

# Laver Cup

Saturday, 21 September 2024

Berlin, Brandenburg, Germany

## Team World

Frances Tiafoe

Vice Captain Patrick McEnroe

Press Conference

F. TIAFOE/D. Medvedev

3-6, 6-4, 10-5

Team Europe - 2

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THE MODERATOR: Welcome, Frances and Patrick. Frances, please tell us how did you turn that match around to win it in the tiebreak?

FRANCES TIAFOE: I mean, honestly, I thought I had a lot of looks in the first. I thought I actually was more in a winning position than he was actually in the first set. It sounds crazy, I got broken twice, but, you know, I definitely had some looks and some loose volleys that I missed there.

So I didn't really -- it's kind of how you look at a glass, I feel like what tennis really is. I try to stay positive from it, obviously more than negatives.

Just, I mean, I started being a little more clinical from the back of the court, playing more aggressive, sticking more of the volleys and not being loose on the volleys and making stupid mistakes, because I am good up there.

That's kind of just a little adjustment I made. Then I kept that momentum going, the crowd got going, and he started joking around, I started joking around. I play better in that environment than he does, I kind of like had the momentum, kind of atmospheres I like. That helped a lot.

THE MODERATOR: You said after the second set you felt like Roger Federer. Please describe that feeling.

FRANCES TIAFOE: No, that was a joke, because I saw him there. He just jokes around with me all the time every time I see him. What a guy he is. So I just had to shout him out. It's his event, too, so I thought it was a nice touch. Yeah, it was a pretty good feeling, yeah (smiling).



# LAVEL CUP

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

**Q. When you go into matches like this, do you at all take notice of the previous record you have against a player like Daniil or you just ignore that? How do you operate?**

FRANCES TIAFOE: No, I don't really -- it's all about, you can only, the only thing that matters is present. All the past results and things like that, what he's done versus what I have done, it's kind of irrelevant.

You look at it right now, and I'm playing some of the best tennis of my life right now. I'm made final of a Masters Series, semis of a slam. If you break it down right now, I'm like, why not?

I kind of have this mindset, this working mentality where you kind of just take it for what is, go and battle, put your best foot forward and see what happens. Because you keep looking at the past, it's like trying to climb Mount Kilimanjaro. I have lost to him so many times.

**Q. Just on bringing David onboard, seems like it's been working really well. For you, what is it you look for in a coach generally and in this particular relationship what it was that appealed and how that works?**

FRANCES TIAFOE: Yeah, me and P-Mac actually had that conversation yesterday. For me, I'm definitely a unique personality, especially in this sport, and someone is going to push me and hold me accountable but also make it fun for me. I'm not a guy where, if you come at me with a drill-sergeant-type mentality, I'm going to go the other way.

Just keep things light but tell me the truth and I'll respond. The lighter things are and where I can feel comfortable and want to bounce ideas off you and stuff like that, then that's why me and P-Mac get along so well and me and Johnny Mac get along so well, because they've known me forever and know how I kind of operate.

I think that's what David Witt's done. He wasn't coming in, trying to reinvent the wheel. He was just trying to shore up some things and keep me, have constant reminders of certain things. Off court, we just clown around and we don't even really talk tennis that much.

**Q. (Question off microphone.)**

VICE CAPTAIN PATRICK McENROE: Yeah, I think as . . . when all is said, we're done.®



Frances said, it's a very personal situation, especially tennis players that are used to being one-on-one, so I think David has had a lot of experience on the women's tour especially. And I think some of those things actually maybe help with Frances, with his footwork and his returns.

But as Frances said, you've got to enjoy it. It's great, Frances is so much fun to be around all the time, and he brings a certain energy to everyone around him, so obviously you've got to understand that coming in.

**Q. Frances, we can see how much fun you're having out there. How much do you think the format of this event helps? Does having teammates there give you a big lift when you're on court?**

FRANCES TIAFOE: Yeah, for sure. It's funny, because I do this at normal events. It's just funny to see everybody else kind of out of their element and loosening up a little bit and just enjoy playing at a high level. I think that's the biggest thing, you want to enjoy playing at the highest level.

