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Christopher Eubanks

Press Conference



D. MEDVEDEV/C. Eubanks

6-3, 7-5

THE MODERATOR: Tough match today, but how does it feel? How do you reflect on the week?

CHRISTOPHER EUBANKS: Overall, I mean, it's tough right after a match, a match obviously you lose. But taking a step back, it's been a dream week for me. Starting off with qualifying, just trying to get a win, trying to just find some momentum and get some momentum. Was able to do that.

But thinking back to each match individually (indiscernible). Match against Coric I was down a set and a break. I had those matches, and now to be sitting here is pretty surreal. Overall I'm pleased with the result obviously. Looking forward to hopefully having more moments like this.

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

Q. Yeah, what do you take out of that game in terms of that step-up in level? There were opportunities there that you didn't really take, and then it seemed like every little mistake got punished by him. Is that kind of the step-up in level after what happens?

CHRISTOPHER EUBANKS: Yeah. Obviously the mistakes are going to be magnified when playing somebody like Daniil. I think the first game I broken, first set, up 40-15, closing out that game was pretty big. I think it's magnified when you're playing an opponent like that at that level.

So little things like, missed opportunities, first point last game, having that overhead kind of mistiming the jump a little bit, kind of indecisive, not really going after, wasn't sure if it was going to be in our out. Bounced it in. Kind of knew I was in trouble when I saw him lining up the backhand.

Those are opportunities that maybe in some tournaments I have played in the past, or opponents, it doesn't seem as big of a deal because it's like I can go out here and pop a

good first serve and maybe get things back even, but against Daniil, even leaning up to serve, there are no easy games. I think that's the best way to describe it. I think that's the step up in level in which you know holds don't come easy, breaks definitely don't come easy. Being locked in for the entire course of a match is probably one of the biggest things to take away from playing an opponent like Daniil.

Q. You were on serve, then the rain delay, and then you came back, and he kind of jumped on you. Anything you could talk about that changed?

CHRISTOPHER EUBANKS: He made some tactical adjustments. Started stepping on my second serve I think is one of the bigger things. Obviously I have been able to watch Daniil for years and watched tons of film even going into this match. I think that was one thing I didn't really prepare for.

I don't mind my second serve. I like my kick second serve. He's 6'7" with one of the best backhands in the world, so it makes you second-guess. When I saw his tactical adjustment, I began to second-guess a little bit.

My first-serve percentage dropped, and that's never a good thing when you're playing an opponent who returns as well as he does. Once the first-serve percentage started to drop, he made the adjustment on the second serve to stand close. My mind started to go a little bit, I don't want to say haywire, but I started to find, try to seek out what am I supposed to do in this situation.

Wasn't able to rebound as well as I would have liked. Next game he broke me, he decided to go back on the second. He's known to be one of the smartest players on tour. That's his reputation, and I can see why. That little bit adjustments, it may not seem that much from the outside, but when you're playing him, and like I was saying, games don't come easy. Then he throws in a wrinkle like that, it does start to mess with you a little bit. I think that's what happened coming out of the rain delay.

Then honestly going into the second, I felt like I was playing pretty well, even though I got broken, I felt like I was playing the right way. Maybe a few execution errors

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which are errors I can live with. I've always been okay living with execution errors. That's just how the game goes sometimes. It's unfortunate for me, but that's my take on how post-rain delay and going into the second how things started to turn.

Q. Heading into the match, what other matches that you had played did you sort of reflect on in order to prepare yourself to play someone at his level?

CHRISTOPHER EUBANKS: Not really. There aren't that many -- I mean, I played Casper Ruud at Indian Wells, played Jannik Sinner at US Open. Different game styles.

It's tough to really -- I don't think anyone on tour really plays like Daniil. It's tough on tour to be able to mentally say who have I played that can serve 125 and not miss a ball from the baseline? That doesn't come around that often. So I never really had anybody that I felt like I could go back in matches that I've played to give me a little bit of a feel and what to expect going into it because he's such a special player.

Q. I have seen on social media that you have had the support of your friends, support of other tennis players as well. Is that something that you think motivates you to go further? Or what else do you think motivates you?

CHRISTOPHER EUBANKS: I won't say it motivates me to go further, but it's definitely nice to have. I think especially getting support from your peers is probably one of the coolest things. Having other players that I have played reach out to me during this time to congratulate me and say keep it going, little things like that, those probably mean the most because it's like, wow, these are guys I spend probably more time with than my family.

I see them often, we're competing against each other, we're all struggling for the same thing, and they took the time out to shoot me a quick message just to say congrats. Those probably mean the most, but I wouldn't say it motivates me more.

I'd like to think that I have a decent amount of motivation now, and I think seeing this level it's -- the success probably is more of a motivation now. It's like, wow, I have shown that I can play at this level. I have always kind of questioned and wondered is my serve good enough, is my forehand good enough, do I move well enough, can I volley, to compete with guys. Now that I know that, that's more of a motivating factor for me to continue. But I wouldn't say that the support is a driving force. It's certainly nice, but I wouldn't really say like that's it.

Q. Chris, now that this so-called Cinderella run has come to an end with this tournament, do you leave here disappointed or do you leave here satisfied with what you have achieved or happy with what you have achieved and going beyond general expectations?

CHRISTOPHER EUBANKS: I mean, I think I'm about 20 minutes from the loss, so I think there is a bit of disappointment there, but overall, if you take a step back, I don't think there is really too much to hang my head at.

I mean, I was down a set and break to Borna Coric in the second round, and now I'm sitting here in the quarterfinals. To some degree, it's like, wow, I could have been at home a week ago.

