

US OPEN

Monday, August 28, 2023

New York, New York, USA

Taylor Fritz

Press Conference

T. FRITZ/S. Johnson

6-2, 6-1, 6-2

THE MODERATOR: Convincing three-set win. Give us your assessment of your performance, Round 1.

TAYLOR FRITZ: Yeah, I felt like I played pretty solid, how I have been playing. Yeah, it was just good that, you know, I got on the court and was calm, felt confident, was able to just play the same way I had been playing in practice. Last year I had a really good practice leading into my first round, too, and then I got on the court and was just nervy and couldn't play how I had been playing.

Super happy to come out today and play confident, play well, and, you know, get through it pretty easily.

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

Q. Does a quick match like that, obviously it helps with the nerves, as you mentioned, but does it help knowing the long battles you might have ahead of you, to get through something so quickly?

TAYLOR FRITZ: Yeah, it's always nice to, you know, reduce the overall match time on court when you want to go deep at a slam. Obviously playing, you know, long, five-set battles definitely they'll catch up to you if you play a couple.

But, I mean, to be honest, I did a light bike workout after the match because I actually felt I needed a little more volume considering I'll have a day off tomorrow.

Maybe nice, you know, three sets is nice, but, yeah, I guess I needed, did a little more extra even after.

Q. You come in here as the No. 1 American. Do you feel more pressure? Speaking of No. 1 American, your thoughts on John Isner's retirement.

TAYLOR FRITZ: Yeah, there is always going to be a lot of pressure, just as an American playing the US Open. There



is no other way to put it. Like obviously all the Grand Slams are equal in points, but for an American, the US Open is always going to be the most important one.

There is definitely a lot of pressure. I don't think there is any more pressure on me than there is on, let's say, Frances. I don't think it's just me being the No. 1 American. I think just being top Americans and having high expectations for this week is something that we just have to kind of live with and deal with.

Then as far as it goes with John, yeah, it's sad. It's sad to see him go, but he's, you know, always been that guy for such a long time. When I was first starting out and before I was pro and, you know, he was always extremely nice and welcoming to this group, this generation that we have right now, when we were first coming up. Yeah, he's what I said in my other press conference what we call, he's the GOAT bot.

Q. 2022 you won at Indian Wells, the first time an American had done that in a long time. It's been literally 20 years since an American won any Grand Slam. Tim Henman, he set foot on Wimbledon, he felt the hopes of a whole nation on his shoulders. I assume it's not quite that serious. Do you think having '22 behind you has taken a lot of pressure off, you can actually have some fun this year at this tournament?

TAYLOR FRITZ: I mean, I think there is still pressure. I think I'm a better player now than I was last year. If anything, I mean, there is just as much pressure, but I think I just can go about handling it better. And I already have.

Performance in the first round here compared to last year, it speaks for itself. I handled the situation much better. Once you get that one in, you know, now that I have one match down, there's no reason why it's not going to continue like that.

Yeah, last year was tough because -- no, I do think me winning Indian Wells, I was the first American in a while to win, like, a big title. So, you know, naturally people are going to start the next step, next step is winning a Grand Slam, and there was no Novak, you know, Carlos and Medvedev were the favorites, I had just played a really good week in Cincinnati, and, yeah, I felt like I had a chance.



I think...

Q. The 20-year drought, that doesn't weigh on your mind, then?

TAYLOR FRITZ: I mean, I don't care. Obviously I want to be the one that ends it, but, I mean, so does Frances, so does Tommy, so do all the other Americans. That doesn't really change anything. I guess that's not on my mind. I want to win a slam (smiling).

In doing that, you know, then all the other stuff. But it's not as much pressure as I guess you'd say like the Tim Henman thing, because it's not just me. There's several of us. We share that, and we share the hopes of it, I guess.

Q. Frances was just in here talking about if you want to do anything in life you have to have a certain amount of dedication, passion, et cetera. But tennis is especially tough because you're really on your own so much of the time, you have to rely on yourself and you've got to say no to certain temptations. Can you talk about that a little bit. Do you feel like it's been tougher in tennis and a lonely road sometimes?

TAYLOR FRITZ: Yeah, look, I mean, tennis is one of those sports that you kind of also have to play your whole life if you want to be a pro. You can't pick it up later on and make it.

So you make this decision like very early on. I played my whole life. I mean, starting from the beginning, you know, always turning down going to friends' like birthday parties on weekends and stuff because I'm playing tournaments because you can't play tournaments during the weekdays when every kid goes to school.

So, I mean, just from that, and, you know, I left high school my sophomore year, which is much longer than pretty much any of the guys got to go to high school. I'm one of the only ones that actually went to a real physical high school. You know, then there's all that stuff just having like a normal life, you give it up. When I was 14 or 15 I decided that this is 100% what I wanted to do and I went for it.

Frances is right. You're not going to make it if you don't just commit to it and love it, and now with traveling it's tough to have a social life. It would be nice if it was kind of similar to other sports where there is a bit more of an offseason so you get that time to relax, but we get, like, four weeks and if you're not training in three of those four weeks then you're going to show up and you're not going to have fun when you start the next year (smiling).

It's tough, but, you know, I said the other day in my press conference, like, over my life I have definitely grown to really, like, love tennis and love the grind. Of course there is things that I think we all want to change with it to allow ourselves to have more time to spend at home and with friends and with family that aren't on the tour.

But, you know, it is what it is. I'm super grateful at the end of the day for everything, and I wouldn't change all the things that I gave up to be here.

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