

# National Bank Open

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Toronto, Ontario, Canada

## Taylor Townsend

Press Conference



E. NAVARRO/T. Townsend

6-3, 7-6

THE MODERATOR: Taylor, hard luck today. What made Emma such a tricky opponent out there?

TAYLOR TOWNSEND: It was tough conditions today. I think that she played the conditions better than I did. In the stadium it was quite windy, but then it swirled a lot, it was tough conditions. I think I kind of found my bearings a little bit more in the second than the first. She's just rock solid, didn't make a lot of unforced errors, started serving better in the second set, putting pressure on me to have better service games, I wasn't getting as many free points on the return. She was just solid.

I think this is uncharted territory for me, my first match in a 1000 quarterfinal. She's been here before, for me it was a new experience, kind of went out a little bit tighter than I was in the last couple of days. I'm just going to learn from it, don't really have much time to process it, I got to play tomorrow in Cincy (laughing).

So, I mean, it's cool that I'm able to kind of take the momentum that I have here and roll it into another event, so, you know, have to have a short memory, another tournament tomorrow.

THE MODERATOR: First question here?

**Q. Could you take us through this week for you, it's been a bit of a roller coaster, I'm sure. What was it like, the emotions, not sure if you were going to play, and then the withdrawal and everything that's sort of gone on for you.**

TAYLOR TOWNSEND: Yeah, it's been crazy, it's been one of the crazier weeks. People kept asking me, like, Do you know who you play? I'm like, God, I didn't even look at the main draw. Because once I lost in quallies it was like, you know, I signed in for lucky loser, but you never know if you're going to get in or not, so I literally didn't even look at the draw, so I had no clue.

Next day, next day, I had no idea. I was just taking it a day at a time, a match at a time, and especially yesterday it was crazy, like people thought I was lying when I told them, like I arrived 11 minutes before I walked out on court, like, it was a true story. Definitely didn't even have any time to think about anything, process anything, I was like, Oh, I was like, I got to get dressed. I had the locker room girls make my drinks, and I was, like, I had all hands on deck.

This week has been amazing. It's not anything shy of what I believe that I could do. I know that it's in my capability to capitalize on the opportunities that I have and play the tennis that I played, and even better.

I was a little disappointed in myself because I felt like I could have played better and had a better showing today. Again, new experiences, and I'm taking it. I know the things that I can do better and I'm going to take that into my match tomorrow. Again, like, I don't really have a lot of time to really sit and kind of think about it too much, I have to be on to the next thing, which is, you know, a gift and a curse sometimes. I view it as a gift because it gives me an opportunity to have a short-term memory, look at all the positive things that happened on this week, and then move on. That can be hard sometimes with tennis players because we can kind of linger on things a lot.

I'm really thankful of the experience. I had a great time here, didn't really get to explore the city very much. I didn't have a single meal outside of my hotel room, so maybe we'll do it today. Yeah, overall I'm really pleased just with the progress and how things are trending.

**Q. It's a pretty good week for American tennis, I think there was five of you guys in the quarterfinals. Could you talk about the depth in the U.S. women's game right now and how you guys are all pushing one another.**

TAYLOR TOWNSEND: I think it's a really special time just to be able to have another resurgence of women's tennis. For so many years it was Venus and Serena only, and people tried to kind of chase the top. It's really nice to be able to have so many high-level women inside the top 5, 10, 20, 50, 100, it's very deep. It's great because, like you said, we all push each other, it's really cool.



Like, you know, I had never spoken to Emma really before Billie Jean King Cup in April, and from there it was like one of the best weeks that I've had. We had so much fun, such a great team atmosphere, such a great team environment. I got a chance to really know her both on and off the court, she's truly like one of my favorite people out here. Yeah, it's really fantastic. I'm really happy to be a part of this and be kind of like a trail blazer in another way of being a mother and kind of doing things my way and on my own path, but to be a part of women's tennis as an American I think it's fantastic and super proud.

**Q. When you get into a draw as a lucky loser, then you starting to go on a run like this, does it change your mentality at all, or do you feel any different kind of pressure trying to take advantage of that second chance?**

TAYLOR TOWNSEND: No, it's like actually the opposite. Maybe for other people it is pressure, for me it's like the opposite because you're not even supposed to be here. For me it's another chance, you know, so why not take advantage of it.

For me, how I entered, like how it happened, getting lucky loser, whereas, like, I came here at 8 o'clock in the morning, like I got here at 8:15, I signed in at 8:30, and I played not before 5:00. I literally had a 16-hour day on site. So, for me it was one of the things where I was just, like, I'm just going to make the most of whatever. Like I didn't even know if I was going to play or not, and then to know, okay, I got in, but now I have eight hours before I play, like, and it ended up raining that day too, so it was more of a delay, it was more mental management than anything.

For me, I was just, like, I'm just going to, I got another chance, all right, let's do it, that was my mindset. Like, I didn't feel any pressure, I just knew that I was going to do better than I did the day before in my quallies match, and so the things that I felt like I could have did better or executed on, I was just going to take those learning lessons into the next match and see what happened.

