

# US OPEN

Wednesday, August 30, 2023

New York, New York, USA

## Zhizhen Zhang

### Press Conference

ZHANG Z./C. Ruud

6-4, 5-7, 6-2, 0-6, 6-2

**THE MODERATOR:** Big five-set win. The fifth set, losing the fourth set 6-Love, what was your mindset?

**ZHIZHEN ZHANG:** Not too many things to think because it's short time to change everything. I have to change, like, T-shirt and socks, everything.

Also I have one toilet break. Try to be same mindset, like go, don't think too much. This set is gone, so one more set is coming. You don't have time to think negative things, so try to think maybe more positive thing.

Refresh my mind, I lost... Just three set again, tried again, tried again. Yeah, that's it.

**THE MODERATOR:** Questions, please.

**Q. Can you talk about your reaction after you won. Did you feel surprised? Did you believe in yourself that you can make it?**

**ZHIZHEN ZHANG:** I was quite believe in myself. If not, the fifth set is going to be different result. I mean, I was little bit tired for few days already. I had some whatever, some sort of pain, whatever. I really, like, I don't spend so much energy. I try to be calm for whole match.

In the end of the match, finish the last point, I don't really celebration like, not super happy. But it is happy like inside, but it just didn't shows up. Yeah, like this.

**Q. Five-set matches were difficult for you for many years. Now you have two wins back to back. How did you change this?**

**ZHIZHEN ZHANG:** Well, the last couple five-setter was also quite close match. Wasn't like far away. Always have some chance. I mean, tennis is like this. Couple points difference, make the whole match different.



Last four matches, I lost last four times, little bit unlucky. Also little bit had wrong choice in important moment. These two time, just made a right choice, plus I'm lucky. You cannot play 10 time five sets, losing 10 times five set. There is chance. You will win one. There's chance.

Try to just keep playing and keep believing yourself every single time, everyone it's tough moments, still try to believe yourself. In the end you'll make it.

**Q. What were the right choices you made tonight?**

**ZHIZHEN ZHANG:** Tonight? Tonight I will say even the points when I lose or had many times like unforced error, I know I have to play like this way. I need to give more pressure to him because I cannot play too long rally, then play waiting him to get mistakes. There's not many balls he will make mistake, so I need to push him. That's how from beginning to end I follow it.

**Q. Two years ago where you were in your career, difficult with the pandemic with the Chinese players, a lot of progress good things with Chinese players. Did you think this was going to happen two years ago?**

**ZHIZHEN ZHANG:** Two years ago, so which means 2021, right?

**Q. You can pick any time.**

**ZHIZHEN ZHANG:** In that moment you will not think like this because in that moment was super hard for us. First of all, with the COVID situation, it's tough to get outside. Then everything is tough.

The second, that moment we still struggling like in China. I don't think that moment we believed today we can make this result. That moment I would say we are more thinking like try to break top hundred, that's our goal, the goal you have step by step. In that moment the goal is top hundred, which we made it. So you have a new goal. Just step by step.

But that moment I don't think I would say two years after, like, we had a tour-level champion, tour-level title, then two third round. In that moment two years ago if you tell me this, I wouldn't believe it.



Last year maybe I will try to believe it because last year we both are playing little bit better. It was a little bit good year for us, which year is even better. We hope every year is better and better, yeah.

**Q. When did you get over last year's loss and when you came here this year, did you think about it at any point?**

**ZHIZHEN ZHANG:** Any point, for sure, because you never forget this is all the time. You cannot say in your mind all the time, but those memory are there. Like good memories you will never forget. Those bad memory also you will never forget.

Last time is just couple days to pass this because I had Davis Cup after. Actually I was little bit worry about the next match what I'm going, losing this kind of match always is big, like it's hurting you so much.

I had one win in Davis Cup, actually I'm fine already. You just need one more win to get over this.

**Q. You talked about how tough during COVID. Chinese colleague journalists told me that tough situation made you guys good players maybe. Do you agree with that?**

**ZHIZHEN ZHANG:** Yes, part of it. I mean, for sure this is very tough situation for us. Also this good push for us because before like we had a time we going back to China quite often, maybe four, five times, maybe five, six times per year. In that moment you have to push yourself to staying outside, get more practice, you get more consistent schedule to play in tournament. You can have more time to play those tournament because if you're going back, one week, two weeks is for nothing.

Actually, yes, 2022 it is pushing us pretty hard, which is really tough moment, and very lucky that we both, me and Wu Yibing, we outside for more than one year. In the end it's good result.

I cannot say it's really bad for us, but it is tough, really tough.

**Q. Do you feel the interest for men's tennis is increasing in China since you cracked the top hundred?**

**ZHIZHEN ZHANG:** Sorry?

**Q. Do you feel the interest for men's tennis in China is increasing?**

**ZHIZHEN ZHANG:** Yes, I would say yes. More and more people is watching. More and more people is trying to playing tennis. In Shanghai, at least in Shanghai, yes, now we get more courts, we have more people to play. Kids, whatever like ladies, whatever. For the picture, whatever, at least they step on the tennis court.

I mean, especially last year we made, like we break the top hundred, then Wu Yibing got US Open third round. Now even better. A lot of people try to play.

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