

# US OPEN

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New York, New York, USA

## Ben Shelton

### Press Conference

B. SHELTON/A. Karatsev

6-4, 3-6, 6-2, 6-0

**THE MODERATOR:** Ben, what's going through your mind as you get ready for the next round of the US Open?

**BEN SHELTON:** Yeah, I'm really happy to be into the next round obviously. Ecstatic. Glad that I had a chance to be in a position similar to this earlier in the year. So I feel kind of prepared what's to come mentally and physically, being able to play on a big stage at a Grand Slam against the exact same guy I'm going to be playing next round. Feel fortunate I got that experience.

But really happy to be moving on.

**THE MODERATOR:** Questions, please.

**Q. Talk about the great celebration after the doubles, the whole day.**

**BEN SHELTON:** Yeah, it's just natural with Taylor. If I went out there and played doubles, I didn't want to be flat. I wanted to bring the energy. We had a lot of fun together today and got a big win. I was pretty pumped about that.

The celebration is always natural for me. I don't really think about it before. Yeah, to have a day like this at the US Open is pretty cool.

**Q. Couldn't get you off that court. Probably feel that you're a better player now than what you was at the beginning of the year.**

**BEN SHELTON:** Yeah, I feel confident in the work that I put in. I think that things are slowly coming together in my game. I think the Grand Slams give me a great chance to show how competitive I am, give me a chance to be tough mentally and physically. I think it's a completely different ball game than two-out-of-three sets.

Obviously being at home here on a hard court, I feel pretty comfortable.



**Q. When you think of your style of play and Tommy's, how would you describe that contrast and what you think the keys to the match are?**

**BEN SHELTON:** Yeah, I think he's a guy who has every shot in the book, a great athlete, great mover, amazing defensive skills, but can also play offense.

I think that he's a really savvy tennis player. He uses his brain a lot on court to beat his opponent. I think I have some of the similar qualities. A little bit more of a bigger ball hitter or server. He places the serve, spins it more. Still has a great serve, hits a lot of aces.

I think the way we go about things is a little bit different.

**Q. How would you describe the physical and mental grind to advance in the majors and what you're experiencing as a result?**

**BEN SHELTON:** Yeah, I think that every time you get a win at a major, it's like a big relief. And a big moment always to get through a three-out-of-five-set match. It takes a lot out of you emotionally and physically. The days here at the US Open tend to be pretty long when you're staying in the city. It's not close. Being here pretty much 9 to 5 or today 9 to 9, yeah, it definitely adds up.

But I think that you get a day off in between each singles match. I'm only 20 years old, so I don't think I can be complaining about the physical toll yet.

**Q. If you look back to Australia, facing Tommy, what do you think it was that gave him the edge?**

**BEN SHELTON:** Yeah, I think that was a match where I was a little unsure of what to expect. I hadn't really been in that situation before, quarterfinals of a Grand Slam, on Rod Laver, packed stadium.

I think I panicked a little bit, pressed early in the match, and he kind of got on top of me and was the frontrunner from there.

I hope to do a little bit better job of that this time around.

**Q. You talked about being a big hitter, having your**



**weapons. What do you feel you have to do in order to hit through the best defenses consistently, a player like Tommy Paul?**

**BEN SHELTON:** Yeah, I think it's not about always hitting through the guy that you're playing. I've kind of found being out here on tour, everyone is really good at hitting the ball. You hit it hard, hit it the same speed, guys can play and they can play really well.

I think having some variety and mixing things up is something that's important for me and my game style.

**Q. Last year at this point you have never played tennis outside of U.S. This year you have been in different countries. You just said Grand Slams or major tournaments made you tough. Can you say more specifically what did you learn from playing in different countries and how do you feel comfortable playing in the U.S. again?**

**BEN SHELTON:** Yeah, I think that I did a really good job this year of playing as many tournaments as I could, going to as many places as I could. Now I kind of have a feel for the places that I love, maybe the places I don't love to play so much, and what type of schedule I want to put together in the future that suits me the best.

I think you don't want to play every single week or take too long off. I'm someone who likes to be playing matches. But I also think it's important that you have some time off to do training blocks or decompress at home.

I think that's the biggest thing for me, I've kind of figured out the things that I like and how to find that right balance.

**Q. From playing all the collegiate tennis, now into your pro career, what do you think the sport has taught you the most?**

**BEN SHELTON:** Deep question.

I think that playing collegiate tennis and professional tennis now, there's big differences. I think that being able to be in college and play for something bigger than myself, be selfless, care about my teammates, know how to lift up people around me, not everything be about myself, I think that's the biggest lesson that I learned.

It's easy to be self-centered out here on this tour. Everything revolves around the players. You have a team around you. It's easy to become self-centered. I think that's something that's really important for me, is to make sure I'm still being a good person, saying thank you to the people who hold the door and the security guards who take

us around the site, people who serve us the food here.

I think college taught me a lot about being a better person and being good to the people around me, not just focusing on myself and my own success or personal gain.

**Q. On court after your singles win, you talked about your serve and having some struggles, you thanked John Isner for getting you out of it. What's the difference between Ben Shelton having a little bit of a serving slump and having a perfect serving day?**

**BEN SHELTON:** I think it's a little more mental. Obviously the mental affects the physical. For me, it's getting into a state where I feel fluid in my service games, like just the rhythm of how I'm walking up to the line. It's kind of hard to describe, but I'm kind of in this flow state when I'm serving well. I'm not even thinking.

Then I realize at the end of the game that, Wow, I put that together well. Maybe not focusing so hard on how hard I'm hitting the serve or really trying to hit a perfect spot or even go for an ace.

The more calm, relaxed, and kind of free I am in my service games, I serve a lot better. I've been holding serve a lot lately. I knew that I had another gear that I could go to that I've seen in myself before. I saw a little bit of that in myself today.

**Q. What did dad have to say about 147?**

**BEN SHELTON:** You know this. Dad is always upset when I go for the bombs. He was saying to me after the match, he's like, I know you looked at the clock, looked right at it after.

They had a little I guess statistic up on the screen of fastest serves of the tournament. He's like, I know you were looking up at that, too, to see you were number one on the leaderboard. He gave me a hard time about it.

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