

Rolex Shanghai Masters

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Shanghai, China

Ben Shelton

Press Conference



B. SHELTON/J. Sinner

2-6, 6-3, 7-6

THE MODERATOR: Ladies and gentlemen, welcome to the press conference of Ben Shelton. We'll do English questions first.

Ben, first off, congratulations. You have unlocked a lot of first times this year, and this is your first time celebrating your birthday overseas, and also your first quarterfinal at a Masters 1000 event. How do you feel about your performance in Shanghai?

BEN SHELTON: Yeah, it's been a really cool week or couple of weeks now. I really enjoyed my time here. I'm playing well, so it's been fun to experience another place and another tournament and, yeah, it feels really great to get a win tonight against such an elite player.

THE MODERATOR: Any questions?

Q. Congratulations. You're thousands of miles away from your home and you have thousands of Chinese fans saying, 'Happy Birthday' to you, how do you feel about that?

BEN SHELTON: Yeah, that was really cool for me, definitely not something that I would have expected, that I would be in this situation this year, and to have, you know, or come in to a country as a foreigner and have people from here, you know, chanting for me and singing 'Happy Birthday' to me, definitely something that's really special and unique, and I feel really blessed to be able to be here and have that opportunity.

Q. It's obviously been a year of really valuable learning for you. What's been the most important lesson?

BEN SHELTON: Most important lesson? I think that there's a couple. I think that, you know, being out on tour as a tennis player, it's easy for you to think that the world revolves around you, but it doesn't.

For me, I think how I treat people every single day, around the site, and the people who work for the tournament, it really couldn't happen without them. I think that it's easy, just being in the situation myself and seeing it, it would be easy to take it for granted and think that, you know, you're a star or you're bigger than you really are. I think that staying true to myself and treating people the right way day-in and day-out, no matter how I'm feeling, losing a match, winning a match, I think that's probably one of the biggest lessons that I've learned.

I guess the other biggest lesson I've learned is just, you know, people are always watching the things that you do and say. Being a college kid a year and a half ago, that wasn't something that I expected or to be in that situation now. It's something that, you know, happened quite quickly and was kind of a shock to me.

Q. Is there anything that you learned about yourself in the course of that match or learned from that match?

BEN SHELTON: Yeah, I think, you know, I can obviously take a lot of confidence from that match, and belief. I think my toughness level and how resilient I was able to be on the court, I surprised myself a little bit. I definitely had a lot of chances throughout the match and he came up with the goods time and time again. Break points, he hit his spots and came up with the great plays.

Going down the stretch, knowing I had had a lot of opportunities that I didn't convert, and being able to get over the finish line after being up big in the tiebreaker and him coming back and putting a lot of pressure on me, I think that, you know, I learned a lot about myself.

Q. Your next match is against Sebe Korda. All-American battle. What are your thoughts on that?

BEN SHELTON: Yeah, I'm really excited whenever Americans are going deep in the draw, it's something really cool for me to see, so one of us will be in the semifinals here in Shanghai, which is awesome.

But, yeah, looking forward to it. Sebe's a great guy and



playing really, really good form. He beat the No. 2 player in the world, No. 3 player in the world, Medvedev, and arguably one of the best hard court seasons on tour. I think that shows how well Sebe's playing and, yeah, I'm really looking forward to a battle.

Q. So this is the first year you play professional tennis tournament outside of America. So can you tell us the biggest difference you saw on playing tournaments in the States and also playing in Europe and also playing in China?

BEN SHELTON: Yeah, I think, you know, the biggest shock for me wasn't the places that I traveled to, it was just how much travel there was, and how continuous this tour is, how few breaks in the schedule there are. I would say that's been the biggest surprise to me, you know, going week after week after week, and having to pick yourself up. If you had a good week, maybe you're tired because you played a lot of matches. If you had a poor week, you know, you have to get that out of your mind going into the next week. I would say that's the biggest shock or thing that I didn't expect.

Q. You had an amazing year. What do you expect for the end of the season? Also, like, is the Nex Gen Masters is a goal for you?

BEN SHELTON: Yeah, I'm definitely trying to juggle a lot of things, figure things out with my schedule at the end of the season, so I can end up fresh for Australia and ready to go.

I'm not quite sure of my schedule yet after Paris. I'm still figuring it out. But, yeah, I'm enjoying, you know, this last part of the season, to be able to play at least two indoor tournaments in Vienna and Paris. I really enjoy playing on indoor hard court, so really excited to get back in there to finish the year.

Q. Talking about American players, you also have Laver Cup teammate, like Taylor Fritz or Tiafoe, who were out very early in Shanghai. How do you keep your energy and the focus and the well prepared for Shanghai?

BEN SHELTON: Yeah, for me it was really important after Laver Cup to be able to go home for a week and have another good training block. I felt like I had played a lot of matches lately in this portion of the season, and it was most important for me to be able to decompress a little bit and spend a week at home.

I showed up fairly late to Shanghai, probably later than most players. I got here on Monday night before the

tournament started. I think I played my first match on Friday.

I think it was good for me to be home for a week, and it really helped me to show up here, feel like I have a fresh start, and really be prepared to finish the season strong.

Q. Obviously your first time in China. I'm curious, if your friends back in the States asked you, Tell us three things about China, what would you say?

BEN SHELTON: You know, obviously I haven't been out of Shanghai yet, but I would say, you know, Shanghai's a very modern city. Lots of high-rise buildings. I couldn't believe, driving here, how many huge buildings that I've seen.

Going to the Bund, I had my birthday dinner kind of on the water last night, so pretty cool view there.

THE MODERATOR: Okay. Thank you everyone.

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