

# Australian Open

Thursday, 18 January 2024

Melbourne, Victoria, Australia

## Shang Juncheng

Press Conference



SHANG JUNCHENG/S. Nagal

2-6, 6-3, 7-5, 6-4

THE MODERATOR: Congratulations, Jerry. This is your first time into a Grand Slam third round. With such a tough battle out there, how do you summarize this match and your current feelings now?

SHANG JUNCHENG: Yeah, I think definitely one of the toughest match I played this year. Speaking from the score, maybe not the toughest. I mean, there's roller coasters during the match. It was windy, tough conditions. Sumit played quite a good first set.

I was struggling with the wind big-time. I felt like at one point I had no plan of how to play or how to make it work, but glad I found a way. Kept my cool. I'm here now (smiling).

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

**Q. I know you grew up idolizing Rafael Nadal. Did you grow up ever idolizing any Australian players? Do you have any Australian connections on your team or coaches or anything?**

SHANG JUNCHENG: Australian players, I would say, I mean, Lleyton Hewitt. He's a legend. I see him in the locker room quite a few times actually. It's actually pretty cool for me.

His playing style I would say maybe is someone that I can maybe copy, too, 'cause he's not the tallest guy, not the strongest guy on tour when he was playing. There's some similarities from me to him.

I often watch his matches. He was world No. 1, one of the best players that ever played. I think he'll be the one, if I have to pick.

**Q. Any Australians on your team?**

SHANG JUNCHENG: No, no Australians. I get along with all the players from Australia really well. They're super nice. We practice together all the time. I mean, I think me and Australia is kind of a connection. I love it here. People are so nice.

**Q. Are you surprised at your ability to succeed so far at this level? You've had a pretty good month. Did you expect this level of success at this point in your life and career?**

SHANG JUNCHENG: I actually spoke to my coach just before leaving pre-season coming to Hong Kong and to Australia. He says, If you expect nothing, then everything you get is overachieving.

For me, I've been just kind of having low expectations, just starting from scratch. I mean, it's always, like, an opportunity for me to learn 'cause last year I played one year on tour, this is my second year, so everything is still kind of new to me.

Kind of expecting me to do well after this really good pre-season with my team, but also at the same time this is very good for me and very good experience.

**Q. If you can tell me what the difference was from the first set to the second set. Also, talk a little bit about Sumit's game.**

SHANG JUNCHENG: Like I said, Sumit is a really experienced player. I actually watched him and Federer play. He got the first set with Roger, played an unbelievable match in the US Open. He was just breaking down my game with some heavy top spins on the forehand.

The Indian crowd, if you saw today, was really good. They were cheering for him big-time. Obviously respectful from both sides. That was really fun. A full house on Court 13. It was good energy and a great battle. Tough match for Sumit, but I'm sure he'll be back.

**Q. The name of your physio and trainer? Do you have them with you here, who they are?**

SHANG JUNCHENG: Yes, my tennis coach is Martine Lunde. He's from IMG Academy. Also my fitness coach, Jason Hettler, he actually just made it today. Left with some of the boys that are training in the academy, he made it to my match today. I'm very glad he saw this, yeah.

**Q. Next up you have Carlos Alcaraz. Very easy.**



SHANG JUNCHENG: (Smiling).

**Q. What are your thoughts about playing Alcaraz?**

SHANG JUNCHENG: Like you said with sarcasm, very easy, right (smiling)?

He's one of the best players on tour. I've watched him the whole year. Basically in 2023 he's had amazing runs, amazing matches in the Grand Slams.

For me, again, low expectations. I expect nothing but a really nice crowd on Rod Laver or maybe Margaret. Depends on which court I play on. Just to enjoy every point, every moment out there, try to learn.

He's a little bit older than me, already one of the best players on tour. It's going to be great. I'm going to have fun.

**Q. When you won your first round last year, you were the youngest player to win a Grand Slam match since Alcaraz. Do you feel like you share something with him there? Do you look forward to being part of the next generation with him?**

SHANG JUNCHENG: That's something maybe in the future. Right now I'm focusing on the present. Obviously me comparing to Carlos, that's great. I know I'm heading on the tour right path if you guys are comparing me to him.

Again, step by step for me. Nothing too crazy. Just try to focus on the present.

**Q. When you're coming from a country where men have not had a great deal of success in tennis, how do you convince yourself that you can do this?**

SHANG JUNCHENG: I think it's an individual sport. I mean, only humans play this sport, so I think everybody is the same. You just maybe have to find the right moment, the right path, just capture your moment and the opportunity.

So for me, I'm lucky that I have a good team, amazing family that has supporting me since I started playing tennis. Other than that, I don't think about too much about what my country has not had players or they have amazing players, these things.

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