

BNP Paribas Open

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Ben Shelton

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Questions.

Q. Nice job in Dallas. You were talking a bit about self-belief after winning that tournament, and I just wondered, that can be a tricky thing, whether it comes from you or comes from the team around you, or it comes from just getting more match play in. I just wonder if you'd talk about that a little bit, how that works for you?

BEN SHELTON: No, I mean, I think it's important both ways. You've got to first have belief in yourself, that's most important, but you have to have a team also that fuels that fire and truly believes in you.

And for me, I have always had that, and I think that's just a very important part of it, because there is going to be certain times as a professional athlete in whatever you do, self-belief drops a little bit, or confidence drops a little bit and you've got to have the people there supporting you.

And that's not that they're not honest with you about where you're at and the things that you need to do or what you might need to change but always believe in you achieving the goals that you want to achieve.

So I think delusional belief or confidence isn't always a bad thing, and I think a lot of the greats and successful people, you know, turn what seems to be delusional belief into success.

Q. We saw that really cool video of you meeting up with Arthur Fils, and I think the tournament put it up. What is it like to have sort of friends on tour that you can sort of meet up with, maybe spend time off the court with while you're at a tournament? Is that an important element for you to have that as well?

BEN SHELTON: Yeah, I think it's definitely important. The tennis tour is long, and, you know, we see a lot of these people more than we see our own families. My dad is my coach, so I guess I see him more than anybody (smiling).

You're around these guys a lot, and it is cool to see a guy like Arthur who's, yeah, one of my closest friends, also a

huge talent and a huge addition to this tour, come out here after a long time. Being injured and finding success his third or fourth tournament back was pretty cool to see.

So I think it's great to be able to hang out with guys like that. Obviously we're very competitive, but we're also close friends. Our families are close friends too.

Q. You obviously got through three, four pretty tight matches in Dallas, a bunch of three-setters. So in terms of confidence, is it more important for you to scrape through matches like that, or is it blowing guys off the court that makes you feel like you're playing at a top level?

BEN SHELTON: It depends. I mean, it gives you a lot of confidence as a competitor when you're getting through the tough ones and coming up in the clutch moments. I played my best tennis when my back was against the wall, so I take a lot of confidence from that.

Obviously when you're blowing people off the court, you feel really good about your level, but, you know, those good days where everything is going well and you're breaking guys, not getting broken, and just going through sets easily, they don't come all that often.

A lot of days, you know, it's a lot tougher, there is a lot more adversity on the court, there's a lot more things you have to deal with throughout the course of a match to find a way to win, so I think at the end of the day a win is a win. Honestly, it makes it sweeter when you win the way I did in Dallas, but I think that there is definitely two ways of thinking about it.

Q. How do you stay focused when there are so many things going on in the world, preparing for a tournament like this and you've got international tensions? You guys travel all over the world, wars are breaking out. Do you talk about it in the locker room? Do you feel safe when you're traveling?

BEN SHELTON: No, I mean, it's tough, for sure. You know, this last tour I had friends playing in a tournament in Mexico with a lot of conflict, friends in the Middle East



playing there still, people that are stuck over there.

It's brutal to think about some of that. We talk about it all the time, obviously praying for all the people, families affected and people who are stuck in tough situations right now.

Yeah, it certainly isn't easy, and it is something that's on all of our minds.

Q. You have an innate sense of style off court, and I'm curious how important it is for you to translate that onto your on-court kits. Do you work closely with On for designing and selecting your next outfits? Like how involved are you in that process?

BEN SHELTON: Yeah, it's something that we get deeper into every year. You know, without sharing too much, that's just been a really cool organic partnership for me that has grown. I was their first tennis player, and we started with one kit, and it's kind of just evolved from there.

So just to see their growth as a company and to be able to work together with them through that process has been really cool for me and being able to be one of a few tennis players that they have. And seeing the success of the group that they have, foreign players that they have signed, it's felt special to be a part of.

Q. At the Austin Open for the women, they introduced this Rage Room where people could kind of just go in there, no cameras, no nothing. Curious what your thoughts on something like that are, and would you actually use it if you were in a tournament?

BEN SHELTON: I mean, yeah, probably (smiling). I probably would use it. I have to look at -- I didn't hear about it or see anything about it, but yeah, I'd probably use it. Yeah, I've got some anger, for sure (smiling).

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