

Laver Cup

Saturday, 23 September 2023

Vancouver, BC, Canada

Team World

Vice Captain Patrick McEnroe

Taylor Fritz

Press Conference

T. FRITZ/A. Rublev

6-2, 7-6

Team Europe - 0

Team World - 6

THE MODERATOR: Taylor, Patrick, thanks for joining us.

Another big win for Team World. Taylor, your thoughts on the match.

TAYLOR FRITZ: Yeah, I thought I came out playing really, really well, and I felt like Andrey definitely upped his level in the second. He broke me early and I didn't think I really did anything wrong in the game that he broke me, so I kind of just had to stay with it, and I feel like I upped my level a lot in the tiebreaker.

It's huge for the team. I feel like after a really good, perfect Day 1, it's huge to start out with another win on Day 2, kind of set the tone.

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

Q. That was some win, Taylor. You've got to be pretty proud of that one. I know you're not one to say that you're a team leader, so to speak, but it felt like that today in a way. Just talk about how you approached that match and how you felt on the court.

TAYLOR FRITZ: You know, I think yesterday all the guys played really well. I thought Ben and Francisco played, like, extremely, extremely well. You know, I felt that, and I wanted to come out on court and also kind of show what I can do. I think it definitely motivated me to play a really good match and kind of prove I guess why I am the highest ranked.

Definitely not, like you said, not a team leader. John's our captain and our leader, but yeah, I just felt great. You know, I hope it looked as good as I thought it looked



LAVEL CUP

on the court, because I felt I played really well (smiling).

Q. Patrick, could you talk about that too, how you view him as a team leader? You're probably more likely to say it than he is.

VICE CAPTAIN PATRICK McENROE: Well, he is. I mean, he's been on the team a number of years. It's fun to watch these guys over a period of time develop. I obviously have seen Taylor since he was a teenager. To see him come into the team and he did great, I remember he had a huge win over Thiem, I think it was his first match or first Laver Cup, and he plays great in this environment.

I think that is a sign of a great leader, not only does he inspire the other guys, they all push each other, but when it's his time and the bell rings, you know, he's always ready to go.

Q. Taylor, like you say, you didn't really do anything wrong today. Yet you were down 4-1 in the second set. What are you thinking at that time?

TAYLOR FRITZ: I mean, it's 4-1, but it's just one break. It's not that big of a deal. I felt like it's easy to get frustrated if I play a bad game to get broken, but the game I got broken was actually the game that I made more first serves than any other game.

He played too good that game. So, you know, it was easy for me not to get frustrated and just kind of accept it, and I feel like the whole match up until that point I was still in a lot of return games. He wasn't getting, you know, necessarily easy holds, so I felt like if I kind of just stayed with it that I was going to get my opportunities to break back. If not, then whatever, we'll go to a 10-point tiebreaker.

Q. 76% of first serves, but you also had 14 points won at the net. You seem to have this great arsenal of shots. That little touch, tap to get to tiebreak, is that something you developed or something...

TAYLOR FRITZ: I've definitely worked a lot over the last couple of years of coming forward and getting better at coming forward. I think this specific matchup with Andrey is a good match for me to get to net, because I can, you know, look to pull my backhand off the court, get in behind it, look to take my forehand hard line, get in behind it off -- when I get him running to the backhand, I think it's a match I do have to come forward a lot.

The conditions are very slow, so you can't really let

... when all is said, we're done.®



people float the ball back and reset points. You kind of have to follow shots in. A lot of shots that I hit, that would normally, I guess, be point-ending shots aren't in these conditions with these balls. So I'm forced to come in a bit more.

I feel like I've always had these little, like I have always been better at the touch volleys and the half volleys much better than actually just like the normal, like sticking normal volleys. But it's something that I have been working on for a while.

Q. Patrick, it's one thing at 4-0 and gets to 6-0, from a coaching perspective, when does it change for, Hey, guys, be careful, to maybe, Put your foot down on the jugular?

VICE CAPTAIN PATRICK McENROE: You have to get to the end, because the beauty of this format, as we have seen in other years when we were quite behind, you always have a chance going into the final day.

So I think the most important thing, as Taylor said, for each guy to play their match and focus on what they need to do. If they win the next three matches, it will be tied up going into the final day.

While we do have a lead, the beauty of the format is that you can come back later in the event, which we have done a few times. So it's really all about just getting to that final match. We've still got a long way to go.

Q. Taylor, you have played other team events before, the ATP Cup, Davis Cup. How different or similar does it feel to be here on Laver Cup? And do you think we already have enough team events on the tour or would you like to see some more?

