

Rolex Shanghai Masters

Friday, 6 October 2023

Shanghai, China

Zhang Zhizhen

Press Conference



ZHANG ZHIZHEN/T. Etcheverry

4-6, 6-3, 6-4

THE MODERATOR: Ladies and gentlemen, welcome to the press conference for Zhang Zhizhen. We'll do English questions first as usual and then move to the native language.

So, first off, congratulations, Zhizhen. You are the first Chinese player to win back-to-back matches at Rolex Shanghai Masters. Are you excited about your performance in front of the home crowd?

ZHANG ZHIZHEN: Yes, of course, because it's first time I winning two match in front of Shanghai. I mean, like what I always say, before I had a zero wins, zero sets, so this time it's quite special for me. Today was pretty hard to win because Etcheverry was giving a lot of toughness to me and, yeah, still I'm super excited.

THE MODERATOR: English questions, please.

Q. Congratulations on the win. How do you think you turned it around today?

ZHANG ZHIZHEN: Because first set I had only one break, I mean, he had only one break up. His service game I couldn't make too many things because I feel my returning is something wrong.

In the second set and third set I tried to change a little bit my position and it works. So this is help a lot.

Q. You face Brandon Nakashima next. What are your thoughts ahead of that one?

ZHANG ZHIZHEN: Well, also first time I think we never played each other. That's Sunday's problem. At the moment I just still want to enjoy a little bit so I will leave it for tomorrow.

Q. And you've made more history for Chinese tennis here today. How much does that mean to you?

ZHANG ZHIZHEN: Oh, history. Again, we have so many history can make because before we are, before we couldn't have too many good results. So, I mean, hopefully we can put more history on my career. Yeah, I'm happy to do this part of job (laughing).

THE MODERATOR: Questions in Chinese.

Q. First of all, congratulations. Last time I asked you about your next objective. Now the moderator has asked the same question. I want to ask, what's your preparations for the next match, and then could you comment on the serving of your opponent?

ZHANG ZHIZHEN: I haven't started to think about the next match. I only know that I haven't played the next opponent.

Today's match is tough. For my opponent today, he's having very good serves today, which has created a lot of threat for me. Then I've adjusted my position at the second and third sets, catching a few opportunities. A few of his first serves are very powerful and, yeah, it's tough.

Q. First impression on you was when you were 18, back in 2015. Now you're sitting here having a lot of very good results and a lot of breakthroughs. So, looking back, any feelings that you can share with us?

ZHANG ZHIZHEN: Well, if we look back to 2015, it's a mixed journey. Usually in odd years, for example, 2015, 2017 and 2019, I was playing pretty well. That was also the case in 2021, although we had the pandemic.

However, at even years, strangely enough, I didn't play very well. I didn't have a lot of memories for 2015, but compared with what I was there in 2015 I think I am more confident and more mature. Before I was not confident in the court. Now it's a different thing. I hope I can have some influence on the game.

Q. I can see the ATP Twitter posting a video of you saying, Living the dream. From the US Open to the Asian Games and then to this breakthrough at the

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Shanghai Masters, can we say that you are living in a dream world?

ZHANG ZHIZHEN: No, it's not a dream world. I think it's actually within my expectations or, in other words, it's not that outstanding which is out of my expectation.

I think I am far more confident in myself now. I trust myself for being able to win some games. This is also the case with Asian Games. I also realized that some of the top players did not come for the games, so luck is another factor.

The good thing is, when opportunities come you will be able to catch it. I think that's part of the reasons how you get good result.

Q. We watched your game, it's very tight and excellent match. We can also see that there are a few match points. The fans in the audience were also very excited. Could you share with us your feelings when you face these match points and the way you hear the cheers from the crowd?

ZHANG ZHIZHEN: You may think that I am very calm, but this is not the case for me. I can see very clearly that I am a bit nervous. Some of the mistakes I know very clearly are because of my nervousness. I did tell myself that I need to try to find other ways to try to win a shot. I think these are the lessons that I concluded from my matches. I've learned a lot from the last set today.

Q. Many people focused on your match today. There are basically two feedbacks: One is you are very confident, you are brave. Then the second feedback is you are a brand person now.

ZHANG ZHIZHEN: Well, for me I know I have to make a few changes in my tactic and let the opponent move. I think I am making progress. I'm getting more mature. I still make mistakes, but I try to make less mistakes. I can only say that I am making progress.

Q. The day after tomorrow you are going to have doubles with Sinner. Do you talk to each other about the match for the day after tomorrow?

ZHANG ZHIZHEN: Not yet. I haven't seen him yet. Of course, I hope he can focus on the singles first. It's a tiring trip for him traveling from Beijing to Shanghai. I think he's going to have a match tomorrow, and then after that we're going to talk about our doubles on the day after tomorrow.

Q. A follow-up question about Sinner. How do you getting each other to play doubles for this Masters?

He actually beat your old friend Medvedev. Did you watch the finals on China Open? Which one did you support?

ZHANG ZHIZHEN: I began to know him as early as 2017 when I went to Italy for training. We also played doubles in the futures. I think it's a very good opportunity for us to play doubles again at the Shanghai Masters. I look forward to it. Both Sinner and I hopefully are making progress. I look forward to it.

Q. Today ATP announced the schedule for the United Cup for next year. 18 teams will join there. If China would participate will you be there?

ZHANG ZHIZHEN: If China is going to play, I definitely will go there. I don't know. The deadline is next Monday, the 17th of October. For me I think there is still a chance, so I will make great efforts towards it. We tried already for this year's United Cup and we definitely hope that next year we can join the 2024 United Cup. Thank you.

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