

# Fritz, Shelton power into Toronto semis

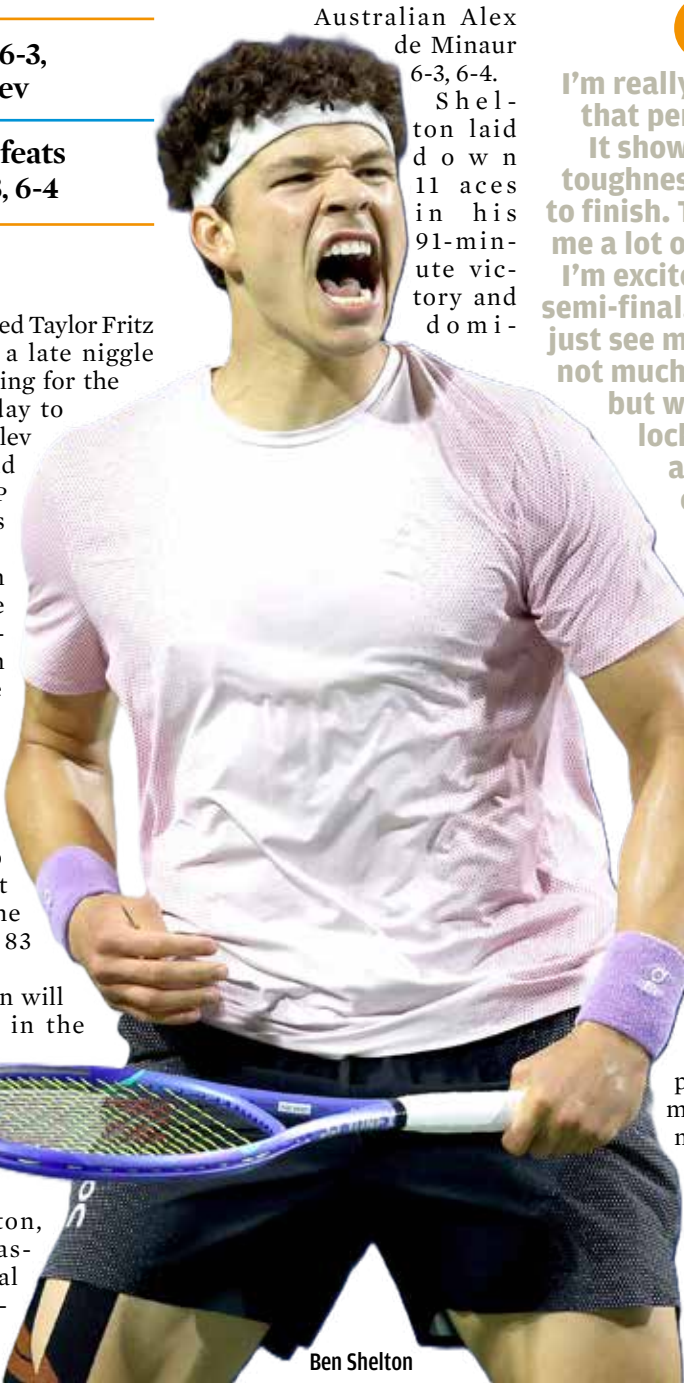
Fritz survives late wobble to set up all-American semi against Shelton

- Fritz wins 6-3, 7-6(4) vs Rublev
- Shelton defeats de Minaur 6-3, 6-4

AFP | Toronto

US second seed Taylor Fritz overcame a late niggler while serving for the match on Tuesday to beat Andrey Rublev 6-3, 7-6 (7/4) and reach the ATP Toronto Masters semi-finals.

The Californian will play for a spot in the Thursday final when he takes on fourth seed Ben Shelton, who won a Masters quarter-final on his fourth attempt, defeating



Ben Shelton

Australian Alex de Minaur 6-3, 6-4. Shelton laid down 11 aces in his 91-minute victory and dominated

“I’m really happy with that performance. It showed mental toughness from start to finish. This win gives me a lot of confidence, I’m excited about the semi-final. People often just see me as a server, not much of a grinder, but when I go into lockdown mode and put a lot of balls onto the court, it surprises guys sometimes

BEN SHELTON

nated on rallies longer than nine shots. The result ended a seven-match win streak for last week’s Washington champion de Minaur.

“I’m really happy with that performance. It showed mental toughness from start to finish,” Shelton said. “This win gives me a lot of confidence, I’m excited about the semi-final.



