

Davis Cup Finals

Sunday, 28 November 2021

Team USA

Frances Tiafoe

Press Conference

F. TIAFOE/N. Mejia

4-6, 6-3, 7-6

USA - 1

Colombia - 0

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. Try to describe some of the emotions you felt at the end. I felt like there were tears on both sides of the net, hugs, emotions, everything. How did that feel?

FRANCES TIAFOE: Felt extremely good. Never won a Davis Cup match before. Last tie I played in 2018, lost both, lost in the fifth rubber. Borna was super emotional, so I know how it feels on the other side. Still had somewhat of a chance to get through. It's not looking like it now, but, yeah, I just really wanted to win.

Just in general for Davis Cup win and for everybody, I'm already out here. I was on vacation before this. I wasn't supposed to play. I came out here, I'm going to give it my all.

Yeah, it was emotional, but in the end I'm happy I got a win for everybody and I put myself on the line for the country.

Q. I think you were delayed? When did you get the call up?

FRANCES TIAFOE: I got the call on Saturday. Man, I was with my girlfriend, we were in Cabo, having mimosas every morning and just chilling out. Thought my season was done after Stockholm. I was cool with it. I was getting ready to eat my feast for Thanksgiving, and plans changed real quick.

Flight got canceled in Houston, got stuck in Houston. So I had a lot of adversity things going in. So I was like, If I'm playing, I'm gonna fucking play hard.

It was nice. I'm happy my girlfriend came here with me.



But, yeah, I'm happy I ended up getting a win.

Q. What made the difference in the end? How did you pull through that?

FRANCES TIAFOE: I have no idea. I'm still trying to figure it out. He was playing so good, man. He was playing so well. I was throwing a lot of stuff at him, doing some cat and mouse, ripping my forehand, coming to the net. I tried to stay in some long rallies. He was just always there, it seems.

Yeah, I had some looks. 4-3, had that forehand, 15-40. He played really well. He played well yesterday too. He had some chances with Sonego there too.

Davis Cup is a different beast. It's not like when it's me and him playing. He's got his team and I've got my team. I think it's a little different of a match. Because I have been playing great this indoor season, but I'm playing a little tired than I usually would, different circumstances.

Yeah, I got a little lucky at the end, got a look at a pass, and he tightened up and I took it in the end. Yeah.

Q. I don't know if you know, but you're nominated for the Sportsmanship Award. One of the guys on the ATP Tour nominated. I wonder what that means to you?

FRANCES TIAFOE: I mean, it's pretty cool. I really didn't even think about it. Never really argue with guys. You know, I joke around a lot with a lot of guys during the match, try to have fun. People think it's me not taking it seriously. I wasn't thinking about it, but, yeah, I joke with the refs and stuff like that.

Yeah, now thinking about it, I shouldn't be too surprised, but at the same time I am surprised because that's not something I really think about. I'm not going out there like I need to be the nicest guy out there. I think it goes a long way. It takes nothing being nice, just being a good person. I mean, I'm happy, and hopefully I get that, something else to put on the résumé.

Q. You mentioned it's three years since your last appearance in this competition. Did you have some pent-up energy for that one after especially what



happened against Coric back in 2018?

FRANCES TIAFOE: I wasn't thinking about that too much, I more wanted to win and hopefully try to get through. That was my main focus. It's a different match. I think the guy is younger than me. Honestly, I don't even know the guy really.

Yeah, you know, I'm supposed to win, but, you know, he's gonna play crazy well, and also you're nervous. It was a different match.

I was just happy to get through. I was going to battle to the end and make him beat me, and I came up with the win, luckily.

Q. He's 275 in the world. What's your take on where he should be in terms of the level today?

FRANCES TIAFOE: I want to see him play on a normal day when he doesn't have this big of a crowd, playing out in the challengers and things like that. It's a different circumstance. Some guys rise to these occasions and some guys fold.

Obviously he rose to the occasion. It's not easy when you go and play these smaller challengers and try to get up. Everybody is hungry and wants to play in the ATPs and have opportunity to play in slams. It's hard. Obviously he hasn't figured out quite to get through that. But he's a good player. He has a lot of heart, moves really well. Offense is not great, but his defense is unbelievable.

Yeah, I mean, he's a hell of a fighter too.

Q. In such a tight match like that, how was having Mardy on the side? How much was he able to guide you through those tight moments?

FRANCES TIAFOE: Yeah, Mardy is cool. Trying to keep my level, have me weather the storm. I'm a guy, I like to -- I feel like I adapt pretty well to things. He's more kind of keep things light and just trying to make it fun for me and keep backing myself. We were kind of joking on it on the sidelines, stuff like that.

He had some big takes at certain moments for me to stay in it when I'm panicking a little bit. He's been through those moments. He understands it. He's played Davis Cup and some of the biggest matches in the world. It was cool to have him. I have a ton of respect for him. Anything he has to say, it goes a long way.

Q. How did you find the atmosphere? Of course it's a neutral site. On TV it seemed like a pretty lively

atmosphere, maybe a few more Colombian supporters in the crowd. How did it feel for you out there?

FRANCES TIAFOE: No, people were going crazy. People were really into it. For me, I mean, I don't mind like, as long as there is people in the stadium, whether cheering for me or not cheering for me. Usually when I'm playing well I can get the crowd relatively even. Usually like to enjoy what I'm doing out there, but as long as there is people in there, if they are cheering against me, that's totally fine.

I just like an atmosphere. I feel like that's what it's about. You work so hard to play in front of people and show people what you can do. Whether they are for me or not, I just like to be in an atmosphere, if I can play, I can enjoy, I really want to compete.

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