

Australian Open

Thursday, 18 January 2024

Melbourne, Victoria, Australia

Thanasi Kokkinakis

Press Conference



G. DIMITROV/T. Kokkinakis

6-3, 6-2, 4-6, 6-4

THE MODERATOR: Thanasi, bad luck on the result. Taking a red hot Grigor to four sets. How do you reflect on the match?

THANASI KOKKINAKIS: Yeah, it was tough. He is playing incredible tennis at the moment. He was a better player for sure for the first two sets. The first set was probably closer than 6-3. I had a lot of break points to kind of make it a real contest.

But yeah, he was playing great. I felt like I couldn't get the ball past him. Moving unbelievably well. Just, yeah, he was playing very well the first two sets.

Then I fought hard, scraping, sneaking out the third set. The fourth set was a tussle. Got broken from 40-15, which is disappointing. Yeah, better player won. He is playing great.

Q. We saw you, it looked like you were wincing a little bit, and you were grabbing your side. Was that something you might have picked up in your first-round match or something you have been managing or just part of playing tennis?

THANASI KOKKINAKIS: All the above. Yeah, I think I picked something up during my first round. Definitely my serve speeds were down a little bit. Struggling to get that pop on first serve and those free points. Against someone like that you need all the help you can get.

Yeah, just struggled a little bit with the side. But yeah, not using that as an excuse at all. He was too good today.

Q. Strategically, what were you hoping to implement tonight against Grigor? Obviously he has been in red hot form. He's definitely one of the players you probably prefer not to face in a second-round match, but what were you hoping to execute tonight that didn't quite go your way?

THANASI KOKKINAKIS: Just found it very difficult to dictate going into his backhand. I didn't serve as well as I

wanted. That was a thing that I knew, I needed to serve well to put him under pressure. Yeah, it just felt like he was on every one of my serves.

Then obviously I was trying to dictate and get him to go to the slice as much as possible, but his slice was unreal today. It felt like he barely missed one, and the ones he was hitting, he was, like, knifing. They were just clearing the net, and it made it very difficult to attack.

You want to open him up, and he has a great running forehand. I just felt like I had to work for everything. Very few free points. Yeah, he is definitely in some great form right now.

Q. If we zoom out a bit and look at your first-round match, which you obviously won dramatically, I think you said on court that you had been battling demons to win that, and you won it. I think you said something similar when you beat Stan at the French. When you come through those five-setters, and that's happened a couple of times at slams now, going forward, are you having success with battling those demons? Is that getting better for you or easier for you?

THANASI KOKKINAKIS: Five-set battles are never easy. Definitely overcoming those and knowing you can get through it and you can win in those tight five-set matches. Yeah, as I said tonight, I felt like I had to work for everything. Who knows if I snuck the fourth.

Yeah, I was coming from behind. It's never an easy task when you are two-sets-to-love down, and you try and come back against someone who is in such great form.

Knowing I can win in five, I've proven it a few times now, so it's a good feeling. It's tough when you start 0-2 in sets.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports