

# Adelaide International

Saturday, 6 January 2024

Adelaide, South Australia, Australia

## Tommy Paul

Press Conference



**THE MODERATOR:** Tommy, welcome back to Adelaide. A big 2023 last year, got up to your highest ranking so far in your career. How are you feeling mentally headed into 2024?

**TOMMY PAUL:** Yeah, really good. The end of last year or the whole year last year was pretty exciting. Going into the training in December, I was super excited, super motivated for this year. Every year you want to try and do better and get better, so that was definitely the goal. So I'm excited to get match play started.

**Q. You lost here in the second round to Jack Draper last year, then went all the way to the semis in Melbourne. What do you look to get out of a tournament like this the week before an Open? What are your hopes for this week?**

**TOMMY PAUL:** You know, get the groove for playing down here. All the courts are a little faster down here. Obviously the temperature is a little different here than pretty much everywhere in the States. You're trying to get acclimated and get ready for the Slam, but also you want to have a good result here.

**Q. That success in Melbourne last year, was it a bit of a surprise to you, or did you feel it had been coming?**

**TOMMY PAUL:** I don't know. My goal was to try and make second weeks of all the Slams last year, and I got two of them. Once I made second week, I saw the draw was opening up quite a bit, but you're not before the tournament going, oh, my goal is semis or I'm going to make semis. It's just kind of one match at a time. At least that's how I am, just looking at it one match at a time.

After the tournament, obviously look back, like it's a pretty good tournament. But you've got to recreate it the rest of the year, try and play some good tennis.

**Q. You won the French Open as a junior almost 10 years ago now. You're still very young, but you've been around a long time. How long does it take or how long did it take you to feel that I'm an established part of this tour?**

**TOMMY PAUL:** Probably about 2019 is when it happened, 2019, 2020, because I was playing Futures and Challengers for quite a bit, and I was always in and out of playing tour events like quallies and some main draws here and there, but I didn't really get a full year on tour until 2019, I think, and then obviously 2020 -- I think I played pretty well down here in 2020 and had a good Acapulco. I think I made quarters there, and then everything kind of shut down. It was kind of weird. It was my first or second year on tour and we were quarantined in hotels and everything.

Coming out of that, it still felt like super fresh. It felt like everything was new again. It's a lot of fun.

**Q. You're part of this massive American contingent. You've got nine players in the top 100. You're all of a similar age. Is there an all-for-one mentality?**

**TOMMY PAUL:** Yeah, we're definitely supporting each other from the jump. We've all known each other for a really long time, and we're all super supportive. A lot of us actually train together.

But obviously we're all super competitive, and we want to beat each other. We want to do better than the other guy. I think that's super healthy competition, and I think we all love it.

**Q. I had one question about last year, as well. You had a great run at the US Open and then Mexico. It looked like a lot of fun, that tournament, but did that whet an appetite like I'm just that close now to taking a title?**

**TOMMY PAUL:** Yeah, definitely. It was pretty annoying because last year I didn't win any tournaments. Made a couple finals. I think I went three sets in all the finals I was in last year, too, so it was a little frustrating for sure.

But Acapulco was a good result. Played some really good tennis there. Had a pretty epic battle with Fritz there. Then de Minaur got me in the finals. It was a really fun event.

Then going into Indian Wells, Miami, like a lot of the players would say, it's their favorite swing of the year. I definitely enjoy that, and I had a lot of fun all throughout last year.



**Q. Is there any one particular goal that you have within tennis at the moment? Is it to get top 10 or to get to a Slam final, whatever?**

TOMMY PAUL: My whole career?

**Q. If you could choose one aim, would it be to win a Slam or get to the top 5 --**

TOMMY PAUL: Yeah, I think I would take winning a Slam over making top 10 for sure. I think everyone wants to win a Slam, yeah.

**Q. Is that what drives you, the prospect of getting as far as you can in each Slam?**

TOMMY PAUL: Yeah, absolutely. Those are the tournaments we all play for. That's where we want to play our best tennis.

**Q. This week in Adelaide, obviously you're looking to win it, but it's also match practice, I guess momentum, as well, going into Melbourne?**

TOMMY PAUL: Yeah, I think I've played this tournament I don't even know how many times. I've played this tournament a bunch. I actually really love the conditions here. I think it's a great tournament to come to before Australia.

Like I said, I'm excited to be here. I hope I can play some really good tennis this week and kind of catch a groove. We haven't really been playing -- I haven't played a match in two months, so no matter what you do in practice, you can never really recreate the feelings that you get in a match, and that's what we're all out here to do, and obviously try and win, also.

**Q. Does it help that it's the same courts as the Australian Open? The weather apart from today is pretty much the same, as well?**

TOMMY PAUL: Yeah, definitely. That's great. Not all the tournaments are like that. The US Open Series all the tournaments feel pretty different. So to have a lead-in tournament that has super, super similar courts is great.

**Q. I was reading an article about you, and you were saying that your mother has a farm somewhere in New Jersey and you sometimes help out on her farm. Is that an escape, and what do you do when you're helping out?**

TOMMY PAUL: I mean, anything. She's got a bunch of animals there. She's got -- most recently she's got a horse and about to get another horse. But moving hay bales or whatever it is. Sometimes we're clearing the path, because my stepdad is a big hunter, so we've got

to clear paths in the woods for him to get back there, put up tree stands, whatever.

**Q. Do they pay you?**

TOMMY PAUL: No, not at all. I wish.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports