

Rothesay International

Wednesday, 28 June 2023

Eastbourne, England, UK

Devonshire Park

Mackenzie McDonald

Press Conference

M. McDONALD/T. Fritz

7-6, 7-6

THE MODERATOR: First of all, congratulations, Mackie. Another top win in your pocket. Now into the quarterfinal at Eastbourne. How do you feel?

MACKENZIE McDONALD: Yeah, thanks. Pretty good. Thought I played well today and happy to get some wins here before Wimbledon. Yeah.

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

Q. Obviously Taylor is someone you know very well, presumably. Are you particular friends or do you practice a lot together? What's the relationship?

MACKENZIE McDONALD: Yeah, we're actually really close friends. We have been friends basically the whole time we have been on tour. We actually travel with the same physio who he's still working with for a couple of years.

We hang out a lot, too. I consider him one of my best friends on tour. I think he'd say the same (smiling). Yeah, we go to dinner together, hang out all the time.

Actually, he tells me some tennis things. I try to tell him some things I know too. We share some secrets, which is actually kind of nice to have someone like that on tour, as well.

Q. How does it feel to play someone that you're so close to?

MACKENZIE McDONALD: I have been doing it since I was super young. I mean, I remember when I was eight years old and first doing it against one of my best friends, like that was like a shocking moment.

But you go through the whole thing, through college, everything, you're gonna play guys that you're friends with. That's just kind of how tennis is. You're playing your buddies.

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and kind of just doing it, especially at this level now. It's just part of the game.

Q. You obviously will remember the reception Taylor got at Roland Garros. Did he mention anything to you about what happened at Roland Garros? Has he said anything to you about it?

MACKENZIE McDONALD: We haven't actually talked about it. I didn't actually see it too. Like I was not on social media. I didn't really see what happened. I actually don't know much about it. I know it was against Rinderknech, but we haven't talked about that.

Q. When you look back to the hamstring problem in 2019, are you a better player now than you might otherwise have been given what you had to bounce back from?

MACKENZIE McDONALD: I'd say I'm a better now because I have more years, but I wouldn't say I'm a better player because I broke my hamstring. Yeah.

Q. Do you just view that as part of the rough and tumble? It was pretty severe injury.

MACKENZIE McDONALD: Yeah, no, injuries are part of the game, really tough. They suck. Not gonna sugarcoat it. I mean, what are you going to do about it?

You look at all the guys on tour. Look at Rafa. Some of these guys have some serious, serious stuff. I mean, yeah, I had one like really bad thing, but like the nice thing about mine was that it needed surgery immediately. They repaired it. Then I knew exactly when I was going to come back too as long as I stayed on course for like the rehab.

Actually, in some ways, when I do look at guys now, guys getting hurt, I feel like, okay, you don't want to be out for eight months, but if -- okay, that one was really shitty too, because it's in such a bad spot and you're bedridden for a while too, but at least I knew when I was going to come back, if that helps it. I'm trying to see a silver lining.

Q. Do you grow from something like that, or is it just part of what you deal with as a tennis player?

MACKENZIE McDONALD: Well, you grow from it if you learn from it. I think that I struggled with it for a while too.

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But I think I have grown from it now. Yeah, I guess it has helped me.

Q. Great match. I was there from the start to the finish.

MACKENZIE McDONALD: I love that.

Q. I didn't realize quite how well you knew each other's game. That kind of makes sense now. You mentioned you guys talk about things in tennis together, you and Taylor. What are Taylor's secrets on the match court?

MACKENZIE McDONALD: Oh, man, I can't just, can't tell you everything (smiling).

Q. But you obviously have a measure of each other. It was just a matter of a few points here or there. What kept you tough, I suppose, in that situation?

MACKENZIE McDONALD: Well, I think I just kind of never let too much doubt kind of creep in. I just stayed with it. I was down a break in both sets and just fought my way out of it. Didn't really let it get to me too much. I think I was pretty composed out there and trying to go point by point, which is pretty good. Yeah, it worked out.

Q. For kids who are playing the game and learning how to deal with such close points in matches, back and forth like that, what's your advice for that? What's your sort of trick that you use to stay focused and positive on the court?

MACKENZIE McDONALD: Tell yourself something positive after each point, even if you lose it. There's always something good you'll get, even if you break your hamstring (smiling).

Q. What are you going to do to celebrate tonight?

MACKENZIE McDONALD: I want to have a beer (smiling). And we are playing chess, me and my coach, we will probably just do that, which sounds lovely (smiling).

Q. You must have been particularly pleased how you played his set point at the end, penultimate point of the match?

MACKENZIE McDONALD: Was that the ace?

Q. You played a very good point. It was a long point.

MACKENZIE McDONALD: When he had a set point?

Q. Yeah, he had a set point.

MACKENZIE McDONALD: Yeah. Well, did I ace him on

a set point at 5-6? Yeah. Sorry, what was the question?

Q. It sort of summed up the way you played the match, because you had to hang in there to win that point.

MACKENZIE McDONALD: Well, I remember the ace. Was there another set point I saved?

Q. You saved two set points.

MACKENZIE McDONALD: I blocked it out. I can't remember. Just so in the moment. I actually can't remember it.

Was I serving or receiving? No, I had to be serving. Yeah. I'll try to go watch it. I can't remember right now. Sorry.

Q. Are you playing better now than when you got to the fourth round of the Australian or when you had that marathon five-setter at the French a couple years back?

MACKENZIE McDONALD: Am I playing better now? Yeah, I think so. I mean, tennis is kind of up and down. Especially with how long the season is, you know. If you're mentally there, I don't know, I'm playing pretty well. I'm happy with it. I don't overthink it.

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