

Miami Open presented by Itaú

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Stefanos Tsitsipas

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: First question.

Q. There is a lot of talk about the new generation of tennis once Rafa, Djokovic and Nadal [sic] decide to take time for themselves. You are one of the first to replace them. Is it a lot of pressure? What is the feeling when somebody mentions something like that?

STEFANOS TSITSIPAS: Well, I've worked hard to be mentioned. I honestly should be closer to what they have been doing when it comes to my age. I feel like I've been a little bit behind recently. Trying to turn my tennis into something better.

I am not thinking about this right now, to be honest with you. I'm trying to compete against my generation more than against them. Also simply because Rafa was one of the few of them that participated in the last tournaments. That you don't know, it won't last that long.

Again, I'm competing against my generation. They might play at some point. I'm trying to be the best of my generation as much as I can, not concentrate too much on what's happening with the elder guys.

Q. After a period of craziness and uncertainty with life events, sports, we're back. How does it feel for you to be on track to the life we had before?

STEFANOS TSITSIPAS: I'm happy to see it, again be surrounded by people, professionals, all kinds of different people in our events.

It wasn't much fun to be playing in these arenas without people, without crowd interactions and interactions with different kinds of people, family and friends. It's very nice to see things kind of settle and be normal again week after week.

I'm really loving the transition so far.

Q. About the retirement of Barty, she's super young, you're young, have you ever thought about retiring yourself?

STEFANOS TSITSIPAS: My God, okay (laughter).

I mean, look, I had a difficult year last year. Honestly I was struggling with that injury problem I had for a very long time. Probably not to that extent, but it was always there.

I remember finishing my match with Rublev at the Nitto Finals in Turin and feeling terrible. At this point I wasn't able to serve the way I wanted, wasn't able to hit forehands and backhands the way I was able to before. No one was able to help me. I was trying different ways and solutions to fix this. Nothing was working.

It kind of crossed my mind for a few days, but I'm in no position to do that yet. I'm way too young to put an end to my passion and to what I love doing.

But it was a very difficult kind of situation for me, tricky. I felt kind of helpless. I felt like I'm not really able to do anything. I don't want to be stuck behind. I don't want to be seeing other people proceed and progress, kind of me stay stagnant.

I'm extremely fortunate that I was able to solve this problem, shift my perspective and mindset, be more optimistic from that point on.

Q. Do you have any ritual before starting a match?

STEFANOS TSITSIPAS: Well, I'm trying to stay hydrated as much as I can before matches. I don't know, I have this tendency to not drink much when I'm on court. Hydration for me is very important before entering a match.

You also might find me kind of very focused in my zone, not very - how can I say it - not paying attention to a lot of things. I'm trying to be in my element. That's usually what happens before entering the court. I like to make sure everything is in place, everything is in my bag and ready to go, get on the court and be ready to rumble.

Q. On the Ash Barty retirement, when did you hear about it and what was your immediate reaction? With Maria's performance last week in Indian Wells, she equaled you at No. 3 in the world. She was obviously disappointed but at the same time incredibly proud of



what she'd achieved, what both of you have done for tennis in Greece.

STEFANOS TSITSIPAS: Ash Barty retirement announcement was very shocking to me. I found it through social media after scrolling my feed. I saw that video. I watched the entire video in disbelief because I couldn't believe what I just saw.

She's been doing incredibly well. Honestly she's at the peak of her game right now I think, having won Wimbledon, Aussie Open recently. I knew she would want to take a break after the Australian Open, which I guess is normal, having to reflect on all of these events that happened. Didn't expect it to be coming anytime soon.

In Maria's case, it's wonderful to see. I'm extremely proud and happy that she was able to equal me and get to No. 3. I'm as equally happy as, for example, me doing it. I think she can do better than that. I was watching her, I was watching her progress, I was watching most of her matches. She deserves to be there. She deserves to be there more than anyone.

Q. Last week Roland Garros announced they were playing a super tiebreaker at 6-All in the final set. All four majors jumped onboard. Do you think that it's time to do away with three-out-of-five and every match should be two-out-of-three?

STEFANOS TSITSIPAS: Three-out-of-five? Repeat that again.

Q. The majors play three-out-of-five sets for the men, best-of-five.

STEFANOS TSITSIPAS: Best-of-five, that makes more sense to me.

Q. Should they do away with that and play best-of-three even at majors?

STEFANOS TSITSIPAS: Whew. Funny, because we were talking about this today with my team. It was like you got a recording in our car (laughter). Unbelievable, isn't it?

Q. What did you think?

STEFANOS TSITSIPAS: I really don't know. I don't want to be controversial or anything. There is also the topic of equal pay and everything, women getting equal pay for playing best-of-three, then getting equal pay for playing best-of-five. I don't know. There are also a lot of scientists and statisticians, whatever, out there.

I've been told that women have better endurance than men. I don't know. Maybe they can also play best-of-five, I guess.

For Grand Slams, best-of-five, I like it. On the other side, on the other hand, we would have seen much more variety when it comes to different Grand Slam winners if it was best-of-three, I believe. I very much believe that, the winners of Grand Slams would be very different if the format was best-of-three in men.

Q. Why?

STEFANOS TSITSIPAS: Alexander Zverev, who did finals in US Open. He could have won the US Open if it was best-of-three. You have my case as well in Roland Garros. You have many other cases. I'm pretty sure you can find a lot of cases where the loser of a Grand Slam won the third set or won the first two sets, still somehow found yourself losing at the end.

It's a different psychology. I'm sure it allows the greater players, the ones that have more experience when it comes to winning Grand Slam titles, on fighting back. It gives them more chances to get back into the match with a best-of-five format.

I like it anyways. I like the best-of-five. I think it gets very physical. It makes for a great show, as well.

Q. (No microphone.)

STEFANOS TSITSIPAS: Traditions? Best-of-five would be a traditional thing to play, for sure. I like it. I don't think there's something wrong with it. I'm just trying to pinpoint the different sides to each one of them.

The tiebreaker thing also, I have no opinion on that. I don't know. As a child, I liked watching these crazy best-of-five matches that went all the way to 18-16. It's just fun to watch and see who is going to break first.

On the other hand you can't allow players to play until 6:00 in the morning with that format because it happens sometimes. It can get quite exhausting.

The case of Kevin Anderson a few years ago where he beat John Isner in the semifinals. It completely ruined the final two days after, so...

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