

National Bank Open

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Toronto, Ontario, Canada

Stefanos Tsitsipas

Press Conference



S. TSITSIPAS/K. Khachanov

6-3, 6-2

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. Great win today. You looked super comfortable out there on these courts. You played two great opponents in the last two rounds. How are you feeling with the court speed? How is it playing? Fast or slow? What are you looking forward to in your next match with Casper?

STEFANOS TSITSIPAS: Court speed is good. Same one as I remember last time that I played here.

Yeah, looking forward to that battle. You know, we have played each other in the past. Not an easy guy to play against. You know, looking for a change, looking for a switch-up this time.

Q. You have achieved a lot already. You've reached a Grand Slam final, Masters. Did you set any targets for yourself for certain ages? Do you think you have achieved the targets you have set until the age of 23? What is your next plan of action? What do you think you should achieve maybe in five years from now? What are your thoughts on that?

STEFANOS TSITSIPAS: It's not that I put goals depending on my age. I set goals every year regardless of what my age is. Within that year I try and, you know, just put my attention to these goals that I have set.

So far, most of my goals have been completed, and, you know, I still have a few months to go to complete 100% all of my goals. You know, that pumps me up. I feel like I'm very close. I feel like I have what it takes to finish the year strong.

I'm not really thinking about much. I'm playing tennis, and that's enough.

Q. I'm working for the Norwegian agency. Can you tell

me a little bit more about this match against Casper? He has been doing so well lately. What was puzzling is that you're exactly the same age but you only have one encounter that unfortunately you lost, but, you know, you never met many times on the ATP Tour.

STEFANOS TSITSIPAS: Yeah, Casper is a player that has been developing very good recently. You know, he had an amazing clay court season, I think inside the top three as the guys with the best clay court season this year.

He's someone that serves very well, has a very good serve-and-first-ball pattern that works really well for him. I think he's probably one of the best players out there to have the serve and first ball inside the three first shots that he hits.

Well, it's definitely something that I'm going to have to pay attention to, and, you know, apply more pressure towards that. We are, yeah, we are definitely the same age. We grew up playing each other. Playing as the same age as mine, it can be quite intense, I would say (smiling).

Q. You had some nice things to say about Pete and sort of reflecting on how you watched him, your dad watched him. What is it you most admire about him? Was it the serve and volley? His sort of champion's mindset?

STEFANOS TSITSIPAS: His flamboyant game. I enjoyed watching his serve-and-volley game. People say Roger Federer is effortless. I also feel like Pete Sampras was very effortless and just making the game so beautiful to watch.

He's someone that also, because of his Greek descent, you know, my dad, when he started tennis at a late age, around 18 to 20 years old at the university, that was a player that he really liked to watch and he passed it on to me.

Both of us grew up, you know, watching him. I grew up being given Pete as an example. We would spend lots of hours at the beach tennis courts in our area, you know, just countless hours of serving, countless hours slicing, volleying, all this stuff.



Yeah, he was always there. We were always -- we always saw him as like a big legend of our sport.

Q. You were mentioning how your dad would show you video and how you both like watched a lot. Is there anything in particular that stands out? Is there one match that sort of blew you away that you remember?

STEFANOS TSITSIPAS: From Pete?

Q. Correct. Yep.

STEFANOS TSITSIPAS: Yeah, I kind of remember watching -- which year was that? No, I was too young for that stuff. Against Federer at Wimbledon? I don't think I watched that. But I certainly do remember him lifting the US Open trophy, which I would think was in 2005 when he retired? Correct me. That was his last tournament?

Q. No.

STEFANOS TSITSIPAS: 2003?

THE MODERATOR: 2002.

Q. 2002.

STEFANOS TSITSIPAS: 2002 when he -- yeah, for me, that was "the" best ending of someone's career, to be honest with you, to win a Grand Slam title and just call it a day (smiling). He did it in unbelievable style. Doesn't get any better, I think.

No, I was probably too young for that. I was like four, almost turning five. But how would I...

Q. What was it like to hear the fans serenading you with "Happy Birthday," to get a cake brought to you on the court? What was that like for you? What does that moment mean to you?

STEFANOS TSITSIPAS: "The" best feeling, one of the best feelings that you can experience on a tennis court (smiling). I'm glad they remembered. It also reminded me my age, which I like to think is five years less sometimes.

Q. I'm not sure what type of cake it was, but do you have a favorite way to celebrate a treat that you would usually have on your birthday?

STEFANOS TSITSIPAS: I would prefer hazelnut, but that's okay, they didn't know about what my preferences were (smiling).

Yeah, but I haven't had a piece yet. I'm planning to after you let me go. Birthdays are the best. Birthdays are the best, because people remember you, people send you nice presents and messages. It's always a beautiful day when it's your birthday.

Q. I'm sure winning a match is a nice way to celebrate. Do you have a favorite memory of a birthday growing up?

STEFANOS TSITSIPAS: Like in Greece, we are more of a name day. We celebrate more the name days than birthdays. We celebrate birthdays too, but for us it's really big when we celebrate name days.

One in particular, I do remember, but it was not "the" best way to end the tournament. It was here in Toronto three years ago when I played Rafa in the final. Yeah, it's kind of like a sweet/bitter experience.

Q. On the camera you wrote "Pray for Greece" at the end. How much has that been on your mind as you have gone through this week?

STEFANOS TSITSIPAS: It's in the back of my mind. You know, it's my country. It's where all of my, you know, where my nation -- sorry, yeah, it's been in the back of my mind. It's my favorite country in the world, and I'm always there to support them and show my love. I'm very proud of where I come from, so it is important that this country heals and goes back to normal.

Right now things are really difficult in that specific region of Athens. People are suffering, and I just want to raise awareness and also have people help a little bit. Many people say it was manmade by foreigners. I really hope it wasn't like this, but, you know, it's something that you cannot control sometimes.

It has destroyed landscape. It has destroyed forested areas. It's really sad to experience that once again. We had this recently too, a couple years ago. So it's not nice to see this back-to-back in such a short time span.

Q. You're 23 now. They call it the Jordan Year, like an ode to Michael Jordan. I don't know if they do that in Greece. Does that mean anything to you?

STEFANOS TSITSIPAS: Well, I kind of figured it would be called it in a way in the States and Canada. Not in Greece.

What is Giannis Antetokounmpo's number? Does anyone know?

Q. I actually don't know.

STEFANOS TSITSIPAS: Well, maybe that could be a new way to celebrate when you turn 16, I assume. 34? 34. 34 is the new 24 (smiling).

Look, 23, I don't know what happens in 23. In Greece you get your driver's license when you're 18. There aren't any benefits that you get when you turn 23. I just wish sometimes I was 16 instead of 23, but it's all right. I accept it and I move on.

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