

Adelaide International

Tuesday, 7 January 2025

Adelaide, South Australia, Australia

Li Tu

Press Conference



LI TU/J. Duckworth

6-1, 7-5

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

Q. Today's match, obviously very satisfying. Unfortunately not in doubles. What are your thoughts on the singles match?

LI TU: I thought I came out, I played really well. I played a really clinical first set I thought from Love-1, Love-40. I thought I played really phenomenal.

Then knowing Duck, Duckworth is a really good competitor. I'm good friends with him. I knew he would bring a high level in the second set. He started serving a lot better and holding his serve a lot better.

Really glad I got to get that done in the end. Had a lot of battles. He's gotten me a few times the last few times. Good to try and even it up a little bit.

Q. What's your mindset overall for the year, the new year? What are your goals entering the new year?

LI TU: Yeah, I mean, nothing but excited. I'm really hopeful for a big year for me. Especially the form the last three, four months, the whole U.S. swing, finishing Asia, challenger final there. That blockbuster match with Alcaraz was amazing. I've gained nothing but confidence the last three, four months.

Me and the team, we put in a real good pre-season. We worked really hard here in Adelaide for two, three weeks. Yeah, just really hopeful for this Aussie summer and also for the year ahead.

This match and even last week I thought I played really well. Yeah, I'm just really happy to keep that form going, to keep growing my game as well.

Q. What does success look like for you?

LI TU: For me, I mean, I've just honestly really fallen in love with the process, getting better week by week, assessing.

But for me a goal would definitely be to be top hundred at some point this year. That would definitely be a tick for me. Not focused too much on the number and whatnot, but really focused on the process, then hopefully that can take care of itself.

In the back of my mind, that's definitely a number. I think every tennis player, that top hundred always seems to be like a figure. Yeah, that for me would be a goal, for sure.

Q. You have Benjamin Bonzi next. Have you played before?

LI TU: Never played him before.

Q. How do you prepare at short notice to play someone when you have nothing? Have you hit with him?

LI TU: No. He mainly plays in Europe. I mainly play in Asia or U.S., stuff like that. Have rarely come across him, to be honest.

Tonight will just be studying some film. The data and the stats, everything are so high level these days where you can kind of get a pretty good read. Obviously it all depends on the matchups and everything.

You can always have a look at film and look at videos, just kind of get a general vibe of what he plays like, if he's an aggressive baseliner or a serve-volleyer, things like that, things you can pick up really quickly. Try to find any tendencies that he might have, where in my game fits really well into his.

Yeah, tonight I think we'll watch some film as a team, then in the morning as well discuss like a plan of attack. Hopefully it goes well.

Q. You just mentioned you took a lot after facing Alcaraz. You talked about preparing for your next opponent through videos. When you play someone like Alcaraz, you can assess a player's game qualities, but how do you get yourself ready to be in that aura of a big player?

LI TU: Yeah, no, great question.

I think before US Open, Arthur Ashe Stadium, 27,000 people, not a whole lot can prepare you for that because



the most people I played in front of before that was maybe 3,000. I remember playing doubles in Kia Arena, that was pretty big. That was before Thanasi and Nick. We were the match before them, so it was pretty packed there. That was definitely the biggest crowd I've had.

Yeah, a lot of visualization, to be honest. But to be honest with you, nothing prepared me for that. It's not until you actually do it and you live it. Then the next time, Okay, I know what it's about.

I was ready for the music, I was ready for how loud it was going to be, I was ready for everything everyone told me. I was prepared. I had a session with my psychologist person. We were really prepared and did a lot of visualization the night before, the morning of.

But I still walk out and I'm like, Whoa. It's still so big (smiling). It's not until you actually do it, yeah. That's where experience comes into play, for sure.

Q. This is my first time in Australia. I've seen a lot of people with Asian roots here. You happen to be someone having the Asian roots. We have Nick Kyrgios, who has Asian roots. How important of a player Nick Kyrgios is to Australian tennis?

LI TU: Yeah, I mean, I think a lot of kids look up to Nick. I think it's cool that he's back on court. We all know what he can do with a tennis racquet.

Yeah, I just hope he has a good Australian Open. I hope that his wrist holds up. Yeah, I just wish nothing but the best for him.

Q. How buoyed do you feel with yourself and your game? Last year was a bit of a breakthrough year for you, but there was also a period where you were not playing. In one sense do you feel, in a polite way, still very young? You haven't had the intensity of year after year after year. When you consider all that, how buoyed and upbeat do you feel?

LI TU: Yeah, I mean, I feel very upbeat. Like you said, I feel really young on the tour, to be honest. I know I'm 28, but I only started playing ITFs three years ago. I had no ranking three years ago. I stepped away from the sport for eight years. I was not on the tour, I wasn't playing. I did uni. I was a waiter. I was a delivery driver for a long time.

I still feel so fresh. I did one year in the futures, then two years on challengers. I feel every year I'm learning more about myself, learning more about what this is about, what it really takes.

Yeah, just nothing but excited. Nothing but really upbeat. I still love going to a tournament for the first time. This is my first time playing this tournament. It's amazing.

Yeah, I feel a lot of energy and just really excited for the year. Hopefully can play a lot more big tournaments for the first time.

Q. With some of the results you had last year, at the start of '25 do you think back on those? To maintain that ranking, you have to be defending the points. Is there an element of pressure on you?

LI TU: I will say no, to be honest. The more I played, the more I've realized also that you have a really great week, you snap your finger, all of a sudden it comes back around in a year. But also you have a bad week or a bad period - for example, from February to June last year, I barely won a match - all of a sudden that's like, Wow, this year it's great, I have nothing to defend for three, four months.

I feel like I've maybe in the past got caught in that a little bit, just trying to chase results, chase points. I know there's always an element of that, but almost getting too sucked into trying to chase points or try and chase something where, Hey, let's actually try to get better as a tennis player, what does that look like. Does that mean playing slightly less but I have more time to work on things, two, three weeks.

We sat down as a team at the end of the year, This is something we have to change for next year of let's forget about chasing X amount of points, but actually let's play five, six weeks, then give yourself two, three weeks where you can actually work on things and get better and improve.

That's something I learned last year. It took me three years to learn (smiling). Hopefully I'll come up with some new lessons next year.

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