

China Open

Wednesday, September 24, 2025

Beijing, China

Zhang Shuai

Press Conference



ZHANG SHUAI/A. Zakharova

3-6, 6-1, 6-4

THE MODERATOR: Shuai, can you please talk to us about how the match went for you and how you felt out there today.

ZHANG SHUAI: Today I think is the toughest match of the year. Since this year's beginning, I didn't play much singles tournament, only one tournament per month. So that's why I still very exciting on the court, very exciting back to the home tournament, very exciting play on Diamond Court.

Today we played really, really great match. We play high performance. I think we play very high intensity match. We both play really fast and early. That's the great tennis. I like very much tennis like this. Three sets, two hours.

I enjoying very much.

THE MODERATOR: Questions in English.

Q. You really dominated in the second set. What was the biggest difference you felt between that and the first set that allowed you to make a comeback tonight?

ZHANG SHUAI: You know, beginning of the match she played really, really good, really fast. Everything almost winner. So normally I make more winner than opponent.

Yeah, I mean, after couple games, when I sitting there, I saw like only three winners for myself. That not my game. I tried to play my game, but she play so much better than me.

But when I saw she only after first set four points more than me, so not looks like what I'm feeling. So I just try my best, keep doing the right things. I want to see she can keep like this level or not.

Also, I mean, I try something different. I try to be better and better. I know I can play better the first set. Maybe I

have little chance. So if she give me one chance, I will take it.

Q. What does the win mean to you today, especially given how it was 12 months ago here, the emotional run that you had? How different does it feel this year to return to Beijing?

ZHANG SHUAI: Yeah, I mean, after match, we talking with my coach, my team, my family. This win I feel like, hmmm, not like last year because last year I have long time not winning. Last year I say like new year. This time like weekend. So much, so much feeling come.

Because I won a lot of matches this year already, singles match, doubles match, so I feel like when I'm on court I have more confident than last year. I know I can play well. Last year I'm not sure (smiling).

That's why I always talking to all the girls, You much better than you thought. You have to trust yourself. You have to believe yourself because everyone better than you thought.

Q. Obviously you have played this tournament many times. You've seen the tournament change, grow, get bigger, improvements. What are some of the improvements you've seen this year that impress you? What is your impression of the 2025 China Open?

ZHANG SHUAI: Because I'm not here that much, I only one half hour, two hour per day here, only going to the Diamond Court practice, then go back.

I feel the big difference restaurants. So good the food. Other tournament, normally I'm not going to the player restaurant because every tournament similar because so healthy. But the Chinese food is more taste, more heavy. I like so much.

I have to find Chinese restaurant of the world. Here we can eat everything I want. Every day they change. They change menu. Some tournament every day same, same, same. From quallies to the final, you have to stay there three weeks in the Grand Slam. You couldn't eat every day same, you know?



Here, oh my God, before the match, I eat a big dinner. During the match, even three set, I still feeling full so I have full energy. I know I can beat her because I am still full energy, you know?

Very important for player what you eat. I mean, healthy very important, but what you like more important - for me (smiling).

Q. What was it like having the crowd behind you tonight and how did that impact your win?

ZHANG SHUAI: Yeah, some player they say, Oh, so much pressure play a home tournament. But I feel like, Oh, I like so much. Sam say she don't really play well at Australian Open. I say, I like so much. No worries. I say, I like. I always feel like I like so much.

Something you don't like, I like. It's okay, I take care of you. Something I'm not so good, she say I like so much, I take care of you. That's why we both play so many tournament so well.

In China, you have so many fans here. They cheer you every points. I mean, so many tournament like that. In Japan, in Australia, in New York, the first quallies, first round, it feel like I play against American player? But more fans, Chinese people, there. I feel like, Oh, my God, feel like not in U.S., not in New York. I feel like in Beijing, in China. We have so many people living different country, different city.

That's I think for me I enjoy tennis very much because a lot of fans coming to watch I play. In Japan a lot Chinese fans. They start from 15 years ago, they are students, college. Now they start work. They coming to watch I play. They driving eight hour car. When they hear I play, they're like, Oh, my God, if I don't know you, if I'm not see this is Zhang Shuai play... I feel like a different person because they tell me I have so much improve, I have so much different tennis level. Make me like, Really? I can still play well. Then they make me feeling happy. They make me more confident. I think that's the most important part of the tennis.

THE MODERATOR: Questions in Chinese.

Q. You mentioned you enjoy playing on the home court. Bu also mentioned he was trying to enjoy the three and four weeks in China. Based on your own experience, how do you actually enjoy the home court?

ZHANG SHUAI: I think when you are at the age of 30, 35

and 36, when you are standing on court, your mentality is definitely different from when you were 20 or 25. We've all been there.

I tell my fans, when I was practicing at the Diamond Court, somebody told me, I watched you when I was in elementary school, and now I'm in college, it just proves that I've been playing a long time.

I turned pro when I was very young. It will be very different from Yushan or other young players. When I see them, they're always full of panic, have a panicked face. They are anxious. Many uncertainties.

I have gone through so much. I will be able to maintain a calm mindset. You cannot force this level of calm on a very young player. It will be very different. As a very mature player, I've gone through a lot. It will be easier to do that.

Talk about the Chinese classic journey to the west. You talk to those people when they start the journey, of course, it will be quite different when they finish the journey. The only thing you can do is to encourage the young players. You just say positive things: I see you improve a lot every day.

After the BJK Cup, two girls were blaming themselves. I said to them, You didn't fail, we're just one step closer to success. Every success is based on rounds of failures. I tell them, You're great, you did a good job. Look at yourself. You are just one step away from victory. It was easy in the quarterfinals and semifinals. We were this close to victory.

They were reviewing this point and that point. Just forget them. Sometimes when I finish a match, I just forget those moments because there's no way for you to return to that moment. If you don't take this option, other people won't do it. This is tennis. This is professional sport. What we can do is to make tomorrow better.

Q. Can you talk about your expectations for the next round. You'll be playing a Chinese player. What are your expectations?

ZHANG SHUAI: The next round? To me it's no different compared to any other matches. I will do my best. I will try to be myself, to show 100% to the crowd. If I don't do that, that's fine.

I tell the young players, Sometimes we cannot do the best because my opponent is better. Even if we fail, there's nothing to be sad about, because there's always room for improvement. It's very common.



When you go to school, when you are doing your job, these are common things. Sometimes there are bad days, and you may not be performing very well in a match. You just accept the fact that your opponent is doing better. This is part of the life.

To me, I'm just open-minded to whatever is happening in my life. I'm trying to get motivation from everything I'm experiencing. This time zero to six, that's fine. Next time I can be 1-6 or 2-6. That's improvement.

When I'm on court, I don't see opponents. The only opponent is myself. This is true to sport as well as to my life. If I wake up one day, I do not feel the desire for competition, I don't feel the desire to practice, that's your biggest enemy.

As long as I have motivation for battle, as long as I'm positive, I think I'm good, that will be great. The only thing is to challenge yourself to overcome these challenges. Don't compare yourself to any other people.

To me, to Xinyu, I wish great success, good performance, breakthroughs, continuously. That's the most important thing.

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