It's great. It's really cool having teammates, really cool having teammates. Guys that are the best in the world, seeing their perspectives on the match, it's pretty cool.

Yeah, it definitely helped me get over the line. I think the crowd, it's a Team Europe crowd, but I definitely felt like they were on my side today.

**Q. I would like to ask you about your teammates, Taylor Fritz and Ben Shelton. All of you have had already quite good results on the tour, and there are also six more U.S. players in the top 100 at the moment. Why do you think it is that U.S. men's tennis is so successful at the moment? And if Patrick has an opinion on that, as well.**

FRANCES TIAFOE: I think P-Mac is going to have a great assessment to it. There is a core of us, and Reilly is coming back, me, Reilly, Tommy, Fritz, I mean, we have been going at it, pause, since, I mean, 11, 12, doing little camps and kind of always pushing each other, always good blood. We were really, really close.

We always want each other to do well. Another guy that goes here, and we just kind of kept going from the 12s to junior slams, to futures, challengers, and you see your guy that you rub elbows with, you're like, well, if he's doing it, then why not? Then it kind of just we found ourselves playing semis at majors (smiling).

That's kind of just what it was. Then, you know, we were doing it at a pretty young age, guys were breaking through in that era at a pretty young age, and that just creates a domino effect. Then you've got Ben who comes through, Korda who comes through, some vet

guys that kind of surprise you that kind of come through in that time as well.

So everybody has a different path, but for those core guys, I think we set a precedent that it is possible, because we kind of still played when Roger and Rafa were still elite, and Novak. Well, Novak is going to be elite until he's 70, but I think that was the biggest reason (smiling).

**Q. Frances, you were at a high with your tennis rankings. Things went off the rails a bit, and then it all came back from Cincinnati onwards. Have you got a reason or can you pinpoint why it suddenly clicked in Cincinnati? You got the run at the Open, which could have gone either way, and now you have a result like this today.**

FRANCES TIAFOE: Yeah, I mean, look, I mean, it ebbs and flows with everything. I was always kind of the guy who was looked at, really talented and had good chances to do some special things, top 10 in the world. You know, a lot of things are kind of really going the right way. Had a tough loss against Ben last year at the US Open, then it was kind of like a little change of guard there, who is really the guy.

Yeah, I didn't handle that loss that well. Then didn't really feel like playing the rest of the year. Took the rest of the year for granted, kind of half-assing it. Then, you know, change of coach, this, that, things were kind of off the walls.

But I don't regret those moments, because I think those tough moments kind of make you appreciate these moments even more, and I think the biggest thing is you don't take the game for granted, don't take playing at a high level for granted. These guys are so good out here, so tough out here. I think that's basically what happened.

Now obviously I have a great coach, great team, I'm just having fun again. And knowing that I would do this for free, it's like all the hype and all this and, like, I would play tennis for free. I just love playing tennis. I love people appreciating what I got to do out there, and that's kind of what it is. I think I have a huge level of gratitude to the game and respect for the game at the moment. It's all kind of coming together.

**Q. Patrick, Frances was talking about what he looks for in a coach, but what about from a coach's perspective? What are the kind of things when a player approaches them that they think maybe this will work or won't work?**

VICE CAPTAIN PATRICK McENROE: Well, I think just to go back to the earlier question, which Frances answered extremely well about this group of Americans, it comes down to talent, which all these guys have, and

passion, which they also have.

So we have been lucky that they have been pushing each other. All those things are definitely important, but if you don't have those two things, as Frances said, it's too tough. You're watching these guys out there now, these guys are taking the game to another level athletically, and the way they use the court is, to me, it's just so much fun to watch these guys take tennis to another place.

But you've got to have those things. You've got to have the physical ability, and then you've got to have the passion for wanting to be out there and take the losses and, you know, deal with the ups and downs.

So as a coach, you know, I have a huge appreciation for what these guys are doing, and just to be around it is a real privilege. If you can bring anything, like Frances said, you know, you just are telling it to them straight, because they know what's going on. I think if you can do that in a positive way, I think that helps you be a decent coach.

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