So I think having that perspective is important. I certainly don't want to say satisfied that it's like, oh, I definitely went out there wanting to win and expecting that, you know, to have a game plan to put me in a position, I would say, to win.

But, you know, that's just tennis, you know. There is only one winner every single week. You kind of have learned to take the lessons from each loss as they come and hopefully you can take one loss, move on to the next week and say, all right, now I just continue to build and build and build.

I don't think it's one or the other. I think certainly right now I'm a bit disappointed, more so getting broken in the last game is the biggest thing. I would have loved to have at least gotten it to a tiebreaker and seeing what happened, but didn't happen that way. So I think there is a bit of disappointment there.

But I wouldn't want to say satisfied, but I definitely say I think more encouraged is a better word.

Q. What's the biggest difference between the Chris Eubanks from day one of qualifying from today, biggest lesson to take from this?

CHRISTOPHER EUBANKS: Is that I can compete with some of the best players in the world, and I know that now, whereas before, we can go and practice all day and practice with, you know, Frances, I have practiced with Daniil back in 2019 in Australia, I practiced with some really good guys, but it's always different when you're rolling the balls out in an actual match.

I think now the belief for me is stronger, because I have seen it, I know that I can do it, and I think that's probably the biggest difference is now when I'm going into matches I think from here on out, I'll have an expectation of a higher

level, a higher expectation of myself and what I want to see from myself and maybe just even higher confidence.

Q. Tennis Channel was showing during the first rain delay your encounter with Jamie Foxx during the break. What was that like? Did it catch you by surprise? What was it like during the first rain delay?

CHRISTOPHER EUBANKS: No, I knew he was coming. I didn't find out about an hour and a half before the match. I knew he would come.

During the rain delay, just kept it pretty light. I tend to play better when I'm a bit more relaxed. I have tried to be serious and stressed out before. Those don't end well for me. I think seeing him get laugh is probably good to relax me.

It's cool he was able to come in, wanted to support me. He's followed my progress over the past couple of years, and it was really, really cool to see him. That's the first time he's actually been able to see me play live. We have played tennis together, played pickleball together, but for him to see me compete live is cool. Yeah, pretty special for him to make the trip.

Q. Your new ranking is going to change your schedule for the season. How do you see the rest of the season? What do you have to improve to step further?

CHRISTOPHER EUBANKS: I think in terms of scheduling, my coach and I, we said before the tournament started, actually I think it may have been after the first round when things started to get a little close, we said the plan was going to be to go to Korea for three weeks of challengers I believe at the end of April. As I began to progress, we started to say, all right, let's wait and talk about it after the tournament. Let's just see how far the tournament goes and reassess whether or not that's still going to be the plan, or will I decide to go before clay court swing.

Don't really know yet. We still have yet to talk about it. Probably talk about it sometime today or tomorrow. I think the deadline for the first clay court tournament is next Monday. So we will have to try to make a decision pretty quickly.

In terms of things that I have to improve, I think it's just continuing to do what I have been doing over the past maybe about seven, eight months. I think that's when I really started to play at a different level. I think it was US Open time, which I qualified in, got my first Grand Slam win, started to piece together some really, really good weeks.

I think it's just continuing the same thing. There is not

really anything I can pinpoint to say, oh, this is what has to improve. I think every area of my game can improve. I can always improve my serve, can improve my movement, my volleys. There is no one real thing to pinpoint. Overall just continuing the progression of bettering my game as a whole. That's kind of I think what the focus is going to be.

Q. Obviously just qualifying, obviously, the storyline that comes with it to get to this point, can you mention more about that obviously? You mentioned earlier with the breakpoints today, one of six, but how cruel was the net to you today?

CHRISTOPHER EUBANKS: Yeah, the net didn't like me today. But in terms of qualifying, you asked what specific about qualifying. Yeah, I mean, qualifying, obviously it's important and it's big.

That's something that I expect of myself to, you know, to come again, even though I wasn't playing the best, I felt like last week my qualifying match in Indian Wells I started to have a lot better form than I had the two previous weeks.

Knowing that, I knew these were going to be conditions that I like. I love the heat and humidity. I love when the ball flies off the strings.

I came in expecting to qualify. Like that's my goal, like I'm going to come here and qualify. Then we see where things go from there. It's kind of the expectation. Then you kind of continue to, I guess, assess as things move on. So that was kind of the, that part -- the second part was what?

It wasn't my day with the net cord. That was pretty tight. I had one dropshot off my strings that I was kind of forced into. I didn't want to hit it initially. I kept getting pulled out to the ad side. I saw it. I went for it, and off the strings, I said that's a perfect dropshot. Sure enough, it tipped the net. I knew it wasn't going my way. I was like, You've got to be kidding me. I can't get a single net cord today. That's how tennis goes.

Q. A question about your backhand. Not many American players have a one-hand backhand. You always had a one-hand backhand?

CHRISTOPHER EUBANKS: No, I started off two hands on both sides up until the age of about nine or ten. Then I switched to a one-hand forehand. I think at about 14 I went to a one-hand backhand.

If I could do it all over again, don't know if I stick with that decision. There are pros and cons to each. Obviously the backhand, you have a lot of variety with the slice, can open up the court, a bit more angle. From time to time I was

able to do that pretty well, but something about that ball above the shoulders, man, one-hander is a bit tough.

It's what I have now. Obviously I have had a decent amount of success with it. Gonna make it work. Going to try and make it as good of a one-handed backhand as I can.

It's a bit of a running joke now between me and some of my friends, my dad, when I switched to the one-handed backhand. I wanted to do it because I loved Federer. Now I go to my dad, Why did you let me do that? You had no idea guys would just go throw balls above my shoulder for my entire career. You know, it's how it goes.

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