I didn't put any additional pressure on myself to feel like I have to do this or that. When I do that I obviously play so much worse. I feel like that's what happened today in a way. I didn't have expectations, but I think that I wanted to play well, and I played so well yesterday and so free, and sometimes it could be a little bit stifling in between the ears.

For me that's, again, it's one of the things that I'm taking as a learning lesson to say, Hey, like, you know, got to go out

there and just take the moment for what it is, and just enjoy it and not put any pressure on yourself, no matter what the round is, whether it's first round, last round quallies, lucky loser, whatever.

It's kind of the rarity of the sport, in the sports world, like, how often you have a quarterfinal and then you go quallies of the following week. Like, this is tennis, it's one of the few sports that that happens rolling into a next event. What I did this week, what I did today, it doesn't matter tomorrow, quite literally, so I'm just taking that mentality and keep pushing forward.

**Q. You showed great mental toughness during the match, so I was just wondering, do you have a routine where you prepare mentally before a match like this or do you build it up match by match?**

TAYLOR TOWNSEND: I kind of have a routine in terms of our preparation. Like, I have my coach, we talk about strategy and kind of the things that I want to do on the court.

In terms of the mental preparation, no, I mean, I just go out there and play (laughing).

I think today, you know, sometimes the mind is crazy because other outside factors can influence how you feel or your thoughts or add additional pressure or, again, may go in with a little bit of expectation of like wanting or more hopes of playing well or at the same level or better, and that can sometimes make it worse.

For us, we stay consistent with our routine in terms of preparation leading up to the match, and strategy, tactics and everything like that, so I'm going into the match very clear on what I want to do. Then things happen once you get in between the lines, you feel pressure, you may feel super free, relaxed, loose, things can always change. For me I try to be as fluid as possible to be able to flow through that and to understand, like, going out, the player that played in the first, that was completely different than the player that played yesterday. So I was like, Oh, okay, like, you can't make a forehand today, got it, cool, this is what we're doing.

So then having to work through that to be able to keep myself in the match and keep it competitive, it's really important that, for me personally, like I just stay in that space of being able to continually adjust. If I kind of get fixated on one thing, like it doesn't really work well. I know that for myself through experiences, like it hasn't always been this way. You know, I'm very stubborn, so I'm the kind of person that will just keep going until it breaks, and I realize that that doesn't work, so I have to be fluid and

relaxed and just kind of take things as they are. That's what I've learned and what works for me.

**Q. Naomi spoke earlier in the week about some of the challenges she's had since she's came back to the tour, with regards to regaining her speed and strengthening her core muscles. Kind of curious, when you came back from your maternity leave if you encountered kind of similar changes physically, and I don't know if you and Naomi have kind of shared a bond to kind of talk to each other about motherhood.**

TAYLOR TOWNSEND: Yeah, we literally were texting yesterday, it was, like, we were long overdue for dinner and just, like, catch-up conversation. So, we haven't really gotten a chance to speak intimately about it.

When I saw her at Indian Wells I congratulated her on coming back and just, that was the first time I had seen her, so I just told her, like, Hey, congrats on coming back and being here, because it's not easy at all, there's so many different things as a new mother that you have to manage, externally and internally. For someone like Naomi that has had such success, and was Grand Slam champion, multiple grand slam champion, and coming back with pressure that I didn't have, like I can't, you know, I can't relate to her situation in that way, but it was really cool to be able to see that she's so comfortable in her skin and just where she is in life, I think that that's the most important thing.

In terms of the physical, like we all, everyone has different, you know, challenges. I look at Caroline, and I'm like, shit, she just bounced right back, like, bing, you know, she was back in action.

For me, my comeback was, like I had to take time. I lost almost 90 pounds to come back and to play, breast fed my son for 10 months, so it was a lot of different changes in my body that I had to go through. Yeah, even this year I traveled with a physio for the first time in my career, and we've identified certain weak points in, like I had to have a C section, so I have scar tissue in that area that causes your core to be weaker, and certain muscles that don't fire or aren't turned on the same because of having to cut through all of those layers of fascia and tissue, you know.

We're working through those things, and it's kind of like one of the things where, once it happens and you have that trauma, you just have to continuously manage it. It's never going to be like it didn't exist, so we can't say, Oh, it's not going to be like it never happened. I definitely am stronger in my core because of that, it allowed us to be able to tailor certain things to understanding those deep core muscles and focusing on that stuff, because you have to, because

it's nonexistent when you're pregnant, and it all turns to shit, honestly (laughing).

So, you know, for us, like it's more of a, at this stage, you know, we went through the strength building and everything and now it's more of a management thing. Yeah, it's one of the crazy things that your body goes through, and it's just part of it, and we adjust, but, you know, it's all kudos to her and everyone else, and myself included, for having to go through that and be able to come back and play on this level. Like, it's not easy, and it's not easy psychologically, it's not easy on your body, it's not easy on your mind, having to be away from your kids and, you know, choose yourself, you have to be very selfish in this sport.

Yeah, I mean, as a mom, you know, I give all praises and all kudos to everyone who is doing this, because it's not easy, and it's a lot of sacrifices on top of the sacrifices that you already have to make as a professional athlete playing tennis and being in this world, so I just give all credit to her and everyone else doing it.

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