

US OPEN

Monday, August 28, 2023

New York, New York, USA

Christopher Eubanks

Press Conference

C. EUBANKS/S. Kwon

6-3, 6-4, 0-6, 6-4

THE MODERATOR: Chris, convincing four-set win. Give us your thoughts on your assessment of how you played today.

CHRISTOPHER EUBANKS: I mean, I thought I played relatively well. I felt like I played well in spots, the spots that I needed to play well. Obviously I think Soonwoo is one of the best ball strikers on tour. When he gets in the mode he was in in the third set, it's tough for everybody.

Kind of able to keep my composure, reset myself a little bit, be able to, like I said, hold serve, allowed that to kind of be a catalyst for me getting some momentum in the fourth. Not very often I get broken three times in one set. When that happened, All right, let's throw that one out the window, start fresh in the fourth.

Everything else kind of took care of itself.

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. The vibe on Grandstand. Talk about that, being able to get through how he can be so dangerous.

CHRISTOPHER EUBANKS: No, it was pretty chilling when I walked out there and saw the crowd that was already there waiting. To hear the applause that they gave me... I played many a matches here at the Open, but nothing, anything quite like that for a first round.

I think it was really, really special. The fans that came out showed great support. I think that really, really served me well throughout the course of the match.

Q. I don't know if you knew Jaime Foxx was watching or not. The whole bond you have with him, talk about that unique relationship.

CHRISTOPHER EUBANKS: Yeah, no, he's a sports fanatic. He loves sports in general. Tennis being one of



those sports that he has an affinity towards. Something I didn't really know till I got to meet him and he started name dropping players from the '80s, '70s, players he grew up watching. I know he's a massive sports fan, tennis fan. He's a really, really good friend. I think he'd be proud of today.

Q. Regarding late bloomers, I wonder if you could give me a little bit of insight of exactly what it took for you to have the perseverance to have so many years where you didn't have the breakthrough you wanted, it didn't happen. What was the key for you to be able to stick it out to where you are now? Also, if you had to give advice to somebody, what would you tell them?

CHRISTOPHER EUBANKS: I think my case is pretty unique because I think throughout the course of my career I had moments of which I'd shown that I can compete at tour level. I think that always served as a little bit of motivation to say, I can do it at times, I just got to figure out how to do it more consistently.

I think that gave me the added motivation during the tough times. Hey, I've won matches at tour level, I just got to figure out my game and figure out how aggressive I want to be at times, when is the time to pull back, when is the time to push forward.

It came through a lot of trial and error. I think that was kind of the main thing, taking a lot of the losses and learning from them, figuring out ways to try to be better.

I mean, honestly, I've said this before, but I think I had a conversation with Isner some years ago in Acapulco in which I was pretty frustrated with my game, had not been progressing as quickly as I would have liked. One thing he told me, Bigger guys with bigger games, sometimes it just takes us longer to figure it out.

He reassured me, You're going to be fine, don't worry about it. I think at that time I was ranked around 180, 170, something like that. He said, Listen, big guys, big games, you got to figure out when to push the envelope a little bit, when to dial back. He really, really reassured me I was going to be fine.

I think kind of hearing those words from him, a guy who's kind of been there, granted he progressed through the



challengers a lot quicker than I did, but just kind of practicing with him and hearing his input really I think gave me a little bit extra push to kind of know it's going to work out, I just got to kind of stay consistent.

Q. Back into your history, on Saturday I bumped into a group of 40 kids, coaches and parents from Coach Wink's NJTL. I wanted to hear about your history with them. Such a big Atlanta connection here at the US Open and with you.

CHRISTOPHER EUBANKS: Yeah, that group has been coming up and supporting me for years, dating all the way back to I believe -- I mean, the time that I can clearly remember was 2019. I got a wild card here, I played Cristian Garin first round. They came out and brought some energy, came out in full force. Unfortunately I lost in five sets there.

But since then, they've always kind of tried to come out throughout the Open and give their support, give their energy and voice, which I think is really, really cool. Many of those kids come from similar backgrounds, similar areas of Atlanta that I do.

To be able to kind of be I guess someone they can kind of look to, maybe see a little bit of themselves in I think is truly an honor. It's really, really special to be able to kind of serve as that kind of - I hate to use the term 'role model' - but serve as that guiding light towards them in their tennis journey, whatever that is, whether that's college, professional, high school tennis. Wherever it is, if it can help them find a love for the sport, then I think it's great.

Q. Thinking of all that's happened with you this year, all the success and all that you continue to embrace with TV, "Hamilton," all the things you do, I'm wondering where that energy comes from. Are you tempted at times to push some of it away or are you happy to embrace it all?

CHRISTOPHER EUBANKS: No, I think there's a balance between the two. I've worked extremely hard to try to get to this point in my career in which I have the opportunity to do those things.

There's a fine line between saying I want to stay focused and not get too caught up in the extracurriculars, but I think also one thing I started to do over this past year is kind of enjoy everything a lot more.

When I have these opportunities and I can honestly say it won't interfere with my tennis, preparation, or training, I'm going to take it, I'm going to do it. I spent a lot of years on the non-glamorous side of professional tennis. Now if I get

the chance to do some fun stuff, I'm going to take that opportunity.

This past week has probably been one of the craziest and busiest weeks of my entire life, but I wouldn't change anything for the world.

Q. You mentioned after the match that maybe in a previous year you might have been playing on Court 4 or 5. Is there a different sort of preparation required to play in front of a bigger crowd, a crowd that is largely there specifically to see you?

CHRISTOPHER EUBANKS: You don't really want to think about allowing your preparation to kind of change based on the court. I think one thing I did do a good job of trying to in the week leading up, getting my practices on some of the bigger courts so everything seems a little bit more familiar. It's not really a luxury I've been able to have in previous years just because at times you get whatever court they give you. It was pretty cool this year being able to say, Hey, can I get a practice on Grandstand, and able to get it. That was pretty cool.

Outside of that, there is not really anything that changes. Everything remains the same. We try to get our hour in, then I'll go in and do some individual work with my coach, things we've been working on for the past year just to remain consistent.

No, I don't try to change anything too much. Maybe, like I say, getting some hits on some of the bigger courts.

Q. You mentioned you hate to say 'role model' about yourself. You seem like a perfect role model to me.

CHRISTOPHER EUBANKS: Yeah, I feel like the term 'role model' just adds -- always felt like it's a lot of 'pressure' because at the end of the day we're all human. Nobody's perfect.

You take that title, that mantra of being a role model, maybe at some point on a court I have a bad day and I'm not all there, and if I were to act out of character or something like that, then it's almost like you've let people down outside of yourself because they looked at you as this guiding light.

That's why I always try to hesitate to use the term 'role model' because I like to emphasize the fact we're all human, we're all going to have good days, bad days.

There's a fine line there that I like to try to walk, just allow people to know, Hey, if you see what I do and you like it, that's great. I'm thankful for it.

But at the end of the day, like I say, we're all human. You may catch me on a bad day. God forbid you see something that you don't like, now all of a sudden it's this image of a role model that you have has just been crushed.

That's the main reason I'm a bit hesitant to use the term 'role model', but again, I think that's up for the person to kind of decide whether or not they want to look at someone else as a role model.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports