

US OPEN

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Michael Mmoh

Press Conference

M. MMOH/J. Isner

3-6, 4-6, 7-6, 6-4, 7-6

THE MODERATOR: Quite a day. Your thoughts.

MICHAEL MMOH: Yeah, you know, surreal. You know, I've had probably bigger wins ranking-wise in my career, but nothing was more special than today.

You know, just the atmosphere out there in the fifth, that Grandstand stadium was rocking. Obviously the majority of the crowd was against me, but it was still surreal feeling to play that fifth-set breaker against a legend like John Isner.

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

Q. MM, just talk about the emotions from two sets to love down and how well he's playing and how difficult he is to play to come back the way you did and in that tiebreak to close it out. Is that the best mental that you have ever shown on court in any match?

MICHAEL MMOH: Yeah, I would have to say so. I always said this. Even before we played I always felt he had the best serve of all time. I think he's the best server of all time. So with that, you know, it's a huge challenge, even on your serve just because you know if you go down a break, that could be the set right there.

And that's how the first two sets went. I felt that pressure. I felt that dynamic of, you know, him maybe kind of not really giving me a rhythm, and then all of a sudden 3-4 in the first set he's making six returns in a row and it's kind of surprising you, and then you feel that pressure because you know if you go down a break, it's basically set over.

Then in the third set I just kind of told myself let's get to a breaker. Let's worry about my own service game. You know, let's just compete.

You know, luckily I was able to get it to a breaker and then obviously win the breaker. Then the only break of the



match came early in the fourth. Then, you know, once you're in the fifth set, anything can happen, and it's just about, you know, who wants it more.

Q. What you told him at the net when you embraced each other, gave him the point after that, then he hugged you again before he went off court. How was that exchange?

MICHAEL MMOH: It was amazing. I think John is one of the best guys on tour, one of the nicest guys on tour. I don't know if he gets the credit for that but he's an absolute standup.

You know, I just told him congrats on an amazing career. You know, to be top 20 for 10 years in a row, you know, that's an achievement that a lot of people would dream of. His longevity for a guy that big, it's not easy to do. There's a lot of injuries that usually come with a body like that.

But, you know, he's been able to stay healthy and he's been able to rack up Ws for almost two decades. I just told him, Congrats. I told him how good of a person he is, too.

Q. What's it like, you have a huge win yourself, you get to the third round, played your greatest major, but in the same vein you end a career of a guy that you clearly look up to. Can you put that into perspective what that was like?

MICHAEL MMOH: Yeah, it was tricky. It was tricky. Because obviously in the moment, in that tiebreaker, you're not really thinking about the fact that it's his last match. Maybe before you start the match you are, but not in that tiebreaker and not when you're down match point.

So, you know, when I won the match, you know, I had a lot of positive emotion and, you know, I was really, really happy. But then, you know, one second later, you know, I felt bad. You know, I genuinely did.

When I saw him, you know, get emotional in that interview, like, I genuinely felt for him. So it was tricky. It was almost like bittersweet.

Obviously at the end of the day we're all competitors and we come here for one reason, and so I'm happy to get the W.



Q. You just mentioned that match point. What is that like in that moment for you, knowing you don't win this point, it ends?

MICHAEL MMOH: Yeah, I think you've almost got to think of it as another point. The more you think of, oh, if I miss the shot here the match is done, you're probably going to end up missing a shot.

I just tried to stay in the moment. I knew if I got a first serve in, my chances were going to be higher to win the point, so I just focused on that. I just focused on execution. I was hitting a lot of T serves in the match so I knew if I hit a good wide one, he probably wasn't going to see it coming.

You know, I just really tried to stay in the moment and stay present and not think about, you know, the repercussions if I did miss a ball or if I did end up not executing.

Q. You have been in that situation before, of course, whether today or in general, when you get past that hurdle, is it joy, is it relief, is it right back to work? What is that sensation like of saving a match point and the match progressing?

MICHAEL MMOH: It's honestly like a second life. You know, you really feel that.

Right when you get to that 5-All moment, you know that he's thinking about the match point that he could have won. He's thinking of the fact that the match could have been over.

So then you're thinking of the fact that, like, now you're in this match, it's square even, you could have just lost the match. It's kind of like getting a second life, to be honest.

Q. Reilly Opelka and Tommy Paul, I've seen all of you guys come up together. Could you talk about them having their pro success before you and how you dealt with that frustration or obviously encouragement by seeing those two guys, for example, and like Frances you mentioned the other day, seeing them have that success and you not quite being able to be at that level. Did that encourage you, frustrate you? What was that like seeing those two guys go up there?

MICHAEL MMOH: Definitely I would say just encourage me more than anything. I just knew if I kept on putting in the work, my game was there, and, you know, I just trusted that. Even though that was tough at times, you know, there was a lot of moments where I didn't know if I was going to be able to get to the level that I thought I was

going to be able to get to.

But, you know, if anything, if they did it, you know, I know I could do it too, because at one point we were all the same level. I just tried to push myself and use their success to inspire me.

Q. With the runs you have made in the slams this year and the players you have beaten, taken down some really big names, has much changed for you from when you started the year in India at the challenger there?

MICHAEL MMOH: It was actually a tour event in India.

Q. Sorry.

MICHAEL MMOH: Yeah, yeah. Yeah, definitely. Just different confidence. You know, now I really feel like I belong at this level, and I really feel like I can hang with these guys and beat them. I think that reputation is going around the locker room as well. If guys see my name in the draw, they know it's not an easy out. Maybe last year they would have thought differently.

But I really know that this year things have changed, and I feel that within myself and I feel that kind of circulating within my peers, too.

I've just got to keep on working and keep on testing these guys.

Q. Many years ago I saw you playing, I think it must have been qualifying for juniors out on those courts out, like, outside the grounds. I wandered over there because the food is cheaper out there. I was watching you and I figured out who you were. All these years later basically, you talked about it a little bit in terms of comparing yourself to Tommy and others, but what would you tell yourself, that kid back then, in terms of what that journey has been like from all the way back then, you were probably about 15 or something, to today, making the third round of a slam for the second time this year.

MICHAEL MMOH: Yeah, you know, I would tell that kid that there's going to be a lot of ups and downs, which there was, but just to stay and really just trust the process, you know, and wait for my moment to come.

You know, I've been unfortunate too with a lot of bad timing of injuries, you know, like when I was top 100 in 2018, 2019, I was basically main draw of Australian Open and Indian Wells and all those events, and then I got hurt for five months. That kind of set me back. I had to start all

over again. It was similar after the 2020 season and 2021,
I was injured a lot.

I'd tell that kid that there's going to be a lot of ups and
downs, but, you know, if you really just put in the time, you
know, put in the work consistently, that it will pay off.

I'm starting to see that now.

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