really exist. He probably meant, I guess, that I played well. I obviously thank him for saying that. But there are definitely a few addition of things that I can consider next time that perhaps I can do them better and avoid sort of time passing and realizing those things a few games later. These are some of the things that I have to tell you.

Q. After Dubai, on social media you posted something that said my game was sinking, so I got myself a boat. Can you elaborate a little bit on what you meant by that? Do you feel like people outside of you felt like you were on a downslide maybe and did you feel that

pressure?

STEFANOS TSITSIPAS: I think it was obvious. Doesn't take much to understand that (smiling). I wasn't doing great lately, and the last few months weren't amazing for me. I didn't have any big results or victories that I could say that I'm headed towards a good direction with my game. So I feel like that caption sort of was a summary of the last few months.

I just like a little bit of that humor like that. Doesn't hurt. I was trying to find ways to improve. I feel like some of my opponents that I got to play were overpowering me and doing things much better than me when it came to playing bigger tennis. My entire career I've been known to be able to play big tennis but it wasn't big enough, and I felt like I had to do something about it.

I was working very well with Dimitris, my coach, the last few months. I saw big improvement in how I approached my matches but also my work ethic in and out on kind of daily tennis sessions. I felt like there were things that little by little I started to improve and kind of perfect.

So it's just the thing was that it felt like I wasn't able to go out on the court and really do that to the level that I was doing it in practice. I was playing practice sets, and I was playing really well. I was winning a lot of the practice sets against good opponents. It's just that it didn't click when it came to the match, and I had to wait a little longer for that.

With a few more changes that I added to my game I felt like it added a lot of confidence stepping out onto the tennis court.

Q. You mentioned you think you've had two perfect matches in your career. Curious what those matches were. Then also, when you've had a good start to a tournament, at what point does your mind start going to, you know, I think I can go really deep here?

STEFANOS TSITSIPAS: Finals probably (smiling). There isn't such a place, let's say, during a tournament that you say that, okay, I've got this.



I feel like it gradually increases. The more you end up going deeper into a tournament, the more that feeling intensifies and you are more aware of that feeling that, okay, I'm getting close.

I don't think there are tennis players out there that start with the first, second round and think I've got this tournament. You've got to test yourself through the waters a little bit to see how players respond and how good is your game against them. And these type of assumptions are not things you want to make too fast.

Two perfect matches that I have played. It's an interesting one, because I've had a bad start against Rafael Nadal at the quarterfinals of the Australian Open. It was not great. I remember thinking to myself, I'm not playing well. I lost the first two sets, and I think something just clicked. I just started, you know, jumping around a little bit more. I felt I was waiting too long when he was serving, and I felt like I couldn't get into the rhythm of the match. So I tried to try a few things that could help me out, get into the rhythm.

And I feel that since that moment, being two sets to love down until the very end, I kind of peaked and reached almost perfect tennis and ended up winning the match.

It still remains one of those moments I'm really proud of because I felt like my tennis instantly just changed. I would call it a semi-perfect match, let's call it (smiling).

Another one was probably against Roger Federer, again at the Australian Open, because of, first of all, the player that he is. Someone that, you know, I had massive respect for, and he was my childhood hero. So playing him first time at a slam was not easy to deal with. I felt like players at my age during that period, it wouldn't have been as easy.

But I was determined when I entered the court. I'm like, I'm not leaving unless there's something to learn from this experience, and I really want to go all the way in that match. I'm not going to let him win just because he's Roger Federer, and I managed to win that match.

I played perfect tennis, even though I was dealing with a lot of pressure moments in that match. Wasn't serving amazing, but made it work somehow.

I would just say that my composure and my inner strength in those moments were the factors that made me prevail at the end.

Q. You mentioned Dimitris. Could you elaborate on your relationship with him since you have been starting with him in the process of progressing.

STEFANOS TSITSIPAS: Well, it's a very honest relationship. There are no filters with Dimitris. I feel like we talk to each other openly and freely, and we can communicate excellently, and I think that's what makes a good team when I can just communicate with him in the best possible ways. I can just talk to him and be precise about how I feel and what I can improve, things that we can consider for the future.

I feel like he's very open-minded, like he listens. I have had a few coaches that, you know, I don't feel like they are as open-minded and adjusting as fast.

But what makes our relationship stand out is how we both feed each other feedback, meaning that I don't pretend that I know everything, and Dimitris is humble enough to think that he's not perfect either. I think that adds a lot to our relationship and makes us sort of work it out together.

Q. I know that some of the players have been commenting on how high the ball has been bouncing on center court. As we were on eye level I was able to see how high the balls were bouncing up to you and Matteo. Is that a bother or something you were able to adapt to very well?

STEFANOS TSITSIPAS: I grew up playing clay courts, so for me this is quite normal. I've played my entire life with bounces like this. But I have to agree that, yeah, the bounce is unusual for hard court. You don't see that when you play hard courts.

I came from a tournament last week where the ball was skidding more throughout the court and wasn't as bouncy. It takes a few days to adjust to that, because your ball-eye coordination is a specific kind of way, and now you have to kind of readjust and reconfigure yourself to match those speeds, and perhaps sometimes you are too early. I don't have that very often that I'm too early to the shot or to the ball.

I feel like it kind of stops sometimes. It doesn't really go through the court. But it reminds me a lot of clay. Like it literally feels like a clay-court version of hard, yeah.

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