

# Adelaide International

Tuesday, 13 January 2026

Adelaide, South Australia, Australia

## Thanasi Kokkinakis

Press Conference



T. KOKKINAKIS/S. Korda

3-6, 6-3, 7-6

**THE MODERATOR:** Thanasi, good win. What do you feel worked in your favor tonight?

**THANASI KOKKINAKIS:** I don't know. My tennis got better and better. I started to feel more confident on the ground. I felt like when I was able to kind of neutralize the points I think that was the shift.

As soon as I, after the first set, I was kind of, everything felt a little bit quick for me, probably not just playing in awhile.

And then, yeah, from the second set I felt like off the ground I was starting to get more comfortable and I think that was the difference.

**Q. Can you just sort of give us an insight into what you're going through in the middle of that second set, the pain factor, and I guess what impact that had on you mentally.**

**THANASI KOKKINAKIS:** Yeah, it's tough. Obviously my right arm caused by serving has plagued me my whole career. There's a lot of what ifs, especially in my mind, if I wasn't struggling with that. I know little niggles are normal here and there, but I feel like kind of what I've gone through is a little bit out of the normal.

It's tough mentally. I spent all year rehabbing, trying to get it right. I had a surgery. It was like a slightly different pain to last year. I'll see how I wake up tomorrow. But, yeah, it's tough. It puts a dampener on the win for sure.

Obviously I know my tennis is in a good spot. I've been practicing really well. It's just the arm and the shoulder that I just need to try and get right, and I'm doing everything I can to do that. I don't think it's alarm bells just yet. It is my first match back in 12 months. I'm just trying to build my way up. I haven't played three sets since I played Draper at AO. So not even really in practice. This is a step up in match.

And then, yeah, I mean, to come off 12 months and beat such a good player like Sebi, it's good for my tennis, but I

just need my arm to kind of follow.

It's tough. It puts a dampener on the win, honestly. I felt like I was in autopilot mode. Usually I would be celebrating and probably yelling by the end of it. Obviously I'm happy that I won, but, yeah, most of my focus is to how my arm is going to be.

**Q. You said it was a different pain. Can you just expand on that to what you were experiencing last year?**

**THANASI KOKKINAKIS:** Well, I had a pec surgery more so last year that I tried to fix. That was more muscle.

This one is in my shoulder. I have had a shoulder surgery as well, but that was probably caused from the surgery I had to the pec at the start of the year. So there's a lot of niggles and a lot of things going on. But, yeah, happy I got through and given myself a chance. I need to go through these matches to see if I have a chance at AO.

**Q. Just the courage today, was that mental fortitude, mind-over-matter type thing in the end?**

**THANASI KOKKINAKIS:** Definitely. I know it's a little bit tricky, I kind of felt a little bit sorry for Sebi at the time. But also I didn't, because I pulled out on him last year and he got a walkover to the semis. So it was good to get one back.

But I just kind of, yeah, it was a mental effort, for sure. There was a lot of times I thought about stopping, and am I going to do more damage if I keep playing. But it's really hard to stop. Like maybe for the sake of my body it was smarter if I stop. But playing your home tournament, the only title I won in singles, it makes it really hard to just be like, Yeah, I think I'll stop here. So I just wanted to see it out and see what I could do.

**Q. How close actually were you to pulling out in that second set? I'm sure plenty of us thought that, even at the end of that set when you went off, that that could be it.**

**THANASI KOKKINAKIS:** Yeah, I had conversations every time I went to the other end I was with my team. I was like, At what cost am I playing. Like, even if I get through this match, so what. I had the surgery so I could

**ASAP** . . . when all is said, we're done.®  
**sports**

back up matches and go through a tournament. But again, I guess I'll never really find out until I go through a long match and see where I'm at after.

So I know this isn't a finished product for me. I'm going to keep working. I've said kind of all along it will be I feel like medium until I'm back to my best, at least physically, my tennis to play that level. And not playing in 12 months, I'm pretty happy. But, yeah, I was very close. A lot of conversations.

**Q. I guess, just how important is the home crowd to being back here for your first singles match? Seemed like sort of grow you an extra leg or an extra arm in this case.**

THANASI KOKKINAKIS: It's the best. It's why I play and it's why I had my goal to come back. After 12 months of rehab I really wanted to start here. Ideally the tournament would have been probably a few weeks later, just to give myself a little bit more prep.

But, yeah, it's my favorite tournament in the world. It's something I'll never forget eventually when I hang up the racquets, and not taking these moments for granted, that's for sure.

**Q. Following up on that, if this wasn't Adelaide, hypothetically, would you have walked off?**

THANASI KOKKINAKIS: Yeah, I probably wouldn't have played to start to with, yeah.

**Q. Do you fear what tomorrow looks like for you or how you're going to feel when you wake up?**

THANASI KOKKINAKIS: I feel like I know what tomorrow's looking like for me, and I don't love it. Yeah, I'm going to do everything I can in 48 hours to see if I can give myself a chance on Wednesday. So just, yeah, full focus on recovery, my rehab stuff, and doing what I can.

As I said, it's not a finished product. So, yeah, I'm going to keep working and see and, yeah, fingers crossed, the antiinflammatories work some wonders.

**Q. You're also aware, I would imagine, everyone in the crowd and us in the press box were just sort of watching it almost in awe going, What the heck's going on. Are you aware of what impact you're having on the man in the street by just playing on?**

THANASI KOKKINAKIS: Well, thank you. I'm trying. I don't know. One thing that I feel like I've always given, especially playing in Australia more than anything, is just whatever I have, I'm emptying the tank. I'm always giving my best.

Maybe it's hurt my body in the past, but that's the only

thing when I go to bed at night I can kind of sleep a bit easier, knowing I literally have tried and given everything I can. So that's one thing. It's tough. It's hard to go in a match having doubts, but I'm trying to give everything I can.

I know a lot of friends and family come out and watch, and they probably expect the best from me. I'm trying to dampen expectations on what I have. But, yeah, I'll always give whatever I have at that day. So, yeah, hopefully people like watching me and they like the entertainment.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports....