

Adelaide International

Saturday, 4 January 2025

Adelaide, South Australia, Australia

Thanasi Kokkinakis

Press Conference



(Transcribed from audio recording. Beginning of interview not recorded.)

Q. You said you're using this tournament to prepare for Melbourne. What are you wanting to get out of it?

THANASI KOKKINAKIS: Yeah, for me, I'm ready to go. I'm just trying to hopefully win as many matches as possible and play as good of tennis. The outcome's not guaranteed. Just bring my maximum effort and energy and play with the right way.

Hopefully use that crowd support and just get that feeling of playing in front of the home fans again. It's not something we get too often at Aussies. We have to make the most of it while we can.

Q. With the injury you mentioned, are you still planning on playing doubles with Kyrgios at AO?

THANASI KOKKINAKIS: Yeah, that's still the plan. Singles is definitely the priority. We both know that. If one of us are going well in singles, playing long five-setters, it's going to be tough to kind of back up the doubles the day after.

I feel like the doubles is fun for us, but I think it's more we saw how much the people loved it when we were playing. We're kind of doing it more so for them than to actually try and have a great doubles career.

Q. On Kyrgios, how keen are you to get out there with him and give him a chest pump?

THANASI KOKKINAKIS: It's going to be fun. It's always a bit of a circus when we play together, especially, yeah, three years ago. It's crazy. We haven't stepped foot on court since that. We played the ATP Finals, which is cool.

It's always a unique experience playing with him. Obviously his tennis speaks for itself. But he's a different character. We talk a bit of rubbish when we're out there. We'll see. Three years ago, not something we expected. The momentum was kind of just building. That was fun.

Yeah, I don't know. It's going to be hard to repeat that result for sure. I think everyone's going to be very hungry

to kind of play us and beat us first round or whenever it may be.

But I'm excited to get out there with him. Yeah, it should be fun.

Q. Can we expect anything special from the Special K's reunion?

THANASI KOKKINAKIS: I don't know. Hopefully on court. Nothing else too crazy. We haven't played. We haven't practiced doubles. I played maybe feels like five doubles matches since winning that event with Nick. After winning that, it was like I don't really want to play doubles much more unless it's kind of with him or for a cool, special moment.

We're not expecting to win or anything like that. We're going to go out, have fun. What will happen will happen.

Q. Who do you think is the most competitive between the two of you?

THANASI KOKKINAKIS: He gets pretty fired up, whether it's PlayStation or anything. I've seen him lose his marbles on and off the court. Maybe him.

Q. Do you feel any extra luck playing on home soil in Adelaide?

THANASI KOKKINAKIS: I don't know if it's extra luck. I definitely have extra sort of... There's a little bit more pressure, for sure, because I want to do well. I have friends and family that don't get to see me play too much unless it's on TV or whatever. For me it definitely brings an extra sort of energy and emotion. I want to do better for the people coming and supporting and they're watching me, the close ones.

Q. Obviously your aim is to lift another trophy at the end. How likely do you reckon you'll be winning another one?

THANASI KOKKINAKIS: I've only done it once in my life. The odds are stacked up against me, if I'm honest.

We'll see. The year I actually won I wasn't planning to play 'cause I had a big week the week before. I was knackered before AO. I thought to give myself rest.

Just kind of works out like that. You never know when it's going to be your week, when it's not. There's so many weeks in the tennis year where it's hard because as Aussies you want to do so well playing in the home events, Adelaide, Aussie Open. It's just a real small portion of the year.

I don't know. If I had to put a percentage on it, I'd say it's not the most likely. But I'm excited. My tennis feels good. I had some big wins last year. I feel like I am capable of beating anyone in the draw on my day. We'll see how we go.

Q. The hip, is it giving you problems? Is it one you'll have to manage the next few weeks?

THANASI KOKKINAKIS: We'll see. The last few days on practice I haven't felt much, which is good. Obviously I've had a little bit of an injury history.

But I finished my season pretty late last year, as well. I got home sort of 11th of December. The thought of playing Brisbane as well two weeks after finishing my year was kind of going to be tough for me to get the training I needed and the repetitions to get ready for potentially five-set matches at Australian Open.

With a little niggle, I needed a little bit more time to get ready mentally and physically. I'm good to go to start again.

Q. 2024 you're out on the road for nine months. You've talked about the struggles of being away for so long. What are you taking into 2025 to make this a bigger season?

THANASI KOKKINAKIS: It's 11 months. It's been pretty well-documented. I get crucified in the media if I say the season is too long. But it is. Then they ask why I play exhibitions. It's 'cause, well, having to call a spade a spade, the money is a lot better in those events than it is in normal tournaments. Sometimes you have to weigh those options out.

I forgot your question (laughter).

