

Western & Southern Open

Friday, August 18, 2017

John Isner

Press Conference



J. ISNER/J. Donaldson

7-6, 7-5

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. Thoughts on that match, what you saw from him? You haven't played him in a while.

JOHN ISNER: Yeah, it was a tough match. I knew it was going to be very tough. I thought the conditions were tricky. There were certainly some shadows on the court, and it was pretty windy, as well.

I think for me it made it tough to really go for my shots, but, you know, having said that, I think my footwork was a bit off, because the ball wasn't sitting in the spot that I expected it to be. So my footwork was a bit off, and that's all on me.

But all in all, I'm happy to eventually have won that match. I think I was pretty fortunate.

You know, moving on to tomorrow, I should be feeling good. Just looking forward to that.

Q. Like it or not, you're kind of referred to as the elder statesman of American tennis now. What's your mindset when you end up having to play one of these up-and-comers?

JOHN ISNER: Yeah, I mean, I actually really like to play these guys. In a sense, a lot of the pressure is on me because I'm ranked ahead of them, but it kind of gives me a little extra motivation to show these guys that I still have a lot left in the tank.

At 32, I was just told I'm going to be the No. 1 American again after this week, so as the oldest person playing on the male side and being the No. 1 ranked, it's pretty cool for me. It's a spot I hope to keep for a long time.

Q. Can we do a little rewind and take you back to when you were the up-and-comer and you were playing some of the more established American players? What was your mindset going into the matches at that time when you were playing them?

JOHN ISNER: Yeah, good question. I was just very excited, you know. It's a situation, you know, I think -- because I turned pro at 22, though, which is a bit different than guys like Jared, Frances, and Tommy.

For me, when I got my first opportunity to play Andy Roddick, I was either 22 or 23, I had never thought it would be possible or at least that quick. I didn't think I would be playing him just a few months after college. He's a guy that was the No. 1 American for the longest time. It was a huge opportunity for me.

I think more than anything, I was just excited to get out there and play in front of a big crowd and play a guy like Andy. I remember I didn't win that match, but expectations were a little bit different back then for me.

I think now that I have been on the tour for a long time, I do expect to win these matches. But that doesn't guarantee you anything, for sure.

Q. As you become the No. 1 American, I think you get back there with this win, any goals? You keep an eye on that?

JOHN ISNER: No, it wasn't a goal for me at all. I knew coming into this tournament that I certainly had a chance to do well here, because I knew I was playing well. I came into this event hitting the ball well and had a lot of confidence on my side.

And sure enough, when I had my first practice here in Mason, I really liked the courts. They seemed to be pretty gritty and bouncing up high, which is exactly what I like, which is actually a little bit different from Montreal, in my opinion. I thought that was pretty icy up there.

But these courts are a little different. Suits my game very well. I didn't want to overthink it. But I knew that a lot of the conditions and everything about this tournament, my schedule - you know, I got to play that first match on Sunday - a lot of things have worked in my favor this week, so I hope to keep it going.

Q. You mentioned being the veteran of the American crew right now. You have single-handedly taken out most of the American's NextGen in this tournament. What are your thoughts for those guys coming up and your general feelings about them and the future of American tennis?

JOHN ISNER: Yeah, I think those guys -- I mean, you guys know all of them. They have a very good future ahead of them. It's incumbent on them to keep doing

the right things day in and day out. Hopefully they realize how much of a job this really is and how things do not come easy at all.

I think maybe Tommy, for instance, is now seeing that. He's started to win some matches this summer. But it's so tough. As soon as the tournament ends, you can't afford to go out and have a few beers. I mean, just everyone on this tournament works so hard. I hope those guys realize that. As long as they do, I think, you know, these young Americans will be at the top of the game for a very, very long time.

I know Jared, for instance, he does understand that. He works very hard. Hopefully he can lead by example in that regard.

Q. Dimitrov next. Thoughts on that? I think you have only played him once, Miami. Thoughts on that matchup and the opportunity for here for you to make another Masters final and maybe win one of these things.

JOHN ISNER: Yeah. Well, against Grigor, he's playing well this week. He's won some matches pretty easily.

I think physically both of us should be coming into this match both feeling pretty good, not too haggard. We both should have a lot of confidence, you know, with us, as well.

So it's going to be a tough match. Very well could be my toughest match. It's one that I'm looking forward to, and I know he is, as well.

We did play, as you said, in Miami three or four years ago. In my opinion, I don't think he played that well that night, so he's definitely playing better now, and so for me to win, I'm going to have to keep doing what I'm doing and maybe even step my game up even more. He's an incredible player.

Q. I hate to keep dwelling on age, but at age 32, are you still learning about yourself? What are some of the things you're learning about yourself?

JOHN ISNER: No, I am learning. I have definitely learned the last few years that it doesn't get easier. I think I have learned that as long as I keep doing the right things - and that's more time stretching, more time in the gym, more time loosening up my body - at 32, I have to spend more time doing that; whereas at 25, I could probably, you know, get away with not stretching, kind of just leaving the court.

So I have always learned a lot about myself, my body, what it takes to keep myself healthy. So I'm in a pretty good spot at 32. There were some times earlier this year where I wasn't playing that great, but I knew that

physically I felt fine.

So as long as I'm healthy, things will always take care of themselves. As long as I'm feeling fit and strong and don't feel like I have lost a step at all, I feel like I can play tennis for a long time.