

Rolex Shanghai Masters

Saturday, 7 October 2023

Shanghai, China

Tommy Paul

Mixed Zone



T. PAUL/S. Ofner

6-3, 6-0

Q. Congratulations. Only three games dropped in under an hour. A debut doesn't get any more convincing than that.

TOMMY PAUL: Yeah, it was a good match. I actually played really well. I didn't miss too many balls today. I thought I served pretty well. From the first game of the match, I thought I was putting a lot of pressure on him. That was kind of the goal.

Q. It must have been good to, I guess, get a quick win considering the weather's not looking great out there, get it done?

TOMMY PAUL: Definitely. I mean, when it started raining, we were still in the fourth game of the second set, and I was lucky to kind of get the break there. We could have stopped or he had some game points there, so then it made coming out at 4-0, double break, a little easier, a little bit more relaxed, rather than one break. We kind of got lucky, like you said, with the rain and it held off there for a bit.

Q. This is the first time that you've played this tournament, I understand. How are you enjoying it so far, just generally the conditions and the city?

TOMMY PAUL: Yeah, I really like the courts. Yeah, it's actually my first time in China. I was in Beijing last week, but I've never been here before. It's definitely a cool experience.

Yeah, this tournament's really nice. Like, the hotel's pretty good and the area's nice and the site is good for all the players. As far as courts, I like the courts a lot, so I'm excited to play more matches on 'em.

Q. This season generally, I mean, you must be very happy with how it's unfolded.

TOMMY PAUL: Yeah, I mean, we still got, I guess, four tournaments left, so we're going to do as much as I can with these four tournaments, and hopefully, put a nice bowtie on the whole year.

Q. I wanted to ask you about American tennis. It's obviously thriving at the moment. What are your thoughts on how well things are going?

TOMMY PAUL: I would say I'm excited about it. I know a lot of people would say it's about time or we've been waiting long enough. I mean, tennis is a tough sport and it's probably the 20th most popular sport in the States. Like, nobody cares about it, and we still have, like, two people in the top 10. So it's kind of cool that we're actually up at the top of the game. I mean, all our best athletes go into other sports, so there's our excuse, I guess.

Q. I talked to Ben Shelton yesterday, and he said he just loves having people like yourself around, and I think he said they're like big brothers. How does that make you feel?

TOMMY PAUL: No, it's awesome. I didn't know Ben too much, like, when he was 17 or younger, but I knew his dad a bit, and when he first came on the tour, I mean, I wouldn't say I took him under my wing or anything, but I like the kid, and I knew he was going to be good. It's fun having him around. He's definitely young. He's got that young-kid energy, so it's a lot of fun, especially with the group of older guys that we have now.

I mean, it's weird to call us older guys, but, like, coming up with Foe and Fritz, we just have a bunch of good players, so it's cool to have that young guy come in and really push us. I mean, it's almost bringing us together in a way.

Q. I guess that speaks to the kind of success-breeds-success element of the whole situation.

TOMMY PAUL: Yeah, absolutely. I think you see it in a lot of different generations in tennis. This one, it's pretty cool because, I mean, it's in the States. I mean, we had a lot of people in the last generation push each other from different

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countries and this time it seems like most of us are playing for the States and pushing each other, so it's cool.

Q. You spoke about tennis is not hugely, well, as popular, I should say, in the U.S., but did you feel kind of a vibe growing at the US Open?

TOMMY PAUL: Oh, big-time. I think tennis is growing a ton in the States right now. Hopefully, we can get more kids to pick up tennis in the States and play tennis and watch tennis.

But I think, like you said, I think in the US Open this year, it was a massive difference. I think people in the States like, they like winners, so the better that the Americans are doing, the more they want to come out. It's really exciting this year. Moving forward, I think everyone's going to be really excited about it.

Q. You came out blazing at the start of the season, semifinal in Australia. Are you thinking an opportunity to bookend your season with a great result at the start and a great result at the end?

TOMMY PAUL: Yeah, that would be nice. That would be great. Obviously, like I said, there's four tournaments left, and I want to try and rack up as many points as I can at the end of the year. I have an opportunity to go for a career-high ranking and keep moving up the ranking, so it would be nice to set myself up well.

Q. Next up you'll have either Davidovich Fokina or Arthur Fils. Any thoughts looking ahead?

TOMMY PAUL: Yeah, I don't really know. I'm going to watch that match, for sure. I've played Fokina quite a few times. I've never played Fils, but he was at Laver Cup, and I watched him play quite a bit and actually practiced with him a couple days ago. So I have a good idea of both their games, but I'm excited to watch that match.

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