Q. 2024 obviously was a strong year. What are you hoping to build from that year into 2025, hoping to do better?

THANASI KOKKINAKIS: Yeah, my bad with that.

It was a good year as far as a lot of wins are concerned. I won some important matches. Obviously some big wins in Davis Cup, as well, which it was my best Davis Cup year. Added pressure for representing Australia. I'd love to replicate that.

I had some big wins in Grand Slams with the potential to

go further. Obviously beating Felix at Wimbledon and Stef at US Open. Having a tight one with Taylor in the third round of French Open. I feel like I'm there or thereabouts. I feel like I'm close. I'm winning some of those five-setters.

I think the next big thing for me is to be consistent in the wins and putting together sort of back-to-back matches per week. I think that's where the points come in. That's where you can have big ranking jumps. It's unfortunate you don't get ranking points for who you beat because I would have been a lot higher than I am right now.

It's all about putting those consistent weeks together. I only played one event post US Open for points as well. That's going to be a difference where I'm trying to play a fuller schedule, as well.

Q. Is that mental in terms of the consistency or it the more the body? Do you feel like you're close to making a big run at a tournament?

THANASI KOKKINAKIS: Yeah, it's a little bit of both. The tour's pretty mentally taxing, especially being an Aussie. I don't have a base in Europe. A lot of the other Aussies base themselves, whether it be in Europe or Dubai or something like that. When I'm traveling, if I'm not playing a tournament, I'm out of a suitcase every single week.

It's definitely an advantage for the Europeans. If they lose early, they can go home, be home three or four days, refresh, go again.

I think it's mentally and physically obviously backing up those long five-setters. I'd love to get them done earlier if I could. These guys are good, so it's tough.

Probably a combination of the two. Stringing together those weeks. Kind of tennis rewards having the big week, then you're almost better off losing four or five first rounds in a row rather than winning one or two matches every week. It's better off kind of hitting on one big week for the ranking. That's the next goal, trying to put together those big weeks.

Q. Do you know what an 'ick' is?

THANASI KOKKINAKIS: I do.

Q. What is your biggest tennis ick with players or audience?

THANASI KOKKINAKIS: There's a few.

Tennis players are really serious. They don't really smile. Everyone looks angry a lot of the time. There's that.

When they try and not step on lines, you see them on the

court avoiding every line. I don't know, get over it.

What else? There's got to be a few more.

Okay. Probably the worst ones are like obnoxiously loud grunting to the point where they're still going when the other guy hits the ball. If you're actually exerting yourself, I get that. If you're just taking the piss, then no.

Those are the two off the top of my head.

Then not hitting your ball toss, catching your ball toss a million times. Those couple things.

Q. What is your greatest victory to date?

THANASI KOKKINAKIS: Greatest victory?
Tournament-wise: Adelaide. Player-wise: Federer.

Q. If you could pick any pro player to train with, who would you choose and why?

THANASI KOKKINAKIS: Any pro player to train with?
That's a good one.

I think training with Alcaraz would be fun. I think, yeah, he's a freak. He plays tennis in the right way. Always looks happy on court. He's got a good attitude. I think he'd be a fun one to train with.

Q. On match point, what is your favorite shot to play?

THANASI KOKKINAKIS: Hopefully I have a serve and it doesn't come back. If it does, then I'm nervous. So I don't know (laughter). We'll see. Serve or forehand.

Q. Would you rather play at Roland Garros on a windy day or Australian Open on a 40-degree day?

THANASI KOKKINAKIS: Australian Open every day of the week.

Q. What do you eat before a match?

THANASI KOKKINAKIS: It's the most boring thing ever. Chicken and rice or plain white rice. I used to eat other stuff when I was younger. My guts didn't like it too much. Yeah, I think if you see every tennis player, it's either pasta or rice. You get pretty sick of that after a year.

Q. What is your favorite emoji?

THANASI KOKKINAKIS: Favorite emoji? Probably the one where you're covering your eyes because you can probably get away with saying anything as long as you put that at the end of it. You're pretty safe.

Q. What is your pregame hype song?

THANASI KOKKINAKIS: I used to listen to music a lot when I was younger, but then it got me too amped up. I don't listen to music that much any more. If I'm feeling flat, I'll put some techno or house on.

Q. How many racquets have you broken during matches?

THANASI KOKKINAKIS: That's a good one. More than I should. Not as many as Nick, though. I'm safe there.

I don't know how to put a number on it. But the last big one that I remember breaking was against Andy after I think everyone seen that point where I had a million smashes and I lost it. I was up two sets to love. I broke a racquet. That's probably the dumbest time I've ever broken a racquet.

Q. Do you want to have a hit with me?

THANASI KOKKINAKIS: We will. We'll do it at some point, for sure.

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