

Australian Open

Tuesday, 23 January 2024

Melbourne, Victoria, Australia

Taylor Fritz

Press Conference



N. DJOKOVIC/T. Fritz

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

THE MODERATOR: Tough luck, Taylor. You must be disappointed but also you can take a lot of positives out of this hard-fought match.

TAYLOR FRITZ: Yeah, for sure. Like, I played a really high level for the first two sets, and they were physical tough two sets. It was like two-and-a-half hours by the time we finished the two sets.

I need to get to the point where I can do that for five hours.

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

Q. Is it kind of astonishing how hard it is to win points, games, much less sets and matches from Novak? Can you describe why it's so much tougher seemingly than against anyone else.

TAYLOR FRITZ: I think one of the biggest things is, like, just the fact that -- well, I mean, he's so fast he doesn't really miss a lot of balls. He definitely makes you really work and, like, hit quality shots to win points. It's also just like the lack of free points he gives you.

That's also why we're playing so, like, you know, the first two sets are so long, as well. It's, like, I never just hit a second serve and he just misses it. That just doesn't happen. Even when I'm going after my second serve, like hitting second serves that are consistently like 100, 105 miles per hour, like jamming him, he still just puts it on the baseline.

It's definitely tough when you don't get those free points and you have to work for every single point.

Q. You saved the first 15 breakpoints that you faced. That must be uplifting in a way. I know you're coming off a loss, but you must take some goodness out of it.

TAYLOR FRITZ: Yeah, it's great to win that many big points in a row. I think I got to the point where I saved so many, I was playing the breakpoints so well because I

just didn't even care if I got broken anymore because in my mind he deserves to break me at some point (smiling). I was playing him loose and playing him so well.

But, I mean, I also honestly shouldn't have faced that many breakpoints. I definitely could have played the games and served better to not put myself in that position.

But how I was playing from the ground, like, after, you know, take out return, take out serve, how I was playing from the back of the court, I'm super happy with.

Q. When you last spoke you spoke about the fact that Novak had, like, an 8-0 record and if you were him you wouldn't change too much because things are working. How do you get yourself from knowing that to the point where you're out on court, believing that you can win in that dog fight?

TAYLOR FRITZ: For me, a lot of the, you know, record looks pretty bad, but at least five of those matches were played when, in my mind, I was a completely different player. I was younger and I was nowhere near as good as I am now.

And then the sixth meeting, it was actually pretty close. Prior to this match is the best I had actually played against him, and I had improved a lot as a player. That was relatively close. And then the next two matches I feel like I played very poorly.

I look at 8-0 and I see, okay, there's only one match here where I really feel like I played well, I feel like I'm a better player. That one was kind of I served for a second set in that match, it wasn't a beat-down by any means.

Yeah, the number, the record sounds very discouraging, but I'm, you know, constantly improving as a player. I know that, yeah, if I play the way that I played the first two sets, if I bring that level for five sets, then, you know, it's possible.

Q. You played Novak over a period of five years now. Do you see any signs that Novak is, like, showing any kind of weaknesses? Do you think he may be a little bit slower, hitting the ball not that hard or is there no signs at all?

TAYLOR FRITZ: No, from what I can recall from the first times we've played, to me, I think he's just as good as ever.

Q. Looking ahead the next year and maybe even year ahead of that, there is talk about merging the WTA and the ATP. Do you have any particular thoughts on that? Can it work? Why do you think it's kind of taking so long if it's been talked about for a while?

TAYLOR FRITZ: I mean, I think that's, as far as why it's taking so long, it's a really easy to answer: There's so many logistics around it. It's such a nightmare to get all these tournaments to cooperate and all the play -- there's just so many things that need to kind of get done.

But, you know, it obviously depends how it happens. If it happens in a way where we can all be united and sell our, you know, kind of licensing agreements as a package deal, and, you know, there's a way that it becomes beneficial for everyone because we're all united, then, yeah, it makes a lot of sense.

Q. What do you put the drop-off down to in the third and fourth sets? It was obviously really hot out there. I think it got up to 31 degrees. Was it frustrating at all to have to wait around, I think it was nearly 5:00 by the time you got on court?

TAYLOR FRITZ: Yeah, the fact that we waited that long, to be honest, it cooled down quite a bit as the match went on.

It was hot in the beginning, I think. The third and fourth, like, I definitely, my serve, just level of my serve decreased, and I needed it to be better, I needed to be getting more free points. I can't be out there having to, like, work incredibly hard for every single point on my serve and then turn around and have to do it returning as well.

I really needed my serve to go for me in the third and the fourth, and I just had some games where even I'd make first serves, but the spots on the serves would be awful. It can't be like that against him. He'll just return it.

Then also, I mean, there is a drop-off of, you know, it was two sets, but, I mean, I've played four sets in that time. It was two-and-a-half hours of really physical, like, really physical tennis.

Yeah, it's tough to just sustain that level for, you know, probably two, three more hours that I needed to when I haven't really gotten to play at that level and play against that level that often. You know, it's tough to prepare for something like that, especially when I've had an offseason with just injuries and trying to get healthy and

haven't really been able to put as much time as I wanted to into just the workload on the court and in the gym.

I've done what I can, but it's tough to prepare you for playing that physicality for potentially four, five hours.

Q. There's a prospect that another men's best-of-five- set match could be starting close to 11:00 p.m. Here. A, how do you think that will affect the two guys playing? B, how do you think it will affect them when they have to play in a semifinal?

TAYLOR FRITZ: Yeah, I think it's rough. I was talking about that to Medvedev or, like, with a group of guys and Medvedev before, because he finished that one match so late. It's just, like, I mean, just screws up your whole clock. I pray for those guys. If they end up doing that, then they can at least get scheduled at that time for the rest of the tournament. Because if you have to turn around and play in, like, the afternoon in any of the other days, it just completely messes your sleep schedule.

Yeah, I mean, it's not easy to go out in the middle of the day in the heat and play three-out-of-five sets, especially when your body clock isn't on it.

You know, in one case, like, I get it, matches go long some days. Like, today in particular, my match was long, the match before us was really long. But yeah, there's got to be something they can do to where people aren't playing until 2:00, 3:00 a.m., because I don't think people really fully understand how much time we actually, like, have to spend doing stuff after we finish playing as far as, like, ice bath, treatment with physios, massage, all this stuff. If you finish at 2:00 a.m., there is no chance I'm going to sleep until 5:00, 6:00 a.m.

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