

# China Open

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Beijing, China

## Zhou Yi

### Press Conference



A. DAVIDOVICH-FOKINA/Zhou Yi

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THE MODERATOR: Welcome to the press conference of Zhou Yi. Today we have Zhou Yi and also six special guests from the China Open training camp, six little hosts and hostesses.

We will start with the questions in English, then Chinese questions.

Zhou Yi, welcome. How was the match like and how do you feel right now?

ZHOU YI: It's incredible. I mean, it's the biggest match I ever been. It's got to be the best player I ever played.

I have to say I tried my best today, and I feel like I can only keep up with him. But he's definitely somebody who I have to improve and learn and improve as. I'll definitely try to be better.

I hope next time when I play him, I'm going to play better and try to beat him.

THE MODERATOR: Questions in Chinese.

**Q. Could you talk about how you felt again in Chinese in the Diamond Court.**

ZHOU YI: The most incredible match, because in Beijing, the home turf, the Diamond Court. I've been here many times but the first time playing here in front of so many audience members calling my name. That was incredible.

Today I think I did my best. There were some good points, but there's still a big gap. For me, it was an incredible experience.

**Q. You said that you came here as a kid. How old were you? Do you remember the first match you watched here?**

ZHOU YI: It wasn't that long ago. I started when I was 10. Before I started playing tennis, I was brought to watch the China Open. I was still playing badminton.

I don't remember who I watched. I was more impressed by the entertainment activities here. I saw the merchandise products with the Chinese flags. I just thought it was quite different from badminton.

The second time I came back I was already playing tennis. I was watching Novak's practice. I wanted his autograph, but I didn't get it (smiling).

**Q. You have been in the junior level Grand Slams, now coming into the ATP Tour. In terms of the level of intensity, did you feel that difference? Were you happy with your performance at the Grand Slams?**

ZHOU YI: I think indeed I could feel the difference, 250, 500. This is pretty competitive. In my daily practice, it wasn't that intense. At the junior level, everyone wants to win the championship. While it was a pity at the Australian Open, I wanted to go further, but it wasn't satisfying in the end.

I thought I played really well at the time, but that was the fact. I was quite happy with how I did.

**Q. To prepare for the China Open, how did you prepare for it, physical-wise, your game against this opponent? Did you prepare for this opponent?**

ZHOU YI: I don't know much about this opponent because in most of the matches I played, it was lower-tier players, junior players. This is the highest ranked players I've ever played against, top 30 (smiling). But Zhou Yi is only ranking 900 something.

I just came back to China. I played a few matches in Zhuhai, then came back to Beijing, then practiced with some players. I thought the preparation wasn't enough. It was never enough. But I did what I could.

Before the match I watched videos of him in previous matches, but that wasn't enough. But it was okay.



**Q. Transitioning from the juniors to the ATP Tour, what is the biggest difference? What kind of lessons have you drawn from these matches?**

ZHOU YI: I think the biggest challenge is the level of intensity. You're facing a whole new level. I'm facing more pressure for each point. You are at bigger events, facing many more different conditions and situations.

The experience I've learned before at the junior level was that I kind of was playing with no pressure. I could play with ease. But at the ATP level, I face more pressure. I had to deal with different conditions.

But there's progress and I can feel the challenge and improvement.

**Q. What is your evaluation of yourself? Are you making a smooth transition? Can you say a few things about your team. What is the ambition of your team?**

ZHOU YI: Jacques Hervet is my coach. Then my physiotherapist. It's still changing. Overall it's a large team, but it's not totally settled yet.

And what was your second question?

**Q. What is your ambition?**

ZHOU YI: The goal is I'm making this transition, but I'm really lucky. All of a sudden I have these opportunities to be in these bigger tournaments, bigger events. I had chances to go into the challenger events, now it jumped up to the ATP level. That was very lucky. This is a big jump.

This kind of performance is quite normal. I think next year I will be back to the challenger level, slowly, slowly making progress into the ATP level.

**Q. Could you talk about how you started playing tennis. Did you grow up in Beijing? I think you're based in Guangxi Province. Did your parents do sports? Did they like sports?**

ZHOU YI: I was born in Beijing, grew up in Beijing. No one from my family plays sports. I am the first one.

I liked to play around when I was a kid. I played basketball, badminton, all kinds of sports. But I wasn't really into tennis. I wanted to be a professional badminton player. Somehow I switched to tennis.

What was your question again?

**Q. The process...**

ZHOU YI: The process? Okay.

At the very beginning, like everyone else, because I was involved in many other sports, I got into it very quickly. I was into Nike Club as well as other teenager events. I did pretty well.

ITF in Shenzhen, that was the first time when I was 14. That wasn't great. Then 2020 COVID hit. I was training at home. It was delayed for another two years.

But I was lucky that I was able to play against national Chinese players. Then 2022 I went overseas. I was very lucky, some of the titles, then higher ranking.

This year, Grand Slams at the junior level. I was very fortunate to be a part of the Davis Cup. Very honored to be there. Now I'm back in China. Some wild card opportunities. That's it.

THE MODERATOR: Now comes the session of our junior journalists.

**Q. My question is, how do you look at victory and loss?**

ZHOU YI: Victory and loss (smiling)? Put it simply: tennis only has victory and loss. Victory is the winner, and the loss is the other person. It's not that simple. I didn't lose today because I did my best and I also learned something today. I improved a little bit.

I think victory means you have new experiences and improvement. You don't have to define it black and white.

**Q. Coming here into the China Open, how did you feel?**

ZHOU YI: I feel great because the China Open is an event I always aspired to play in. I'm really happy to be in the main draw. I'm a Beijing local. I have a lot of friends who came here. So I feel really honored to be here.

I'm really, really excited.

**Q. My question is, soccer, basketball, badminton, then tennis. What motivated you to make that change?**

ZHOU YI: Because those were my hobbies at the very beginning. I wanted to be a professional badminton player, but because of some personal reasons I wasn't able to follow through on that ambition.

At the time I was really into sports. My family members really liked tennis, and they thought it's a racquet sport, they think it's a very international sport, and I played very well. That's how I started.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you.

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