



# Press Conference



23 July 2019

with **DOMINIC THIEM**

Thiem – Cuevas 6-3, 7-6(3)

**QUESTION:** Dominic, are you back in your comfort zone on clay after the grass court season?

**THIEM:** Yes, of course I wish that the grass court season would have been longer. I also love this surface but it was only one match unfortunately. So, I hope that I can do it better next year. But you know I'm back on clay for two weeks and the two last weeks of the year. So, I'll try to enjoy them as much as possible. And as I always said Hamburg here and next week of course are very special, they mean a lot to me. So, I'm happy that I got off to a great start.

**QUESTION:** What have you and your coach Nicolas Massu been working on specially to make you a better player?

**THIEM:** Many things. Of course, it was a pretty bit change how the practice and everything is going but I think the main thing we changed that my game gets more unpredictable again. I think it was once when I was younger and it got lost a little bit this part of my game. So, slowly it's getting back. Of course, I hope it's getting even stronger than before but I think it's pretty fine now.

**QUESTION:** And my last question is not tennis related, it's football. You are a big fan of Chelsea. What are your hopes for the new season and how do you think we will do with Eden Hazard gone?

**THIEM:** I am really looking forward to the new season since a long time because Lampard is the coach now. He was one of the big reasons why I became a Chelsea fan, so I am very happy about that fact and they have a transfer ban this year, so they have to play with the young players. I think there are some really exciting young players in the team. So, I'm happy when the season starts and I cannot wait to watch the matches.

**QUESTION:** Dominic, when you were young you always seemed pretty shy. I'm curious after all these years of travelling, meeting a lot of people, has this changed?

**THIEM:** I mean I didn't really change. Of course with the experience and all these years on the Tour, meeting so many people, getting to talk to so many people, also so many interesting people it got better and I think I'm not that shy any more.

**QUESTION:** And the sponsorship talks?

THIEM: I try to be good because it is important and it is nice also in a way. So, I think I improved a little bit also.

QUESTION: Surely a two-set win against Cuevas is nothing you need to be ashamed of but still you seemed unsatisfied during several phases of the match. What was it in particular which annoyed you? Not being aggressive enough?

THIEM: I wasn't ... it might have seemed like that but I wasn't unsatisfied. Of course, there were a few things which made me a bit unhappy. I was up a set and break; right in the first game I broke him in a really good game and then almost gave him the Rebreak when I made a couple of very very easy mistakes and did wrong things, and he played really very well then. I think I only had another chance to break him, and then there were three, four service games where I didn't have a chance, however that was merely due to him playing really well. Then, my service games also got better. At the end of the first and beginning of the second set they were a bit wobbly but then things got smoother, and tiebreaks can always go either way and are 50-50 I would say. So, I am really glad that I came out on top.

QUESTION: How were the conditions today, it was extremely hot for Hamburg?

THIEM: It was hot and I would say that the conditions are different, completely different than Madrid or Paris. The ball doesn't bounce as high and also the balls are completely different and it is a bit more difficult to play a proper aggressive spin. I think the ball here favours the players, who go for it and play aggressive which is also shown by the winners of the last years. They were all players, who fire in all directions and the conditions favour them a little because they are forgiving, and for me sometimes it isn't easy to use my aggressive spin, but the encounter today was ok and I hope that it will be even better tomorrow.

QUESTION: Your 250<sup>th</sup> Tour level victory, congratulations. Does this mean anything to you or is it just a number?

THIEM: No, every round number is quite cool and also the 250<sup>th</sup> victory on the Tour. When I started I would never have thought that things would go that far, but now I am working towards 300 (laughs).

QUESTION: It is supposed to get even hotter in the next days. Do these conditions favour you?

THIEM: I don't have anything against the heat at all. I think it's even worse on hard court than on clay, it doesn't reflect that much and it is also very humid. I think you sweat here which I prefer to a completely dry heat. So, it's ok. And I think everybody is glad when the weather is good in Hamburg for a change.

QUESTION: Your next opponent is Fucsovics. I think you practiced with him yesterday or the day before yesterday? Are you going to play tomorrow or day after tomorrow?

THIEM: Tomorrow, I'm going to play tomorrow and I've known him for ages. I think I first played him when I was 16 and he was 17. Thus, we know each other very very well, and we played each other just once in qualies in Barcelona 2014. Back then, we were both completely different players. We practiced together on Sunday but he played a very very good match against Kohli, has a great forehand and moves well. I'm really

curious. He is also one of the rare opponents, who I haven't played in the past years. So, it will be an interesting task.