

Rolex Shanghai Masters

Tuesday, 3 October 2023

Shanghai, China

Zhang Zhizhen

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Ladies and gentlemen, welcome to the press conference of Zhang Zhizhen. Today's press conference, we're going to start with English and then switch to Chinese. Please ask one question at a time. If we still have time, we will give you the second chance to ask the next question.

Before you ask questions, please tell us where you're from and your name. Every time, one question per time. Before your questions, please tell us your media outlets and your name. Thank you very much.

So, Zhizhen, welcome back to your hometown to start at Rolex Shanghai Masters. How do you feel about the preparation so far after gold medal at Hangzhou?

ZHANG ZHIZHEN: It is not easy from the last week and it's a very short time between Asian Games and Chinese Masters, so I had only a few days to practice. Also, I will try the center court after the match of the day today.

So I mean, I think the schedule is out already, right? Not yet. Okay. So I leave it (laughing). But still, there's a big chance to play center court again and also happy to play in Shanghai Masters that's four years after already. So, yeah, let's get some good result.

THE MODERATOR: Any other English questions, please.

Q. I was wondering, if you could, talk about your memories of this event, whether you attended as a child, and also playing here.

ZHANG ZHIZHEN: Well, the memory here was, first memory here because it's the final, final eight here. That's a long, long, long time before, and then it become the Masters. Also, this year is the first year of, like, a two-weeks Masters. Like, it's a big one. That's all I have the memory. Still I don't have a one set win in the Masters, so that's also some memory for me.

Q. And you are China's No. 1 men's player. That comes with a lot of attention. I know the fans are sort of chasing you for autographs and your photo is

everywhere. How do you cope with that attention?

ZHANG ZHIZHEN: Well, I was surprised. I was pretty surprised that there's one at the milk shops. There's a big face of me. I was, like -- everyone see me and said, like, Man, you're everywhere here. I said, Really? But, okay, I didn't see it because I come in from Hangzhou, so it's by car. I didn't went to the airport. They say, Airport everywhere it's your face and here everywhere is you. So really I have no idea. But, sorry, give me one week, only one week for the whole year, so leave it.

Q. Do you enjoy the attention?

ZHANG ZHIZHEN: Yes, I mean, I'm happy to be like this. I mean, well, one week enjoy, it's fine.

THE MODERATOR: If no more English questions, we'll take questions in Chinese.

Q. First of all, congratulations on getting the Asian Games champion. Any plans and objectives for the Shanghai Masters in particular after you won the Asian Games?

ZHANG ZHIZHEN: In terms of my plan and objective, I think I'll try to focus on winning the first game. That will be terrific because I have never had any wins in the Shanghai Masters, so I'll try to be down to it step by step.

Q. We can see that in the Asian Games, there are two female players who went to the finals but didn't play very well at the China Open. So could you tell us, how well are you physically?

ZHANG ZHIZHEN: Yes, I also focus on the -- I also paid attention to the other players. I think I am okay, so I think I can still play well. I hope I can recover much better in these days, and hopefully, there is no surprise for me at the game. I think I can continue to play well.

Q. This is your hometown. What would you feel?

ZHANG ZHIZHEN: Yeah, I am very happy. Last week it was also in China, but this week it is really in front of my

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home, so to speak, so I want to make full use of the home game advantage.

Q. I can see that tennis is a very important game. Could you tell us, it's very important to keep quiet at the court.

ZHANG ZHIZHEN: Tennis is a little bit special, I think. When you hit the ball, every minute we are actually making choices. If there are noises, it might interfere with our judgment, so I think it's actually not a good thing to give advice from outside the court.

Q. You mentioned that there are a lot of pictures of you when you come back to Shanghai. You are a celebrity now. Could you just tell us, what's your feeling now?

ZHANG ZHIZHEN: This is the first time that I can see my pictures everywhere. I also see my pictures on the milk bottle. Like what I said a minute ago, this is also a pretty good feeling that I can enjoy for a week in my hometown. I think it's okay just one week out of 365 days. It's a different feeling. It gives me a warmup for being a top-seeded player and the feelings coming from that.

Q. I also want to ask, on one of the advertisements, it says to speak less and act more. How do you feel about that?

ZHANG ZHIZHEN: I think this really fits with my character. I don't want to talk too much. I focus more on actions. For example, I didn't say anything after winning the Asian Games, but this is a very busy period for me, so I will do a year-end summary. I don't want to talk too much.

Q. Two questions about G.E.M. I wonder whether you've noticed the background music at the Asian Games. It's from singer G.E.M. How do you feel about that? Will you feel pressurized if she comes to see you play?

ZHANG ZHIZHEN: Yeah, I noticed that. I told them it's better not to play too much background music. Indeed, I think it's a little bit helpful to calm my nerves, and for me, it's pretty good. I still remember that in 2015, in Shenzhen, I also heard the music again from the same singer at the court. If possible, I'd rather gain more information after the games rather than before the games.

Q. You were pretty down in February and March this year, and now you've experienced a lot of exciting moments, and then now you are winning the Asian Games. What's your take on that?

ZHANG ZHIZHEN: My take is that don't give up too early. At the beginning of the year, I was pretty down. Now, looking back, I think I need to stick to my game and there is always hope. Tennis is like a marathon rather than a short sprint, so I need to give myself more time and be patient.

Q. Could you share with us the role of Wu Di in your team?

ZHANG ZHIZHEN: Wu Di is the chief coach of the Shanghai team. That's his main role. In some of the matches in China, he will come to discuss with me about my game. If it's outside China, whenever he is there at the court, I didn't play very well, but I would always welcome him to see my match. I think he is my coach and also friend.

During the Asian Games he gave me a lot of advice. I wanted him to be at the back of the court, but then he misunderstood, so he left, although I believed that he would always watch me, watch my game. Although he, at the time, including many people, misunderstood my intention, I still want his attention, of course.

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