

BNP Paribas Open

Monday, March 9, 2026

Alex Michelsen

Press Conference



A. MICHELSEN/T. Fritz

6-4, 7-6

THE MODERATOR: Alex, congratulations. Well done, especially in that second-set tiebreak. What got you over the line today?

ALEX MICHELSEN: Yeah, definitely got a little lucky at the end but stayed as tough as I could. Had a tough game at 5-4, felt like I should have served it out there, but stayed composed, won a pretty tight breaker the other night against Humbert, so I was telling myself, you know, another breaker, you live for these. Yeah, got away with it in the end.

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

Q. Seemed like you had a lot of energy right from the start of the match. Talk about your plan coming into the match.

ALEX MICHELSEN: Well, yeah, to beat someone like Taylor, you have to go out there and have a lot of energy. I feel like that's also kind of my style. I'm one of those guys that shows a little more energy, shows a little more positivity and negativity. Both ways, right?

Yeah, and then game plan was try to take away his strengths, because he's such a good ball striker, makes a lot of balls. I was just trying to take that away from him as much as I could.

Q. I was at the Ugo match, and you made two gutsy volleys in the third-set breaker. Today against Taylor, you made a beautiful backhand low volley. How much of that is instinctual and how much is you're trying to evolve your game? How do you see your style developing?

ALEX MICHELSEN: Yeah, I think it's pretty instinctual. Growing up, I always went to the net a lot and did a lot of volley stuff, a lot of doubles stuff. I've always felt like I've had pretty good volleys. Obviously, I can get a lot better, because I still miss them and don't put them away when I

should.

It's definitely one of the things I'm looking to improve, because to beat these really good guys, you have to have weapons and be able to finish off points. I think being at the net is another progression of that.

Q. Wondered how you find playing someone you hit with and know pretty well, how you find that dynamic?

ALEX MICHELSEN: Yeah, he knows what I'm going to do and I know what he's going to do in a lot of circumstances. We've practiced a lot, especially the last six months. I think, you know, being the worst player out of the two of us, I think it benefits me more, because I know what he's doing.

So I think it definitely helped me today that we practice a lot, yeah.

Q. Just because you have a sense of his patterns and...

ALEX MICHELSEN: Yeah, his patterns and what he likes to do with serves and first balls and stuff like that. Yeah, that's pretty much it, yeah.

Q. Seeing Learner beat Ben yesterday, did that in any way fire you up to come out on this one?

ALEX MICHELSEN: I mean, yeah, a little bit. I was super happy for him. I talked to him after the match. I was texting him, and he texted me after I won today.

Yeah, it's always nice when we try and go like this to each other, try and one-up each other. He's definitely beating me right now, so I have to catch him eventually. It's really fun.

We're both doing super well at the same tournament. Doesn't happen very often, but we're enjoying it a lot, and we're rooting for each other, for sure.

Q. Taylor has called this his home tournament, but with you from Orange County and him having



Southern California ties, does it mean something more to you to do it here?

ALEX MICHELSEN: Also my home tournament, as well. My parents are here. They never really travel with me. It's really cool to have them here. Had some buddies from college that were here last week and old coaches and stuff like that.

I think it's a blessing to play this close to home and have people you know and love around.

Q. You and Learner both came up through kind of the cauldron of the Southern California very competitive section. Give me some thoughts on how that helped you become a pro player.

ALEX MICHELSEN: Growing up, everyone in our section was super, super good. Learner was always at the top. He was at the top since he was 12. I wasn't always at the top.

There were so many good guys. A lot of them I'm still friends with, because we played the same tournaments for years and years. I think that really helped my development. You don't have to travel a lot. If you're from Nebraska, you've got to go somewhere else, right?

I was super lucky, never really had to drive more than an hour to tournaments growing up. Great competition, great training. Got super lucky there.

Q. He talked about you sort of handling the wind better than he did.

ALEX MICHELSEN: The wind? The wind.

Q. Did you feel the same way? Is that something you feel is a skill of yours?

ALEX MICHELSEN: I wasn't thinking about the wind too much. I didn't think it was that bad today. My first-round match it was really, really windy. When I played on Stadium 2, it was really, really windy.

I didn't really think about it. I knew on one side it was definitely you could feel it a lot more than the other. But I wasn't trying to think about it, because I feel like the second I try to think about it and overthink it, it just becomes too much and I make stupid decisions.

But I noticed it a little bit, I hit one dropshot into the wind and it stopped dead and he couldn't get it because of the wind. That was when I kind of recognized it, but I tried not to think about too much.

Q. How important a win does this feel to you?

ALEX MICHELSEN: It's a very important win. Top-10 player, been top American for many years, someone I have looked up to for a long time.

It's a very big win for me, especially to do it out here close to home and get another fourth round of a Masters, I think it's my second time. Yeah, it's a big win for me.

Q. Taylor said you served really well. How do you feel about that?

ALEX MICHELSEN: I think I did serve really well. Thanks, Taylor. I think I did serve really well.

I think the 5-4 game I got broken. I think I just got a little tight, didn't make any first serves. Yeah, I felt like I was making a lot of first serves, hitting spots well, and I was hitting all four of the spots so he couldn't really get a read, I felt like. Yeah, I think I served really well today.

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