

Brisbane International

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Brisbane, Queensland, Australia

Frances Tiafoe

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Questions.

Q. How has the off-season been for you, being back in Brisbane, nice warm welcome?

FRANCES TIAFOE: Yeah, it's great. It's been great to come back. I haven't played here since I was 20 years old, which I don't know why. I can't even remember where I've played.

It's great to be back in the city of Brisbane. They really love their tennis here. It's a great event, been around for such a long time. A lot of great champions have won here, so...

Happy to be here. Happy to be part of such a great field. Super stacked tournament. I think everyone came to this tournament for a reason: because it's such a great event. So yeah...

Q. You had a bit of a slower start first half of last season.

FRANCES TIAFOE: A little bit. A little bit (smiling).

Q. It changed as soon as you returned home to the U.S. swing. What changed for you?

FRANCES TIAFOE: Just competing better. Just competing better. Obviously got a new coach right after Wimbledon. I think really playing Carlos there at Wimbledon, still tough to swallow. It was definitely on my racquet there.

I started to get that love again. I was kind of losing that. Just lost. Not really wanting to be out there. Wasn't having fun playing at all.

Once I had the standing ovation, people actually appreciating what I do, got that feeling again. Once I came back to the States, I played home in DC. Then, yeah, you just kind of keep going. Had a good win against Andrey. Good team camaraderie. Ever since then I feel like I'm in a great place.

Q. The US Open semifinals, bittersweet memory. How do you look back on it now that the dust has settled?

FRANCES TIAFOE: That's not easy, yeah. That wasn't easy. I really thought I could have been in the final there. Thought it was pretty one-sided until that point.

Again, you have to tip your hat, man. Taylor battled and he deserved to win. The guy who wins the match at the end of the day deserves to win. Happy it was an American at the end of the day.

It was great to see him play a final. That's only going to light the fire under me to keep going, keep working. Guys, we look at the tour totally different. The game is open. Even though Sinner has had an incredible season, Alcaraz, incredible, Novak. I still think the game is open. There's no clear winner for any event. It obviously showed.

Q. You mentioned your new coach. What has he brought to your game?

FRANCES TIAFOE: One, he instilled a lot of confidence. The biggest thing he came on, focusing on competing, focusing on understanding that I'm one of the best players in the world. I lost sight of that for a little bit.

As far as pertaining to my game, my return of serve has improved a lot since I started working with him. Then first strike. Use my speed to be aggressive, not defensive. Looking to dictate play from the middle of the court, play closer up to the baseline, play faster.

I think I've played much faster since he's come on, which that's when I'm really tough, using my hands, stuff like that, try to get in as much as I can.

Doesn't take a rocket scientist, but he did it in the right way. Yeah, we just have a great rapport. He's a funny guy. Laid back. I think I needed that.

Q. You said getting the joy back. Is that what helped?

FRANCES TIAFOE: 100%. It's a good rapport. We don't talk much tennis at all outside of it. Talk American football a lot, crack jokes, make fun of each other. I think the whole team kind of does a good job of keeping things light, not making the moment as big as what it actually is.

We are also trying to achieve one thing: get to the



second Sunday of a slam, right? Those are the things I'm kind of focusing on at this point in my career, so...

Q. You had a pretty amazing breakthrough at AO 2019.

FRANCES TIAFOE: Yeah.

Q. What are your memories? How much do you like competing in Australia?

FRANCES TIAFOE: I just love Australia. It's a great country. People are so nice. Obviously we're here in the summer, so everyone is excited. Hot as shit. But, I mean, it's just great.

I mean, I owe it to the Aussie fans to try and put on a good show. You see when Nick is playing there, how crazy it is. That year when I was playing there, it was madness, it was nuts. It was me turning 21 during that run. People just going nuts, like Tiafoe cheering squad section. It was epic.

Unfortunately I haven't been able to do it since. Tough draws. Ranking dropped a little bit. Now I want to try to do that. I want to try to remake those memories, so on, so forth, go deeper in draws over there. We'll see.

I know Craig would like that a lot, so hopefully let's make it happen.

Q. You just mentioned Nick. Depending on how first rounds play out here, you could meet Nick in the second round. What would that mean?

FRANCES TIAFOE: That would be sick. I think the whole tournament would look forward to that. I mean, me and Nick are great friends. We had one match where we played in DC where he beat me at home. I'd have to return the favor if we played here. I had a crazy amount of match points, lost. I think it's good for the sport to have matchups like that.

Obviously he puts so many asses in seats. So do I. We have a great rapport. It would be great to compete against him, see how his form is. But also him just playing the sport. Whether you like it or not, it's great for the sport. However you feel about him, you're going to watch him play. Gives more views to the game. Guys like him are crucial.

Q. Your first match, Adam Walton, thoughts on that one?

FRANCES TIAFOE: I actually don't know him that much. He did a great job coming out of college, Tennessee. Getting top hundred pretty fast. I don't know if he's still in or just outside right now.

Yeah, I really haven't seen him play much. Watch YouTube videos, stuff about him in the next day or so. I'm excited to get out there and play a good match, hopefully come out with a win, start the quest.

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