

Adelaide International

Thursday, 9 January 2025

Adelaide, South Australia, Australia

Tommy Paul

Quick Quotes



T. PAUL/ R. Hijikata

6-3, 6-4

Q. Straightforward, or it looked relatively straightforward, but Rinky can be tricky.

TOMMY PAUL: Definitely. I'm pretty sure we never played each other, but I've seen him play a ton. I watched his match earlier this week with Goffin, and he was playing lights out tennis. So I knew, I always knew what he could do, and how he could cause problems. I knew I had to come out and play a good level of tennis, a lot better than I did yesterday, and I'm happy that I did.

Q. What is it about here that you feel so comfortable with?

TOMMY PAUL: Well, I don't, I didn't feel too comfortable yesterday. I like playing in the heat. I like, whenever you come here, you're coming off of a long training block, which is, there's pros and cons to it. I'm not exactly, you know, match trained, I guess, you're more like physically in great shape, but match conditioning is different, and getting your mind ready for matches like this and matches like Australian Open is important, that's what this week's all about. Obviously everyone wants to do really well here, but the main goal when coming to Australia is to do well in Aussie Open.

Q. This is your 10th year on the tour, is it still fun, do you still like the grind?

TOMMY PAUL: Yeah, I've learned to like off-season even more, just because of how long the years are, it's, like, really our only time at home where we're home more than a week at a time, I enjoy it a lot.

It's not really my 10th year on tour, it's more like, I would say, my fourth or fifth. My first five years were like pretty much challengers, and in and out of the tour, challengers and some futures also. So, yeah, 10th year as a professional tennis player since I turned pro, but, yeah.

Q. Also, big picture, you're right on the cusp. What do you think is going to take it, or what's been the focus in the off-season, because you've been close. What, are you ranked 12 now?

TOMMY PAUL: Yeah, 12. I mean, we wanted to sharpen things that I've done well in the past, and then also try and add some ball speed on my shots. You look at the top guys, and they're hitting the ball a lot harder than me (laughing), to be quite blunt. Yeah, I'm trying to pick up the ball speed.

I think today I did a decent job of it. It's about picking the times of when you want to do it. Like today, I missed a few more backhands than I would have liked, but it was because I was trying to lean into 'em a little more, hit 'em a little harder. Like I said, it's about picking the right time to do it.

Q. You don't know who you're up against, either Felix or Marcos. If you could examine both of them independently, and I guess you know both of them quite well.

TOMMY PAUL: Yeah, no, I know 'em pretty well. I think I only played Felix once. Marcos I played quite a few times. Different players, you know. Felix is a big hitter, good server, and not much rhythm. Marcos is super low and flat balls through the court, and he's a warrior, he'll be ready to go all day.

Q. How are you feeling now? I mean, the draw, as we speak here, is being done in Melbourne at the moment. Are you somebody who would tend to look ahead, or are you just looking at your first round when that happens?

TOMMY PAUL: Look ahead in the Aussie draw? No, not really. I'm pretty focused on here this week. Obviously, like I said earlier, the main goal is Australian Open. We were talking about it last night actually at dinner, how I don't always do it. Like, pretty much every other week I don't play the week before the slams, besides this one. It's kind of nice. It's kind of a distraction when you show up to the slams a week early, and training, it's nice because you get used to the conditions, but the pressure's just building every day that you're there.

Here I have, like, this tournament as a distraction, and hopefully pick up quite a few points along the way and, you know, kind of sharpen my game.

Q. How often do you get on a grass patch, barefoot,

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with a phone in one hand, and catching the equivalent of baseball throws with another, and pretty accurately?

TOMMY PAUL: No, I mean, as much as I can. More on the beach than the grass, I think, but, yeah, I'm outside a lot.

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