

China Open

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Beijing, China

Shang Juncheng

Press Conference



An interview with:

SHANG JUNCHENG

THE MODERATOR: Questions in Chinese.

Q. First round you'll be facing Bu. What is your reaction? On court, off court, what is your relationship with him?

SHANG JUNCHENG: When the draw came out, I asked my team whether it was a wild card or Chinese player. They said it was a very slim chance. Well, eventually it was Bu.

Off court we have a really good friendship, really good relationship. In the Grand Slams, we did it together. He is a few years older. We did not play juniors together. We did not train together. But we have a good relationship in general.

Q. In this generation we see really great performances from Chinese players. A great milestone for Chinese tennis. The great performance of Chinese players will be a great inspiration for the younger generation. What is your view? Were you ever inspired by older Chinese players in the past?

SHANG JUNCHENG: I think it really depends on different players. It would be a different story. If I can inspire any young tennis player, I would be really happy because in this regard I wouldn't be really thinking too much, I would focus on my own training, focus on myself. Zheng Zhizhen was the first one in the top 100.

Having really steady performances recently for so many Chinese players in the field, in the top 100, indeed very good, very good news for Chinese tennis.

I don't really want to compare myself against others. Every person is different. Every young tennis player is different. I try to learn from everyone else. Not from one single thing, one single player can motivate me to this point.

Q. Back to the China Open. You said your tennis started from the China Open, you started playing tennis because you came here. Now you're coming back here as a professional player. You said you did not look back on history. From your personal viewpoint, could you talk about the full-circle experience?

SHANG JUNCHENG: The China Open is very special to me. The first time I saw professional tennis was here. Before each match, of course I will feel the pressure thinking about wins or losses. Of course, the matches last year, I felt the pressure playing at home.

This year I will learn to focus on myself. I would love to enjoy every moment. When I talk about enjoying tennis, I think it's more challenging for other players. But for the whole year, I'm trying to adjust my mentality, trying to relax. I think relaxing would help raise my level. I hope I can do that next week.

Q. A question about your serve. Being 183 centimeters, it's tough to serve. How will you resolve this issue to make your serve more aggressive?

SHANG JUNCHENG: I think it really depends on different players. Evans, 178, shorter than me, his serve is really good, very aggressive. I can learn from that.

Of course, I would not be a really aggressive server. If I want to improve, it would be hitting angles, changing it up. Chengdu is a higher altitude, so it helps to speed up my serve. Every day I'm trying to strengthen my core, doing movement improvement.

Q. When you first entered the top 100, you said you didn't want to think about a specific goal because it's a trap, it would be distracting you from focusing on your training, your daily routine. How do you motivate yourself to be a better player?

SHANG JUNCHENG: I think goal-wise I'm not putting my goal into daily performance. I'm putting it on more practical grounds. My current goal is to, after Wimbledon, be healthy in the tournament, no injuries in the whole season.



I want to be happy. This goal is very important to each player. A relaxed person, a fresh mentality will help you in each tournament.

Q. Your father said, talking about your career choice, as a kid you enjoyed soccer. You said you chose tennis because you didn't have to collaborate with others. Are you happy with this choice now? Your parents have been a part of your team. Can you share experiences with other boys going through their teenage years?

SHANG JUNCHENG: As of now, I still really enjoy soccer because for tennis players, it would be really risky for me to participate in any soccer games. I am kicking my tennis ball to practice my coordination.

I really enjoy soccer. My dad had a really big injury from playing soccer. There's a lot of physical contact when you're playing soccer. They thought that playing tennis would be safer for me.

Looking back now, I think tennis is not that much safer than soccer (smiling).

I just enjoy sports in general. I think enjoying sport is a way for me to relax as a professional tennis player.

In terms of family, I think my parents have been telling me to enjoy the things you choose instead of putting a lot of pressure in terms of victory or loss.

The pressure actually comes from yourself. What would happen after a loss? What they have taught me is to adjust my mentality 100% into each match. No regret, just put yourself all in.

Q. Qinwen at the age of 21 won a gold medal in the Olympics. You are one of the youngest tennis players winning a title. What does it mean to you at the age of 19?

SHANG JUNCHENG: This question is tricky. It really depends on different players. We have different styles. We play different tennis. We face different opponents.

The age of 19 doesn't mean anything to me. Age is just a number. No matter how old you are, you need to be 100% in your preparation on court, you need to have a good mentality to face a match.

In this regard, I never really put much thought into age, my opponents. I just focus on myself.

Q. We saw your fashion shoot. We see a different side

of you. Any comments on these photos, your fashion shoot?

SHANG JUNCHENG: I really enjoyed it. Great photos. What are the comments? I wouldn't comment too much (smiling). I think the photographer was very professional, giving me great advice, where I should look. I think it was great teamwork to produce these photos.

Q. In 2024 at the China Open, do you have any family, friends coming here? Do you want them to be on-site?

SHANG JUNCHENG: Last week in Chengdu my grandparents came to watch. Having family around is very important. They can take some of the burden with me. Off court it was a very relaxing atmosphere. On court I felt the energy.

My father is with me in every tournament, every training session. He works very well with the whole team, with the fitness coach, with my coach, with my hitting partners. My parents are a very important part of my tennis career.

Q. You talked about the pressure playing at home last year. In Chengdu you said you now learned to enjoy it more. With fans cheering for you, is that a sort of pressure? How do you translate that into greater momentum?

SHANG JUNCHENG: After Shanghai last year, my coach said to me, It's never easy to play at home because you have higher expectations, as well as higher expectations from the public.

This year coming into Chengdu, I was sick on day one. I had a fever. I was just thinking about finishing the match with a good mentality because I wasn't feeling that great.

Coming to the China Open, it is very similar. I need to face the challenges and issues in the same way. The result is not that important.

Q. In your interview you emphasized enjoying. Enjoying is not that easy just by saying it. What kind of adjustments at your young age can you do so you can say you enjoy your career?

SHANG JUNCHENG: I think a professional tennis player is always on the road, playing matches on the road. You don't have that much time at home. Everything is about tennis. If you think about tennis every day, you are consumed by it. There's no other time for relaxation.

I think as a professional tennis player, relaxing is the most important thing, one of the top three things. No matter how



many titles you get, the most important thing is to have a great relationship with the people around you. I think tennis can come next. I think the people around you are more important.

The second half of 2024 I've been making this my largest goal so I can relax and enjoy more.

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