

# Roland Garros

Wednesday, 31 May 2023

Paris, France

## Stefanos Tsitsipas

### Press Conference

S. TSITSIPAS/R. Carballes Baena

6-3, 7-6, 6-2

THE MODERATOR: Well done, Stef. Were you happy with your overall performance today?

STEFANOS TSITSIPAS: Oui. It was good. I had a difficult set on the second one, where I feel like my focus shifted towards not that great of a place, and things seemed tougher than usual.

Yeah, well, this is part of the clay court ideology. You know, it's never really over. There is always a chance to fight back and survive it.

So he played a few good games there, consecutive breaks back to back. Tiebreaker was a very tough challenge for me where I had to overcome it and I had to play some of my best tennis in that particular moment to get that advantage of being two sets love up. In which I feel like if it would have been the other way, things can get quite tricky there.

From one side I'm really relieved that I was able to deliver on that promise that I'm going to play well during the tiebreaker and be a little bit more daring, which I wasn't before. Those daring thoughts and situations that I tried to put myself in paid off greatly.

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

**Q. A question on the tournament so far. You have had a more difficult first round and easier second round. Is it going the way you want it? Is this the plan?**

STEFANOS TSITSIPAS: During a Grand Slam, there is no plan. Things are being thrown at you, and you just have to react to them and do something.

So I wish there was a plan. Maybe in Rafa's mind when he plays here there is some sort of a plan. But you just have to adjust to each player's shot making, each player's idea of how they're going to play against you. That's how things work, you know.

You can never be sure enough of how things are going to



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evolve during a match.

**Q. You got your 50th Grand Slam win in the first round. You got your 20th Roland Garros win here today. Just wondered the kind of significance of those milestones for you.**

STEFANOS TSITSIPAS: I am very much in when it comes to breaking records. I get excited when I see personal records being kind of set and broken.

Of course it's a great satisfaction to be seeing those stats, because there is so much work behind it, and sometimes it's difficult to grasp the fact that it all happened so quickly.

I just wish to keep on going. I wish to be healthy and to be fighting for more titles and breaking personal records but also records that haven't been set before in tennis, like that serve thing that happened in Madrid was quite cool, actually. I never thought about it. It just happened. I wish to be kind of I think few things like this too (smiling).

**Q. We know you think a lot about tennis, and we know you work really hard to always try and be the best player that you can be, to constantly improve and win titles. How complicated is tennis, and how simple is tennis?**

STEFANOS TSITSIPAS: Yeah (smiling). You got me there.

Tennis can be very complicated for some, especially people that see more of the glass empty rather than the glass full.

It's a mindset. It's a way of how you practice and train and how you go about things when you play tennis. There are moments where it feels like a mountain, and I have been through that, and I have had phases in my career where it felt like a giant mountain.

There are other phases of my career where it just felt so effortless and so simplified and easy that it's just a joy to be playing the game and to be trying to figure it out, because that's what it is. Tennis is just trying to figure it out; what works best for you, where your strengths are, how can you pull through when difficult circumstances or moments come about.



These are some of the things that I want to focus on, because it's beautiful when you can play with ease and just hit incredible winners, just come to the net, approach, win points like this, serve aces, hit incredible returns, makes tennis ecstatic, makes tennis, like, this is just so damn easy, just like Roger makes it seem sometimes in the past. Which is not relatable to most people of how they're trying to play because it's not an easy task to do that.

In that regard I want to say that having asked that question, I thought about it the other day, and I had a little bit of a read of Rafa's book of how Rafa relates to a lot of players because of he kind of shows you that anyone can do it, and I think that's a great example right there, you know.

Now, on the other instance, Federer's precision is kind of difficult to duplicate or replicate in a way.

**Q. Clay courts are fairly unique in the way they are maintained between sets, cleaned, watered, it can be a bit hypnotizing to watch it when there's no tennis going on. I'm curious what you make of the ritual, as someone who sort of sees things from a philosophical bend, if you take any deeper meaning from the way the courts are cleaned and watered between sets.**

STEFANOS TSITSIPAS: It's just like in life. You let the old pass and you just start with the new.

It's a great feeling when you step out on a newly made clay court that is clean. All the lines are perfect. It makes for a very pleasing visual experience. But there's also beauty on when the courts are dirty and messed up and you can see all of the footwork and effort that has been put in and you have a visual of that, of how much work has been put in in order for you to succeed in what you do.

It's a spiritual type of surface. Let's call it that way (smiling). It definitely is.

I'm attached to it because I played on that surface since I started playing tennis. Those rituals, I have seen them over and over again. It's kind of ingrained in me, and it's part of my identity.

Yeah, I have done it a thousand times myself, and now it's kind of been, it's a ritual that is done by other people, not by me anymore.

**Q. Curious about the experience yesterday, playing such a tight match, kind of a heartbreaker of a loss in that third set.**

STEFANOS TSITSIPAS: Which one?

**Q. Doubles.**

STEFANOS TSITSIPAS: Oh, the doubles.

**Q. Yeah. I guess you forgot about it already. Because I was going to ask you, did that linger with you and your brother at all and what the rest of the day was like and how quickly you're able to turn your attention to, okay, got another match in 12 hours here.**

STEFANOS TSITSIPAS: Trust me, it sucks. To be losing that with your brother, it sucks more than usually.

And I had to shift my focus towards singles, but having put in so much effort, in a way, I'm doing this for my brother. I don't think I would have done this for anyone else.

I'm so happy that we get to do this together, because I remember when we were little kids, we wanted to be part of this, like this is our dream, in a way.

So him, having worked so hard and earned the spot in a doubles draw, I just want to go for it. You know, we have been very close a few times. We have had a lot of battles. Not that many, but we had a few battles in Grand Slam events.

I'm hoping we just get better. I feel like there is so much gap that we can close in in order to bring our games even higher.

One of our own personal dreams is winning Davis Cup together, I think. Doing that with your brother is probably the most beautiful thing you can witness on a tennis court.

**Q. What is your definition of a tennis match? I think which forces are involved in it? It's way much more than just two players hitting ball.**

STEFANOS TSITSIPAS: Well, it's psychological, I believe, a big important part of the game. As I said, in the tiebreaker, my mind shifted. It changed towards something -- well, I wasn't aiming too much for being conservative, and that led me, that for sure I owe to that, that I was able to win a tiebreaker because of that.

The psychological state that you're in when you play is "the" most important thing, and this starts from outside of the court. If you're able to be in peace and balance before you step on the court, that's already a big advantage that you have.

Of course technical, these are minor things that you can always improve on and are much more controllable in a way and have external force too. But I think if you're a player that can perform big on pressure moments, that is

the thing that is going to just give you a good career in tennis.

There are a few guys that can play good under pressure, especially in big, tight moments, and you have to have the mental strength of a Navy SEAL to pull it through, in a way. You have to have the physique of a marathon runner, the lungs of a marathon runner. You have to have the power of a football player, so back to the hard-work part, there is just so many little components that you have to link up in order to make this unbelievable player where you allow yourself to be unstoppable.

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