

Adelaide International

Tuesday, 9 January 2024

Adelaide, South Australia, Australia

Thanasi Kokkinakis

Press Conference



D. LAJOVIC/T. Kokkinakis

3-6, 6-1, 6-4

THE MODERATOR: Tough match tonight, Thanasi. Can you talk us through your thoughts.

THANASI KOKKINAKIS: Yeah. Very disappointing. Obviously I thought I came out pretty well, playing a good set of tennis. Didn't do much wrong.

Lost a little bit of focus in the start of the second, and he got confident but I just dropped my level and focus.

Third set was tit for tat. Could have gone either way. Had the chances early, didn't take them. He kind of broke me with a mis-hit lob, and then it was just back and forth for the third set.

But it's tough, and that's disappointing. I would have loved to have done better here, but I'm not quite where I need to be, so I've just got to keep improving.

Q. That second set you mentioned you lost your focus a little bit. Did you feel like the 6-1 result was more on your racquet than on his?

THANASI KOKKINAKIS: Yeah, yeah. I don't think it was he played incredible in that second set. I just missed some easy forehands. I got broken, too, clipped the tape and flew long, and there's not much -- I had chances to break back, didn't get it, and then it looks like a 6-1 set. But it was just me losing focus.

But yeah, he was steady. He's a good pro, and he's a tough player.

Q. The commentary team mentioned that you might have noticed that the balls were softer than what you would have liked. Is that an issue that you were going through at the time?

THANASI KOKKINAKIS: I mean, they're the same for both players. I saw he was rolling them on his sweat to try and speed them up a little bit.

I don't know, the balls after a few rows get super slow and they turn into melons, and it makes it tough,

especially when it's colder, to get much power on the ball, but it's the same for both players, so it is what it is.

Q. Are you straight to Melbourne from here?

THANASI KOKKINAKIS: Yeah, yeah, I'll probably head there tomorrow.

Q. Can you pinpoint any reason that you lost some focus at the end of the first set?

THANASI KOKKINAKIS: I'm not too sure. I think it's just been a trend in a lot of my matches. It's usually sort of early in the second set. I don't know, just my feet stop, and I just lose my focus. I think that's my biggest weakness, to be honest.

When I'm playing well, I just take my foot off the gas and just maybe go for some shots that aren't there and I lose a bit of focus, and it can change the whole momentum of the match. I felt like a lot of it was on my racquet, and I made a few errors, and all of a sudden it's a dogfight.

Q. As far as the balls were concerned, did you find the same thing in Brisbane?

THANASI KOKKINAKIS: It's tough. It was a different court in Brisbane we played. It was a smaller court, so it kind of felt a little bit quicker. The ball was hitting the backstop a little bit quicker.

But I definitely felt it in practice, and they're a lot slower than last year I think in general for the most part, maybe barring Cincinnati. I don't know, I just remember here usually being a lot quicker, and the surface is the same.

But four aces today for me is not something I'm sort of used to, especially on a fairly quick playing indoor surface, and when the balls get super slow, it feels like there's a ton of time on return.

Q. Are you feeling under any pressure that the first two events of the year it hasn't gone your way from early on?

THANASI KOKKINAKIS: Yeah, definitely. You get a few doubts, but I didn't give my best effort last week, honestly. That was disappointing.

This one I was happy with how I fought. But yeah, it's

... when all is said, we're done.®



going to take a little bit for me to find my game. I knew coming into Brisbane I wasn't going to be where I needed to be sort of end of last year, but I was a little bit better this week. Not good enough. Hopefully I can put another good training week.

I've been in a much worse situation. I know in tennis we're fortunate we get another opportunity every week, so it doesn't take much to turn it around, and I've got to keep working because it's not just going to happen magically.

Q. Is there anything specific you feel you need to concentrate on between now and the start of the Open?

THANASI KOKKINAKIS: I think everything. Just keeping my conditioning up, getting a bit sharper. I moved a little bit better today than I did last week, but still a ways to go.

There's just a few things in my game that I think need to be better to compete, because at the moment I don't think I'm playing to my full potential.

Q. Taking aside the disappointment of tonight, how have you enjoyed being back home in Adelaide? Took in the 36ers game; I know you like being home

THANASI KOKKINAKIS: Yeah, no, I love it. It's one of my favorites if not my favorite tournament of the year. Support was incredible tonight again. They were doing as much as they could from the sidelines, and that's why I'll come back every time.

Yeah, nothing but great memories here, as I said. The crowd was phenomenal, and they helped me through when I was down a break in the second. I'm gutted I couldn't get out there and play more matches for them, so that's very disappointing.

But yeah, unfortunately that's sport. But hopefully I can come back for many years and keep getting that turnout because they're incredible as always.

Q. Did you feed off that, particularly when you were Love-40 down in the third and you held and they were up on their feet? Was that one of the moments where it really did stick with you?

THANASI KOKKINAKIS: Yeah, yeah, for sure it was good. But I think -- I don't know, I broke back, so I tried to get the crowd into it, and then I go Love-40 straight away to get back in a hole.

I felt when I got out of that game, the momentum was good. I had a good chance to break the next game and didn't do it.

But as I said, if I could play in front of that crowd every week, I'd be a happy man, but that's not reality. They were awesome, and can't wait to come back.

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