

Dubai Duty Free Tennis Championships

Monday, February 20, 2017

Kristina Mladenovic

Press Conference

K. MLADENOVIC/K. Siniakova

6-3, 6-3

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. How would you rate your confidence level kind of like right now relative to kind of stretches of good play in the past? It has to be pretty high.

KRISTINA MLADENOVIC: Yeah, but yes or no. For example, today I saw there was a lot of things I can still improve. I was, for example, time to times out of rhythm on the serve. I think I served pretty good, like it helped me to get through tough positions during couple of crucial games, but I also double-fault a lot of times.

I also thought I could be more aggressive today, for example. Precision was quite good, I have to say, on backhand. And like just the geometry of the game, I think I, you know, I commit my tactic plan really well. But I still think, like, I'm not right now playing on confidence that everything is going well, you know. Like I was still, you know, fighting there, struggling. I was lucky because she did some big errors sometimes, you know, some easy shots, volleys, or baseline shot that she gave me that put me again a bit more in the lead.

But of course, I mean, you know, I won my first title couple weeks ago now and played -- also played really well back with Fed Cup, and it's sure that -- I wouldn't say confidence. I would just say that, you know, some things clicked. Like, you know, when you persevere and then you're working hard every day, at some point you hope that everything is gonna come together.

I feel like, you know, like my movement, my physical aspect of my game improved, so I'm like more often on the ball more precise, like more powerful and like I can rally more. All these little details makes my tennis a little bit more composed, I have to say.

This is what I have been working on, like, from always, since always, you know, that there is no secret about high-level players, especially the way they are playing all year. You have to be very consistent.



But, yeah, I'm very happy about that, because I always knew, you know, I had the shots, I had the mentality like I always believed, and wanted to belong up there.

But, you know, it requires a lot of work. Everybody's different and takes, you know, its own path to arrive where you want.

Not everything is perfect yet, far from that. But, yeah, I'm happy to getting some wins lately.

Q. How do you find these courts? I mean, they are very unique --

KRISTINA MLADENOVIC: Yeah.

Q. -- in terms of how they are playing. How do you feel on it? And do you think that it favors your game or less so? What do you think?

KRISTINA MLADENOVIC: I love it here, because it's a home tournament for me. I moved to Dubai a couple of years ago, three years ago now, and it's special to come here. And especially I had great memories. I had lots of success. You know, even if it was just doubles, I won here once in final last year. It's always something great in the career to have titles.

I love the place. You know, it's at home. You're staying at home.

But I think also I love the surface. It's unique, as you said. It's tricky to define it exactly. Like it can be very fast, depending against who you are playing. If you're playing against a player that play lots of topspin, maybe bounce is very high and it's not that fast. Otherwise if we play like we did with Siniakova today when you like press and go forward with the big ground strokes like flat, it can go very fast. So there was not a lot of rallies, and of course it helps the big server.

But I still think I need some adjustment, because I feel like I haven't played outdoor for ages. Really, last time was in Melbourne, and I came back. It was St. Petersburg, then it was Fed Cup, and, you know, kind of lots of indoors especially that I had a lot of matches and practices.

So I kind of, you know, had my kind of habits and everything indoors. Like I felt today like there is a little bit of wind and stuff, so my rhythm was just gone.

(Laughter.)

But, yeah, I definitely need to, you know, to fix some things, because the next round is tough, obviously.

Q. Talk about the next round. Karolina.

KRISTINA MLADENOVIC: Yes.

Q. Two of the hottest players on tour. Kind of on a bit of a winning streak. What's the challenge of playing Karolina right now on this surface? What do you think is the key?

KRISTINA MLADENOVIC: Yeah, it's a big challenge. First of all, we know each other very well. I mean, we are great friends. We always had tough matches, especially the last one.

When I think about it, I still have -- I don't want to see you that soon again, like that was a long one that I had, like, in my mind for quite a long time because it was at the end of the season, and it was a tough one, a tough loss for our team.

But, I mean, she's definitely up there, you know, on fire, like full confidence, I have to say. She's been improving like for the last two or three years like all the time and being now like a serious tough player, like she proved it with lots of titles already.

And especially her game, it's tough. It's tough to play. You know, you have to be very, very consistent, try to read her serve, especially. That's her biggest weapon.

So, you know, I'm expecting a very difficult match. She just won in Doha, so she will, you know, feel great, obviously. And here, the conditions are also great for her.

I will need, I think, to play a bit better than today.