

BNP Paribas Open

Friday, March 10, 2017

Taylor Fritz

Press Conference



T. FRITZ/B. Paire

6-3, 6-2

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. It's got to feel good to get that start. Talk a little bit about that match.

TAYLOR FRITZ: You know, I think I came out. My focus was just to serve, serve well, kind of just manage my service games, because I felt like I would get chances on his serve and I would just have to take them.

It was just a weird match, because the ankle or foot injury or issue he had in the beginning and then, after that, figuring out like -- because sometimes he'd move really well, sometimes he wouldn't. Sometimes he would just double fault, sometimes he'd hit an ace.

It was a lot -- just kind of focusing on myself and trying to keep my level consistent and focus on what I needed to do and... It was just -- I had to focus on me and not so much what he's doing or thinking about what he's doing.

Yeah, it was just a strange match, I'd say.

Q. How do you feel to be playing well in Southern California?

TAYLOR FRITZ: Really good (smiling). I always think I play well here. This is where I'm from. I have played in Indian Wells since I was, like, eight years old probably, I have come down here for tournaments. Just being from San Diego my whole life and having a lot of family that lives out here in the desert, it's like a second home to me.

I have been telling everyone this week, man, I think I have been playing my best tennis ever this week. It's been going really well in practice, and I just hope that I can kind of just bring that onto the court in my next match.

Q. You said it was a weird match. That sounds like a very typical Paire match. Is that something you were prepared for going in? What do you do to kind of get ready for something like that, someone who is very unpredictable?

TAYLOR FRITZ: Yeah, I knew something like this could happen. Never played him before, but I knew that maybe if I could get up it would be really important for me to stay focused, not let him back in the match, because sometimes he can just go away, from what I've heard.

And then after the injury, I just -- I just didn't know what to expect. So like I said, I just needed to focus on myself, just act like nothing was wrong, just play my own tennis and not worry so much about what he was doing.

Q. Quite a lot of very important things have happened in your life in the past few months. How are you managing to arrange your time and your focus between your on-court commitment and your off-court life?

TAYLOR FRITZ: Nothing's really changed at all for me. My wife's been handling everything. She handles all of the off-court stuff so I can be on court more than I was before.

I wake up at 7:00. I get breakfast. I drive to Carson where I train. I practice about two-and-a-half hours, get lunch, practice another two hours, go to the gym. Some days I go to physical therapy to get some work done, and then I'll be home at, like, 9:00 at night and I go to sleep (smiling).

You know, my life really hasn't changed too much because of how my wife has really stepped up. She's really just -- she's really just doing everything she can for me and for my tennis.

Q. Along the same lines, how has the dynamic changed with you and your peers? Most other 19, 20-year-olds, are not fathers and husbands at this stage as they rise and try to make their way up on the tour. What's it like with your peers just in terms of your own learning curve?

TAYLOR FRITZ: I mean, nothing's really changed, to be honest. I feel like everything is the way it was before with all the other guys that are my age.

You know, people can think I'm spending less time on the tennis court and less time in the gym, and, you know, that's perfectly fine, because I'm sure that will come back to get them if they're underestimating the

training and the work that I'm putting in.

Really, nothing's really changed that much. Not anywhere near what people are thinking.

Q. What, if anything, did you learn from this experience today and was there anything that you surprised yourself with?

TAYLOR FRITZ: I just needed to focus -- like I said already, I just really needed to focus on my game, serving well, especially once I got that first break.

The break in the first and the break in the second, I just told myself, Okay, hold serve, focus on your game. Make him beat you. I just had to stay mentally strong and not give it to him. You know, that's what I was able to do.

Q. Do you have a full-time strength and conditioning coach? How important do you think your physical conditioning is right now?

TAYLOR FRITZ: I do have a full-time strength and conditioning coach with the USTA, Ronny Marshall. And also I get help when he's not around. He sends the workout plans. So I'm always staying on top of it, and I also have a full-time physio that I have hired to take care of the recovery after the fitness.

I think it's just as important as the tennis. Especially for me, because as a 19-year-old on tour, as a teenager on tour, most of the time you're not as developed as the other guys on tour who are just full-grown men.

So being physically fit and being able to compete at their level is really important at my age and something I have been working hard on, spending time in the gym and trying to get stronger.

