

National Bank Open

Tuesday, August 10, 2021

Toronto, Ontario, Canada

Frances Tiafoe

Press Conference



F. TIAFOE/Y. Nishioka

6-4, 6-3

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. First, for starters, how happy were you to find out you caught a little break and you were a Lucky Loser and get to play in this main draw? How do you feel about your performance today, coming through in straight sets against Nishioka?

FRANCES TIAFOE: Yeah, I mean, obviously it was tough, being one out. You know, I didn't have the best mindset playing quallies. I wasn't really in the best state of mind (smiling). With D.C., obviously being home and, you know, such a quick turnaround from Olympics.

Yeah, I mean, to be quite honest with you, I was okay just with just having a week off. I felt I just needed a week off. I was ready, just be, like, yeah, my girlfriend got here in Toronto and kind of spend the week her.

Then, I was, like, I will wait a day. Definitely gonna wait Tuesday to play. I got a chance. Then I was like, Why not go out and play and have some fun? Today I played really well. I was really locked in. I served great. I was moving the ball around.

Yoshi is obviously a very tough player. I respect him a lot. We played World TeamTennis together at one point. It was fun it be out there and just take the pressure off and kind of just enjoy yourself.

Q. Obviously now that you are in this tournament and you get to enjoy yourself, you're going to get an exciting night match I think tomorrow against Denis Shapovalov. It feels like the two of you have a bit of a rivalry brewing on the court, and in terms of your head-to-head, you have had competitive matches. How well do you two know each other and get along? What does it take to beat Denis in a matchup?

FRANCES TIAFOE: Yeah, obviously I won the first time.

He's got me the last four. Well, yeah, I mean, we had some tough three-setters. Last couple of times he's won pretty convincing.

Yeah, you've got to serve well. You've got to serve well against Denis and you've got to be able to dictate play. Obviously he hits the ball so strong and plays super aggressive. Kind of managing the first couple of shots off serve and return, try to make things, returning as much as possible. Sometimes he can just take the racquet out of your hand.

I'm ready to go. Me and Denis are great friends. We get along great. Obviously always pulling for each other. We FaceTime all the time. We go to dinners when, you know, not bubble situations. We text all the time. We're good friends. He's a good guy.

Sometimes I think he's a little misunderstood. Obviously we're all human, and sometimes we act out, but I think he's one of the nicer guys on tour. I'm sure he's a good guy and someone I speak to outside of the game. I think I'll always be friends for and always have a ton of respect for.

Q. Great match today. You served 11 aces and didn't face any breakpoints. Like you said, against Shapovalov it's going to be important to serve well. What were you most happy with with your performance today?

FRANCES TIAFOE: Yeah, I mean, I was super on today. Played really aggressive, at the net. Nothing really to complain about. I was locked in. Gave no real freebies and just enjoyed it.

Obviously not tough out there, super dry. Obviously we have been in D.C. last week with crowds. Sick atmosphere. It was definitely a bit of a plot twist. He's dealing with the same thing, as well. Definitely no excuse. Yeah, I'm ready for the next match.

Q. The next match will be different obviously with Denis at the night match, or assuming a night match with some fans at least on center court here in Toronto. Do you have good memories of playing in Canada when you were younger? Did you get up here much in your junior days? What's your overall



impression of the country?

FRANCES TIAFOE: I love Canada. My girlfriend lives here in Toronto. I like Toronto a lot. 2018 I had a great run here. I beat Milos on that court on center here. I had a blood bath with Grigor, lost 7-6 in the third. I played some great matches here.

And then, yeah, I did win some juniors. I think in Montreal, played some qualifying and World Team Cup or whatever back in the day. Yeah, I have spent some time in Canada. I like it. I think I played, I don't even know if you know this tournament or if it still goes on, Cub Leblanc (phonetic) when I was super young, that was a cool tournament. Yeah, Canada is cool.

Q. Just wanted to get your reaction to some breaking news. Apparently Rafael Nadal has just pulled out of this tournament. When you have an event where all big three now are gone with Nadal out, what does it do, I guess, for the mentality of young players like yourself, like Denis, other guys who are maybe seeing a shot at a first-ever Masters 1000 title?

FRANCES TIAFOE: It's a good look, right? Obviously you never want to see that, but, I mean, the guard is going to change soon. Obviously these guys, time is of essence now obviously.

You already see Tsitsipas playing great, Medvedev obviously been doing his thing, Zverev winning the Olympics. The guard is definitely changing. It's a matter of who's going to take it. It's going to be an open field a little bit.

There is a lot of good players but nobody who is so great that can't be beaten, right, out of this crop. Me beating Stefanos at Wimbledon, depth of tennis, a lot of guys can play well on any given day.

I think it's good for the sport. See some new faces, kind of have the game, you know, new personalities, new changing of the guard. We'll see who takes it. I think it's an open field. Anybody can put it together, honestly.

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