

cinch Championships

Tuesday, 20 June 2023

London, England, UK

Queens Club

Frances Tiafoe

Press Conference

F. TIAFOE/B. van de Zandschulp

6-2, 6-4

THE MODERATOR: First of all, congratulations, Frances. Your first win as a top-10 player. How do you feel about your performance today?

FRANCES TIAFOE: Very happy about my performance today. Honestly, I thought it was the best I have played since I have been on the grass, to be fair.

The courts here are so good here in Queen's, very firm court and bounces like a hard court. I thought honestly I played much better today than I did all last week, to be honest.

Yeah, you feel more confident the more wins you get. They don't come easy out here, so I'm happy about it.

Q. Frances, just a moment ago, Jordan Thompson was saying the grass in The Netherlands where he was last week to here are quite different, that this was a more traditional grass court, really, really low. Have you noticed a difference to what it was like in Stuttgart compared to here?

FRANCES TIAFOE: Stuttgart, I mean, very tricky bounces. Not very true. The lines would chalk up.

Yeah, I mean, a lot of bad bounces. Here it's like literally playing on a hard court, but the bounce is much lower here, for sure. Also, it's not as fast, well, in comparison. I mean, Stuttgart was very, very quick. I'm liking the court speed a lot here. I feel like I've got a lot of time on the ball.

Q. A lot of players around your age aren't as comfortable on the grass but you clearly are. How long did it take you to get comfortable on it, and what do you like about it?

FRANCES TIAFOE: I'm just a skilled guy, man. I don't know what to tell you (smiling).

No, I mean, I have always really liked playing on grass. I've got good hands, good instincts. I can move quite



well on it, am very quick, very fast. So, yeah, I have a really flat backhand which makes it uncomfortable for guys. Yeah, I feel like I always just got on to it really well. It helps me play the right way.

Q. Yesterday Venus played a match that was like three-and-a-quarter hours. You had that one against Andy, almost four, best-of-three. Do you feel like tennis is getting increasingly physical?

FRANCES TIAFOE: Absolutely. I think guys are just, game is getting so much more physical. Everyone is so athletic, everyone moving so fast. I mean, anybody at the top of the game is a great mover. You have to be almost.

Yeah, I mean, it's getting brutal with the racquets and everything. The game is just getting tougher and tougher. Guys are getting more skilled. The level, you know, is not very different from a guy 80 to a guy 10.

So hats off to her. 40-some and battling right now with the career she's had and the person she is. Still want to do that. I don't know if I have it in me at 40 or whatever to be doing that. To see how pumped she is after a win like that, it just shows you it's different, honestly.

Q. Jordan was saying he definitely wouldn't want, even though there is more physical and longer matches, he wouldn't want best-of-five scrapped at majors. Wondered what your view on that was?

FRANCES TIAFOE: I don't know if I fully agree with him. I get what he's saying. But, I mean, I think it's true. I made it to semis at the Open, playing three out of five. You really beat somebody, three out of five, if you do that for two weeks, you definitely deserve the title. But, I mean, shit, two out of three would feel great on my body (smiling).

I think we should keep it the same. Honestly, it's good for the game.

Q. I agree.

FRANCES TIAFOE: Hey, man, you said it, not me.

Q. I saw you admiring Carlos' Travis Scott shoes on the practice court. You said you were going to be

messaging Travis. What are you planning to say? Have you checked if Carlos actually knows who he is?

FRANCES TIAFOE: It's funny. Me and him were just cracking jokes in the locker room. Totally forgot to ask him that. I was so pumped. You just told me that. You just reminded me.

Yeah, I mean, Travis is my guy. Hung out there at All-Star. Hit me up. I ain't got no kicks, man. What's up?

I see him. Come on, man. You can't be rocking those before I am. That's just unacceptable.

I don't know if you guys saw this new Trav shoe with Johnny Mac? You see I'm in the video? And I ain't got no [expletive] shoes, man.

That bothers me, man. I don't know. We gonna have to fix that. I'm definitely gonna remind him, for sure (smiling).

Q. You're now a top-10 player. I wonder how did it feel waking up on Monday morning? Obviously a Stuttgart champion, but also now inside the top 10. How did that feel?

FRANCES TIAFOE: Yeah, I mean, it's got a little bit of a different ring to it, doesn't it? Felt really good. I felt really good. Even though I won Sunday, I was waiting for Monday, just seeing that top 10, wake up in the morning and go to the ATP Tour, it's like a milestone, man.

Wow, guy like me, been through what I been through to be top 10, a lot of guys would have said I wouldn't have done it. You know, here I am, top of the game.

I just feel good. I still feel like I'm the same guy. Just loving the journey. Just loving every day of the journey. I just hope guys take some inspiration off it. Anybody can do it. There's no special guy. I don't really believe in that. Just do the work and be obsessed about it. Sky's the limit for it.

Q. As part of that top-10 aspect, first time since Isner and Fish, the two American men have been in the top 10, and you're the first African American since James to be in the top 10, have you considered or have you already maybe rewarded yourself with something, let's say a memento, gift to yourself on what you have achieved and considering what you just also said, the way you started, the whole family background to achieve what you have achieved?

FRANCES TIAFOE: Yeah, it was also Father's Day on that Sunday, so my dad was super-pumped. I mean, it's tough. I'm still in the moment, right? Tennis, I win a title,

now back here at Queen's playing on Tuesday.

It's tough to really celebrate, but for sure after Wimbledon, I'm going to go back home. Next tournament after that is Citi Open. Just enjoy my family, my friends, cousins. Just, you know, just think about all the struggles, everything my parents went through, and for me to be in the position I am today, top 10 in the world, it's wild, man.

Yeah, nobody really guessed it. I always believed in it before anybody else did. Now I'm here and I'm super excited. Can't really write it any other way. Got in top 10. It was Juneteenth yesterday. It's just all around a great day.

Yeah, I mean, again, I hope, I think just keep going. I texted and called James. He didn't answer. He big-timed me. He Hollywooded me (smiling).

But he answered my text. You know, I actually didn't know that I was the third African American guy. I just knew the last African American was James Blake. I looked up to him. When he came out with the dreads and everything, I was, like, That would be sick to be like James Blake.

I wear the head band because of him when he went bald and started wearing it. This guy's iconic.

Yeah, he says, yeah, I hope you pass 4 in the world and have a better career than me. That means a lot hearing from a guy like that. Just want to try to run this as long as I can, and hopefully there's many more Frances Tiafoes who come after me and be in the top 10 and look like me. Yeah.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports