

Australian Open

Wednesday, 17 January 2024

Melbourne, Victoria, Australia

Taylor Fritz

Press Conference



T. FRITZ/H. Gaston

6-0, 6-3, 6-1

THE MODERATOR: First of all, congrats, Taylor. From a five-set battle to smooth straight-set win, what do you feel you have improved today?

TAYLOR FRITZ: I just came out today a lot stronger than I did the other day. I still stand by the fact that I played pretty well in my first-round match. That first set was rough, and I think that allowed my opponent to loosen up and have the belief and confidence, and then he raised his level and played really well for the next four sets. It turned into a battle.

So today continued to play well, but just was on it from the beginning. So I feel like I never really gave my opponent a chance to get into it or feel confident or just play well.

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. When you are up in a match by that much, how do you keep your focus or keep your foot on his throat, metaphorically? When you have just bageled him, and it's 2-1 in the third, and still theoretically space to come back, but it all seems like it's going one way, how do you keep your focus in that kind of situation?

TAYLOR FRITZ: I just kind of focus on the basics, like just focusing on holding serve. The whole thing can change really quickly if we're on serve and then I just drop a break out of nowhere, then I go down. He just holds serve and wins a set. It can change a lot.

It's just about focusing on holding serve, being focused on the return games, make sure you get that break, and then once I get the break in the second and the break in the third, it relaxes me a lot, and I know I can kind of stay focused on my serve and close out the sets.

Q. Is it particularly difficult here, with the way the weather changes so much, just the conditions different each day you play?

TAYLOR FRITZ: I've dodged the really hot days. I

practiced on Friday, and it was really, really hot on Friday. That was tough. It would have definitely been a struggle to play a physical five-setter in those type of conditions.

So far it's been pretty windy for both the matches I've played, and it changes things a lot for sure. There's one side where you feel like you can dictate, you have the wind at your back. You get a lot of extra power on the ball. It's just easier to be offensive and hurt the person.

Then on the other side it's so much harder to attack. You feel like it's so easy for the other person to hurt you off your shots. The wind is slowing your shots down. There's a bit of that. I felt that a lot in my first-round match, for sure.

I mean, I've been here a lot. I've seen a lot worse. I've seen some really windy days, and we've dodged it so far. If the fluctuation we've had the last couple days is as bad as it gets, then that's good.

Q. Can I ask you a question about being the son of a professional sports woman. What was your mum like in terms much how she... I'm sure she wants you to play as many sports as possible, but did she want maximum effort from you? Was she a pushy sporting mum, or did she just let you go?

TAYLOR FRITZ: Not at all. My mom was really, honestly, chill about all sports, and tennis included. My dad was much more the one that was very trying his hardest to get me on the tennis court because I hated it so much when I was younger. So he would do pretty much everything he possibly could to try and give me incentive to play.

Obviously where I'm at now, I didn't like it back then, but now I can appreciate the lengths he went to to try to get me to play tennis. My mom was always very, like, just relaxed. Kind of, Do what you want to do. My dad was the one that got me on the court.

Also, when it came to other sports, too. We would be driving home from something, and we would pull over at a park, and he would be, like, Okay, do chin-ups, do push-ups, go run sprints.

Yeah, like I said, I wasn't too happy about that when I



was a kid, but I can appreciate it now.

Q. Is that because you think she realized she didn't want to push you too hard?

TAYLOR FRITZ: Just how it was. My mom was just a lot easier on me. My dad was the one pushing me. I think that was just kind of the dynamic.

My mom still helped coach me and gave me a lot of advice. I probably -- I wouldn't be where I'm at if it wasn't for the tough love that my dad gave me and how he pushed me.

Q. I wanted to ask a Netflix question. You were one of the biggest stars across both seasons. This season, when it came out, there was a lot of backlash from tennis fans and viewers about the inclusion of Zverev as one of the main figures in the second season and having the episode have no mention at all of the accusations that he has gotten from multiple girlfriends now and the legal proceedings that are going on and stuff. So ATP put out a question poll for questions for Season 2 cast, and it was 95% all about Zverev, and people thought it really overshadowed the season. I'm curious, as a pseudo co-star on the show, what do you think of that inclusion and portrayal of the situation?

TAYLOR FRITZ: I didn't watch the episode. I think as far as the whole injury at the French Open, him coming back, I do think there's a story there, regardless of what's going on off the court. Him coming back, he had a great year last year.

If you are going to make an episode about him, then I definitely understand why people want that to be, at the very least, I guess included in the episode or touched on. At the end, they are building up the players and making the players into - what's the best word - I guess you want to watch the show and relate and like all the players pretty much.

I think they're going to leave negative things out about everybody. Obviously I understand the public reaction to that. I think you could probably touch on the story aspect of his injury, return, all that and also touch on everything else that's going on with that.

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