Taylor Fritz of United States returns a shot to Andrey Rublev

“People often just see me as a server, not much of a grinder, but when I go into lockdown mode and put a lot of balls onto the court, it surprises guys sometimes.

“Winning longer rallies is all part of my evolution.”

Shelton set up three match points with his final ace and needed only one chance to emerge the winner.

Fritz admitted he was struck by brain freeze as he served for victory leading a set and 5-4. After saving three break points he put a return into the net for 5-all as Rublev held on.

“That game was so shaky for me, we had both been holding

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Fritz served a personal-best 20 aces in the match despite nearly collapsing when serving at 5-4 in the second set, admitting his “brain turned off” under pressure

serve easily, everything felt calm and chill,” he said. “It came out of nowhere, the pressure of that game. It was tight and my brain just turned off.

“The only thing to do is to come back and try to win the set. That’s what is able to make it all feel not as bad.”

Fritz did just that, closing out the win 15 minutes later in the second-set tiebreaker with a serve winner. Fritz struck a personal-best 20 aces (for three-set matches) among his 29 winners. He now stands 6-4 over Rublev.

The American has now won 19 of his last 22 matches including reaching the Wimbledon semi-finals.

# Sizzling Osaka to face Tauson in WTA Canadian Open semis

- Osaka defeats Svitolina 6-2, 6-2
- Tauson stuns Keys in straight sets

AFP | Montreal

Four-time Grand Slam champion Naomi Osaka advanced to the semi-finals of the WTA Canadian Open on Tuesday with a comprehensive 6-2, 6-2 triumph over 10th seed Elina Svitolina.

Osaka, chasing her first WTA Tour-level title since the 2021 Australian Open, needed only 68 minutes to dispatch the Ukraine star and book a semi-final with Danish 16th seed Clara Tauson, who stunned reigning Australian Open champion Madison Keys 6-1, 6-4.

“I’m just having a lot of fun playing. I’m glad to be here,” Osaka said. “I think I’ll be seeded in the US Open because I won my match. That was a really good goal for me. I’m just really excited.”

Tauson dedicated her victory to her late grandfather, who died on Sunday as the Dane was dispatching Polish second seed Iga Swiatek, who won her sixth Grand Slam title last month at Wimbledon.

“Two days ago, my grandfather unfortunately passed away so I really wanted to win for him



Madison Keys of the United States congratulates Clara Tauson of Denmark for her victory

today,” a tearful Tauson said after beating US sixth seed Keys.

“I was told the day after I beat Iga so I really wanted to come out and show my best tennis for him. Hopefully he’s watching.”

The US Open hardcourt tune-up in Montreal is the first event where Tauson has beaten two top-10 foes, with Swiatek and Keys exiting at her hand.

Tauson dominated the opening set and took full advantage of Keys giving up a break on a double fault to open the second. The Dane won 12 of 19 points on her second serves and kept Keys

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CLARA TAUSON

at bay most of the night.

Keys joined a scrap heap of Montreal seeds, with the top five seeds and seven of the top 10 seeds ousted before the quarter-finals.

Tauson, 22, seeks her fourth career WTA title after the 2021 Lyon and Luxembourg Opens and this year’s Auckland Open, where Osaka retired after winning the first set of the final in their only WTA meeting.

“She’s really tough,” Osaka said of Tauson. “I played her in Auckland this year. I had to stop halfway because I was injured.

So I’m really excited that I’m healthy.”

**First title as a mom?**

Osaka seeks her eighth WTA-level title, and her first since a maternity leave comeback last year. She last won a WTA-level title below the Grand Slams at the 2019 China Open.

Osaka broke for a 3-1 edge in the opening set and exchanged breaks in the last three games to capture the set after 38 minutes, then cruised through the second set, taking the triumph when Svitolina hit a forehand wide.

Tauson is one win away from her second WTA 1000 final, having lost the first in February at Dubai to Mirra Andreeva.

The Dane dominated Keys in the first set, breaking in the fourth and sixth games, and Keys double faulted away another break to begin the second set.

Tauson held from there to win, never facing a break point in the second set before holding at love in the last game to end matters after 70 minutes.

Elena Rybakina, the 2022 Wimbledon champion, and 18-year-old Canadian sensation Victoria Morikova will meet in the other semi-final.



Naomi Osaka