

US OPEN

Friday, September 1, 2023

New York, New York, USA

Frances Tiafoe

Press Conference

F. TIAFOE/A. Mannarino

4-6, 6-2, 6-3, 7-6

THE MODERATOR: Frances, moving on. Your thoughts on your play as you now advance to the next round.

FRANCES TIAFOE: Yeah, I thought it was a good match. Honestly even though I lost the first, I thought I was the better player. I played one loose game there, kind of broke myself there at 1-All or 2-All, whatever the score was when I got broken. Then I had a ton of break points. I had break points right before I got broken. Just didn't get it.

But it gave me a lot of confidence there going into the rest of the match. I played a great second and third. He kind of lulled me to sleep little bit there in the fourth, came really tough.

Happy to get through obviously. It's another fourth round here, so it's good.

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. Earlier this year, may have been Indian Wells or Miami, you spoke about giving yourself another chance, that you'd been much talked about, then you sort of didn't quite put things together, now it's a different situation. What do you think has been the biggest change or the biggest difference from last US Open to this US Open? What have you changed the most?

FRANCES TIAFOE: I mean, kind of approaching, how I've been approaching. I think obviously things are just kind of coming together. I've been much more professional for the last two, three years now. But as you have big results, as you see the work paying off, you start tapping in more and more and more.

Obviously you can't keep doing the same things you were doing to make semis here last year, I can't say I'm just going to replicate everything I did to do the same, so on and so forth. You got to keep evolving, yeah, just keep



trying to add things to my game, keep trying to stay locked in, but still be me.

But, I mean, just the consistency, trying to get the most out of myself every tournament I play. Just little things. I perform better in the smaller events than I have in the past. Usually I don't do so well in the small events. Usually it's like selective competing. Now I'm competing every event. It's the most matches I've won in a season so far already.

But, yeah, just kind of grow, honestly. That's pretty much it.

Q. Three Americans through to this round, chance for Fitz as well. How much do you guys kind of build on each other's success?

FRANCES TIAFOE: Yeah, I mean, tremendous, tremendous. We're going to continue to do so. Again, this is a group that had a lot of ability. Always had a lot of talent. Guys were doing really well in their age groups growing up. We competed against each other in big matches, juniors, futures, challengers. Now we're at the top of the game.

You see guys do certain things, it makes you believe it, right? The guys you grew up with, rubbed shoulders with and stuff, you see them do well, you're like, Wow, if this guy is doing it, what's wrong with me? Why can't I do it? It's kind of a domino effect after that.

You look at a guy, Tommy Paul, took him a while to get going. He believes more than anybody right now. Taylor obviously has been playing well for a while. Myself. Then that creates a lot of other people. Ben, he's had an up-and-down year, but now he's playing great tennis. He's putting it together here.

It's good to see. It's good to see a lot of players playing well. Hopefully we just keep doing it. Just got to stay in the moment.

Q. This is your best week since about June or so. Was there an adjustment coming back to America? A lot of demands on your time, eyeballs on you. Does it take time for you to get into this groove and find your quiet space where you can compete at this level?



FRANCES TIAFOE: Yeah, I mean, every summer I haven't played my best going into US Open. It's just kind of been what it's been. So it's kind of like whatever. There's two tournaments that really matter to me in the summer, honestly: Citi Open and here. If I do well in the Masters, great. If I don't, also great. I want to be playing my best tennis here. That's ultimately what matters.

Yeah, I mean, yeah... So obviously does that need to change? Yes. I would like to play some more matches than I have this summer.

I just love playing here. It's a special feeling playing here. I've always as a kid wanted to compete here. It's just fun. I'm able to just be me for whatever reason. Probably the atmosphere, crowd, energy in New York, generally I have fun playing here. I think that's why I'm able to play consistent and play so well.

But, yeah, New York's a great place.

Q. For people who don't have a deep understanding of the grind involved, the mental and physical effort and motivation needed to consistently go deep in majors, how would you describe it?

FRANCES TIAFOE: It's tough. It's tough. I mean, hats off to what Novak, Rafa, Fed, Murray, those guys, even guys like Berdych and DelPo, and all those guys who consistently make quarters, semis. It's tough, man. It's not easy, bro. It two weeks. A lot of distractions. And it's just long. Like, and you got to stay in the moment for two weeks. It's brutal.

But it's definitely worth it. A lot of hype. But I enjoy it. I think here is how I kind of want to approach all the other ones. Stop making it such a big deal. Obviously, everybody wants to do well in the slams. I put so much emphasis on the slams this year after what I did last year here in the Open, I think that was almost a detriment to me.

Just go out there and do your thing. Have fun, complete hard, get the crowd involved, and let the chips fall where they may.

At the end of the day I'm 25. Whether it happens now or another time, it's okay. I think that's what Novak and those guys do. They just go out and do their thing no matter what. I think that's the best approach.

Q. You obviously thrive in the big stage out in Ashe, all of that. Is there something at a tournament like this, you can have night matches that start very late, go very late, is it better and easier to get an afternoon assignment or do you not care about the time because

of the joy you get from being out there?

FRANCES TIAFOE: Yeah, you can play me whenever here. I don't care. It's going to be jumping. It's going to be fun regardless.

I don't care. 3 a.m., start at 12, I'll be just excited to play. Especially all my matches here have been packed. People going crazy. It's been a lot of fun to play. Opening up at night, not playing, like, an anticipated match, was a big honor my second round.

Opening up on Ashe was great during the day. I mean, playing on Louis just now, it was packed to the rafters. Getting out of the court was crazy.

So, I mean, the fans here are really getting behind me. It's something special. I don't think the time is relevant. People, there's a lot of momentum with the young Americans. People are super excited to see us play and really hope that we can do it. I definitely feel that and I love it.

Q. With having a group of you still around as the tournament moves into the second half, how much do you see each other? Like today, you, Ben, Tommy all won, Fritz is playing later. Do you run into each other in the locker room or the gym?

FRANCES TIAFOE: Of course, of course. We're definitely not hanging out. Everyone's locked in. Yeah, definitely not hanging out. Everyone is kind of doing their thing.

Yeah, I want nothing but the best for those guys. I want them to win, and hope we can play against each other in big matches. That's what it's all about. Let the better man win.

I'm not one of those guys envious of anybody. You want those guys to do well. It's only going to help me, right? So, yeah, I mean, everyone's super excited for each other. Everyone's pumped up. I mean, it's great for American tennis ultimately at the end. It is what it is.

Q. You know Adrian is a crafty player. To beat him you have to be smart and crafty. Do you feel you're underrated as a tactician switching up the tempo? Facing off against Rinky in the next round, your thoughts of playing him.

FRANCES TIAFOE: Yeah, I really don't know much about his game at all. I mean, he's won a lot of matches. I really haven't seen him play much at all, so we'll see. We'll see what happens.

I'm excited to play him. He's going to be pumped up. I'm pretty sure it's his first fourth round. But, yeah, we'll see how he does with the crowd and all that.

But yeah, I think I'm super underrated when it comes to tennis IQ. People used to talk about me as an energetic player, using the crowd. I think a lot of people don't talk about how I got a lot of tools in the tool bag. I'm not afraid to go in there and pull out whatever to try to win a tennis match. A lot of people don't talk about that at all. Hey, man, it is what it is.

Q. Did you have a favorite song to warm you up?

FRANCES TIAFOE: I've been playing Travis and a lot. Playing 'FEIN' a lot, get me pumped up. 'My Eyes' get me super pumped up. Yeah, that boy tough. He tough.

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