TAYLOR FRITZ: I guess I could be a bit biased towards it. I'd like to see more because I love team events. I feel like my record in team events is really good. I play much better in team events. I feel like when I have a team to play for, I get more pumped up. You know, I love it.

I think that Laver Cup's an amazing event. It is a similar feel to other team events. You know, at times, like especially something like last year when Roger's retiring and we're looking on the other side and it's Novak and Roger and Rafa and Andy, yeah, something like that feels different, I guess, from the other events (smiling).

But, you know, the thing they all have in common is that team energy, I feel always more fired up to play when I'm playing whether it be Team World or team U.S. or whatever it is.

Q. A question for both of you. You probably noticed that Steve Nash and Dirk Nowitzki were flanking Roger Federer over there. How nice is it to play in

front of those guys? Did you get a chance to speak to them?

TAYLOR FRITZ: I actually didn't realize they were here until after the match. I try not to look into the crowd too much. But I know Roger is watching, so I think that's always something that is really cool is after I get off the court, especially since I played a good match, I'm, like, it pumps me up a lot knowing someone like Roger and those guys, that they're watching, watching me play, and I'm happy that I played well (smiling).

VICE CAPTAIN PATRICK McENROE: Well, it got me inspired, maybe it was the last year or so to go watch highlights of them playing in their prime, because I just did see them actually in the hallway as I came over here, and they're great guys, great tennis fans.

Steve's actually a pretty darn good player, actually played with him a bunch at our academy in New York, he just moved back to Arizona, but when he was in Brooklyn. He's an incredible athlete. You know, obviously he was a great soccer player growing up in Canada as well.

Dirk's an incredible guy. Unfortunately he's got some ankle issues now, but they have been around, yeah, I think I have seen them at every major. I remember years ago I saw them in Australia and Wimbledon. I think it's great for tennis, you know, seeing guys like that come around and appreciate the sport.

Frances and I, as we were watching Taylor, we were talking about his step-away jumper for Dirk, the greatest step-away jumper.

Milos, I said, He's got to be the best big-man shooter of all time.

He said, What about Durant?

I said, Well, Durant's a great scorer, but is he a better shooter than Dirk?

I'll leave that to you. (Laughter.)

Q. Taylor, you just touched on things like half volleys. Have you put in extra work on that aspect?

TAYLOR FRITZ: No, like I said, I actually feel like the feel and touch shots are actually something that I have always done well. I have just never really, I guess, used them enough. You know, you don't really get to see the half volleys, because I don't come in to net that much. So I think it catches people off when I'm sometimes dropshotting and hitting those touch-and-feel shots well.

I feel genuinely that's -- I'm the first to say I'm bad at a shot. I'm extremely hard on myself. Genuinely those

shots I have always had. I have just gotten better at finding the times to use them in matches now.

Q. You also just touched on Roger watching. For you, who would be more intimidating or inspiring or whatever if it was Roger, Rafa, Novak to be watching you?

TAYLOR FRITZ: Watching? Intimidating, I'm not quite sure. I think I know, for me, when it's Roger watching, that's probably, like, what I'd be the most excited about, I guess, of the three of them. Probably would be the most excited about Roger watching, because I just, you know, always looked up to Roger so much.

Yeah, I'd love to talk to him and ask him what he, you know, what he thought about the match or about my game.

Q. Since we talked about technique, talked about volleys and half volleys, can I ask you about your backhand? You seemed to be hitting a couple of one-handed aggressive backhands today. Is that something you're building in or improvisation or just feeling great at the back of the court?

TAYLOR FRITZ: No, it's just improvisation. I hit oneys in practice sometimes as a joke, but I think it's actually, it's pretty decent. I mean, you would have to watch a lot of my matches to catch it, but a lot of times when someone, you know, smokes a return and kind of catches it deep to my backhand, I'll hit like a oney flick because it's much easier than me trying to hit a two-handed pickup.

I mean, it's not anything crazy. I have done it plenty of times before, and I'd say I normally hit it better than the one I hit today, but I got away with the one I hit today.

Q. But you're not looking at what Tsonga used to do where...

VICE CAPTAIN PATRICK McENROE: His two-hander is too good to do that.

TAYLOR FRITZ: Yeah, I like my two-hander a little too much to start doing it. It's more of just an improvisation when I need to pick one up off the baseline if I get rushed after a serve or something.

Q. Taylor, what's more daunting, the catwalk or playing?

TAYLOR FRITZ: Definitely, definitely playing. You know, it's not too hard to just fast walk in a straight line. (Laughter.)

FastScripts by ASAP Sports