Q. This is a multi-part question. Your dad helped get Coco Vandeweghe started and, of course, he's done a great job with you. Can you talk about your dad and what kind of a coach he is? And also, have you had a chance to talk a little bit to Coco since she made her run to the semifinals of the Australian Open?

TAYLOR FRITZ: I will start out with the easy one. I have not gotten a chance to talk to Coco yet. I haven't talked to her much about anything in Australia. That's that one there. I really haven't seen her much at all, actually. But that's that one.

And then the second one was my dad is obviously an amazing coach. He completely developed both of our games from the start to when we basically turned pro.

I'd say he's a coach that's pretty tough. He's not easy to give a compliment. He really tells you how it is,

which annoyed me at times, because I'd want some confidence and he'd just be, like, No. It's really tough to get a compliment out of him.

And he's, I'd say, also a bit old-fashioned with the way he sees, like, fitness and tennis and managing and schedules. But obviously he's a great coach. He is a great service coach. You look at both of our games, we both have -- serves is a huge focal point in our game.

He's been able to help a lot of people with their serves in the past, and he's just a guy that loves the game and, you know, wants to help people who he thinks can be good. He's pretty selective with who he picks. Obviously, I made the cut because I'm his son, so... (laughter). Yeah.

Q. You get Cilic next. How do you see that match? Do you see yourself as a similar sort of build? You can model yourself off of someone like that?

TAYLOR FRITZ: We do have similar-type games, we're both pretty serve-dependent. I'd say we are both pretty solid off of both sides and play aggressive baseline tennis.

So I will be focusing on the key parts of my game which is the serve and just staying aggressive, attacking, but not giving him too many free points. And if I do that, I'll definitely be in the match. You know, if I'm serving well, I'll be in any match.

So if that's the play, then hopefully I can create chances on his serve. It's going to be one of those matches where I'm going to have to just control my service games and then, when I get the chances on his serve, I need to take them.

Q. Just talk a little bit more about your dad. You said he was old-fashioned in terms of fitness and managing schedules. And also, you know, when he wouldn't give you the soft compliment, did that piss you off? How did you deal with that? Or did that help you grow?

TAYLOR FRITZ: I mean, tennis is a lot of confidence, in my opinion. So I always wanted someone who was just going to make me think I'm the best player ever, even if I'm not. Someone who is just going to fill me up with compliments, tell me how good I am.

But I always wanted -- you know, I always wanted his approval. I still want his approval, even though we don't even work together anymore. I called him up the other day because I thought I was hitting really great. Come over, watch me hit. He wasn't as thrilled as I was, I guess, with how I was hitting (Laughter.)

I'm sure he's happy to see me win here. I'm sure he's happy to see me playing good tennis, even if he doesn't want to tell me.

Old fashioned-wise, I would just say with fitness and off-court stuff, he'd tell me, Go do your push-ups. Go do your chin-ups. Run some sprints. Like, simple stuff. And I would be like, I need a fitness trainer if you want to get me in shape. He's like, No, you can just do that yourself.

Q. Just getting back to the father aspect, you were just explaining you're up at 7:00 in the morning and training and practice and all that and going to bed at 9:00. How hands-on are you? What's the biggest discovery you have had as being a father? And continuing on that, also saying about your father, how demanding or complimentary would you be with your child if he decides to pick up tennis?

TAYLOR FRITZ: When you said hands-on, do you mean, like, how much -- what do you mean by --

Q. Everything from bathing to changing diapers or whatever.

TAYLOR FRITZ: I'm not very hands-on at all, then, to be honest. Like I said, Raquel, she's really stepped up and she's just doing an incredible job, because my dream is to just be the best tennis player I can possibly be. And I'm very fortunate to be with someone who shares the same dream as I do.

She wants that more than anything. She's willing to sacrifice her time and do whatever it takes so I can stay with my training, and I can do everything exactly how I want to do it and still, you know, when it's all said and done, I'll know that if my tennis career doesn't turn out the way I want it to be, then I'll know that it's on me and not anyone else.

I'm just really lucky, and I try to see him as much as I possibly can, obviously, because it's amazing (smiling). It's really amazing. He's here. Any chance I get, I go and see him. I'd love for him to play tennis. I have a little, like, four or five-inch tennis racquet I always put in his hands (smiling).

You know, I'll be an accepting father whatever he wants to do, even though I personally, my life revolves around sports. So I'd like him to grow up in sports, and obviously tennis is in his genes, I guess. Yeah, I guess that's it.