

# US OPEN

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New York, New York, USA

## Frances Tiafoe

### Press Conference

B. SHELTON/F. Tiafoe

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

**THE MODERATOR:** Questions.

**Q. Just dealing in terms of Ben playing his defense and just trying to hit through him and the conditions, can you just describe the challenge of facing and dealing with those things there.**

**FRANCES TIAFOE:** Yeah, I thought it was super hot tonight, really muggy, super humid. Was sweating a lot, balls were really heavy. He was able to hit through the ball a bit more than I was. Yeah, he just played better than me. I gave him a lot of chances to stay in the match, and he took advantage of it. Hats off to him.

**Q. You had a set point in that third set and then Ben wins those final three. Did you feel demoralized or it carried over to the fourth set?**

**FRANCES TIAFOE:** A little bit of a lull, played a bad game in the opening game in the fourth. Yeah, I mean, obviously after a tough set, after such an up-and-down set, we both broke each other a lot. Not common in men's tennis. How many breaks there was, pretty poor level both sides.

Yeah, it was a little bit of a lull and unacceptable on my part.

**Q. I feel like when you're in late rounds of tournaments, you're so often the underdog. Obviously you weren't tonight. What was it like dealing with that with kind of a different set of eyes on your game?**

**FRANCES TIAFOE:** Yeah, yeah, it's a different seat to be in. Obviously Ben really wanted to win. Ben came out and played with a lot of energy. But it was different conditions today. It was super heavy. Not what I was accustomed to when I played at night earlier in the week.

Yeah, it's definitely different. Obviously a lot of times I play late in tournaments, yeah, I've been the underdog so I just



go out and play. Kind of like how Ben did, play and swing and do whatever you want.

But I mean, even so, I still put myself in positions and I just didn't play well enough.

**Q. You spoke a bit about the way Ben played. What are your thoughts about Ben going forward and now facing Novak Djokovic?**

**FRANCES TIAFOE:** I mean, I guess they're going to have a good match. It's a semifinal. Novak's obviously Novak. He's a tough customer. We'll see how he's able to deal with that. Novak is going to make him play and make it super tough for him. We'll see what happens.

**Q. Talk about the matchup between two Black men. Was that something that you thought about or...**

**FRANCES TIAFOE:** Yeah, no, I mean, it's great. It's great with two people of color going at it. Obviously a historic moment. But ultimately once you get out there you just want to win.

The moment's great, and obviously surprised a lot of people, but when I'm out there I just want to win and play well. Obviously both of those things didn't happen tonight. I'm more on the frustrated side.

**Q. If I can add, you're from the D.C. area. What do you think about the US Open doing HBCU Day?**

**FRANCES TIAFOE:** It's great, it's great. My second-round match, that was great. Obviously Howard and, yeah, Morgan State and so many of those schools are around my area. It was great. It was really cool. I didn't even know it was happening. So it's pretty cool. Hopefully they can do that for many more years.

**Q. Both this and the loss at Wimbledon were, I would say, pretty uncharacteristic in terms of your tennis game. Where does that leave you with to think about going forward and evaluate in your game? How do you kind of reckon with that?**

**FRANCES TIAFOE:** Yeah, totally right. We'll see. Just gonna learn from these moments. Obviously can't keep having these matches in slams. Some things you gotta



learn from. Obviously at the end of the day, it hurts now, play a lot of matches in this game. I still want to end the year strong and try to end in the top 10. Still having a great season.

But, you know, obviously I want to perform really well in the slams. My exits in last two slams, both matches I didn't play very well at all. That's tough to swallow.

**Q. Did Ben's returning or any other aspect of what he did out there surprise you at all today?**

**FRANCES TIAFOE:** No. No, not really. We both broke each other a lot. I mean, he hit some really good shots, running forehands, hit some great shots on the run, came up with some good stuff. But ultimately I let him back in. I gave him way too many opportunities to stay in the match.

1-0 break, 4-3 break, I got to win that set. More times than not I would win that set. Leave door open for a lot of guys, you're playing with fire. I had a look there, 7-6, he hit unbelievable return from way back there. That's unheard of stuff. It's tennis.

**Q. Obviously Ben has talked, you guys are friends and he's talked about how you're like a brother to him. Obviously being the elder in that relationship, this is the first time you're playing on tour, what was that dynamic like? Were you able to put it out of your mind, or did that factor in, would you say, at all to the match?**

**FRANCES TIAFOE:** Once you get out there, you're just going to play to win, obviously. Obviously it's a big match. You're playing to get in the semifinals.

I mean, this game is a very selfish game. Once you get out there, you just want to win and try and bring your best stuff to win a match, and then your relationship stays after the match. Yeah, I mean, I don't think it really mattered. We both really tried to come after each other, and he just played better than I did today.

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