

China Open

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Beijing, China

Zhang Zhizhen

Press Conference



An interview with:

ZHANG ZHIZHEN

THE MODERATOR: We'll go straight to questions in English.

Q. I wanted to know what your reaction was after being able to play last week. How was the body feeling? Mentally, everything? What are your thoughts?

ZHANG ZHIZHEN: I feel pretty okay. I mean, first time after half year coming back, you won the first match, that's great for me already (smiling).

Even the second match was a little bit problem with the body. I mean, there's more soreness on the legs. But shoulder also maybe a little bit feeling better. It's much better than what we thought.

Before that, I never play two sets straight like for the practice, never. Always like separate. In the morning we have one set, afternoon we have another half set. We never go through two sets straight. First match we go for the three set, almost full.

I'm pretty happy that, like, everything was kind of healthy, yeah.

Q. When did you start being able to train pain-free?

ZHANG ZHIZHEN: Pain-free? Even now, because I'm training, as everyone see, I change serve and forehand. Forehand pain-free was long time, make a month let's say. But the serve, when the position is not right, still will get a little bit painful. It just kind of remind me to be the good position.

So actually, when I was doing everything correct, the pain is not going to be there, yeah.

Q. With that being said, what are your expectations now here for Beijing?

ZHANG ZHIZHEN: Well, what is now? Kind of still in the process for the rehab, I would say, those moment. Rehab is for the practicing and everything, for preparing the match.

Also first few weeks for the match, I mean, everything is kind of rehab. I'm still kind of I'll put the healthy first. Still I will try to win a match, like there (smiling).

Q. You've obviously been around the National Tennis Center for the China Open for years now, since your debut in quallies maybe 10 years ago.

ZHANG ZHIZHEN: Really (laughter)? True, true, true, correct.

Q. From your perspective, how much has the facility, the site, the tournament changed in what you've seen? What do you see this year that has impressed you?

ZHANG ZHIZHEN: It's kind of let's say last year I saw already big difference because we also missed the year before for the Asia Games. We missed the Beijing China Open. Last year I was kind of really impressed. Everything was changing.

Let's say before we're using everything around here, under this stadium. Last year they show us the restaurant, everything was the other side of the building. That's much bigger. Also the gym bigger, which is pretty nice.

This year and last year, I couldn't say much different. But last year compared before, that's a lot of difference, yeah.

Q. In Beijing, do you have a favorite thing to do, a favorite place to go when you're here?

ZHANG ZHIZHEN: Well, Beijing favorite things? I just had some really good place for the dinner. Very good restaurant now. Trying to going every single time when I come to Beijing.

Q. So just food-related?



ZHANG ZHIZHEN: Food is the most important thing for me, yes (laughter).

THE MODERATOR: Questions in Chinese.

Q. We have Bu, you and Shang competing on the Chinese team. What do you think of this internal competition? Is it a good motivation for you to get a higher ranking?

ZHANG ZHIZHEN: I'm actually an outsider of the pack (smiling). I'm not within the pack yet. I'm haven't come back yet. For the time being, I haven't competed for the past six months. They have been competing, so I don't consider myself within the pack yet.

I believe in the coming months, in the Asian Swing, I think we will see more internal competition between the Chinese players. We see really good results from Wu Yibing and good results from Shang Juncheng, and we also have high hopes for Bu.

Sometimes maybe we would not be able to compete at one tournament. Sometimes one will not be able to compete in one tournament. But I hope that after the winter training season, next year will bring new results coming from the Chinese team.

Q. Yesterday I saw you were training with a lot of fans cheering for you. What did you feel like yesterday? Anything you would like to share with us, any memorable moments with these fans?

ZHANG ZHIZHEN: Memorable interactions? Somebody asked me to sign a box of bandages. This is a very interesting gift. I hope they don't ever need to use bandages like these.

In Hangzhou, I didn't expect that many fans cheering for me because I hadn't competed for six months. Indeed I saw many fans. I thought these fans might be watching other players. But coming here with so many people cheering for me, I thank them for their support and help in the past six months.

We are together for this, and thank you very much.

Q. What is your goal for the China Open this year? We see the Chinese players are struggling with injuries. In this period of recovery, any lessons you've learned that you can share with us?

ZHANG ZHIZHEN: My goal is to be healthy. This is the priority for the time being because all the matches I'm playing, there's a process of recovery. It's practice for me.

It's not about the victories, it's not the most important thing. But I would like to put 100% in and would like to focus on my health because there will be a long season coming ahead. Next year, too. It's all in my plan.

During the recovery period, I saw other people also struggling with injuries. I think as a professional player, everybody has similar experiences. It just happened that all of the Chinese players happened to be injured at this time of the year. We have big injuries, small injuries. A lot of people are thinking that these Chinese players are injured. But it's the same for other players, too. It's very similar.

The season is always very long. Tennis is always very challenging. You need to be prepared in your physicality so you can have a more complete season.

Thank you.

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