

Dubai Duty Free Tennis Championships

Thursday, February 22, 2018

Angelique Kerber

Press Conference

A. KERBER/K. Pliskova

6-4, 6-3

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. Must be very happy with that performance.

ANGELIQUE KERBER: Yes, I am. I think that I was playing quite good today. Especially I served well. I think that was at the end the key for the match. I know what to expect, all that. She hit the ball really hard, serving good. I was trying to, yeah, playing good returns back, then just playing my game.

Q. Where is your confidence now compared to where it was, say, before the Australian Open?

ANGELIQUE KERBER: You know, of course I have much more confidence than when I start the year where I actually had no idea where I am, especially after last year. I had already so many matches on my belt, so that gives me, of course, much more match confidence.

Yeah, I'm trying to playing every single match my best, trying to going out there and just thinking about the next match, the next point. Yeah, nothing else.

Q. How close in terms of confidence are you to 2016 then?

ANGELIQUE KERBER: You know, I think I cannot compare these years. I mean, so many things happened in the last two years where I learned a lot.

Now it's a new year completely, yeah, fresh start for me where I really trying to focusing again on my tennis, on my way how to improve my game. This is all about right now. It's tough for me to compare these two years.

Q. How much of a shock was the last year for you?

ANGELIQUE KERBER: You know, I mean, I still tried my best. I think I'm actually, after last year, getting much more stronger right now. Also mentally I know what to expect. I know that I get through about good and bad things.

I'm still here. I came back after the last tough year.



Now I just try to enjoy much more things on and off court, try to relax a little bit more, yeah, playing good tennis.

Q. We asked you the same question at Melbourne Park. Have you in your head worked out what went wrong last year?

ANGELIQUE KERBER: I don't know exactly what. I think there are a lot of things that came together, I mean, especially after 2016.

I was still trying my best. But, yeah, I didn't know what to expect with all the things on and off court. Also the motivation was a little bit different. I think I had to go through all the things.

I think right now I get all to the best things, to the bad things. Now, like I said, I think that I am much more stronger and, yeah, much better as a person, as a player, know what to expect right now.

Q. Ostapenko was talking yesterday about similar things that you're saying, dealing with new things. Do you think there is a way for a player to have a big year, a breakthrough, a way to avoid having the dip?

ANGELIQUE KERBER: I mean, I was five, six years in the top 10. You have to go through it. I mean, of course I had my best year 2016, but still I had great years before. Last year was not the best year.

You have to go through it. You have to learn about all the things. I mean, you can always do something wrong once, but then twice I think then you have to learn about that.

I think every player has to go her own way, learn about all the tough days, tough losses and, yeah, coming back.

Q. Would it be fair to say that because you didn't chuck it all at the end of last year, that was your biggest victory, that you stayed with it, and you are back here with the same kind of commitment?

ANGELIQUE KERBER: Yes, of course. Especially after last year where I was sitting home, I told myself, Okay, this is not the end. I know I am a fighter. I will come back and I will go through all the tough pre-season, fighting back. This is how I am.

Of course, it's great to being back in the top 10, playing good tennis again. But for me right now, I mean, my goal is improving my game, enjoying my tennis, just trying to continue how I start the year.

Q. How important has Wim been in the whole process?

ANGELIQUE KERBER: I think everything is important in my team right now. I mean, especially my friends and my family, which are supporting me the last years, especially last year, they were behind me. Yeah, I think this is for me the most important thing.

Now to have a great team, they supporting me, they believing in me, they know what to do. They know my game. I think that Wim and also the rest of my team is really, really importantly right now for me.

Q. Karolina Pliskova, you know her well. For some people it's a bit strange that maybe she hasn't won a slam yet. Do you find it surprising?

ANGELIQUE KERBER: I mean, she's still young. She's playing great. She won already so many big tournaments, as well. I think it's just the time when she will be there.

Q. You play Elina next. What do you think are her strengths and what do you make of her rise?

ANGELIQUE KERBER: Yeah, I mean, I think it will be a rematch. We played last year also in the semis. Yeah, she played unbelievable last year. Still a lot of confidence, especially here where she won last year.

Yeah, it will be a tough match. She's, yeah, bringing a lot of balls back, playing good tennis, moving good. I think it will be, yeah, a close and tough match tomorrow.