

# Dubai Duty Free Tennis Championships

Tuesday, February 20, 2018

## Garbine Muguruza

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

**Q. How did you feel about the way you played in Doha? Did you feel like you're starting to find your game?**

GARBINE MUGURUZA: I'm happy with my week in Doha. I didn't feel my game at the best, I would say. But it was important for me to play a full tournament, meaning like playing some matches, playing also against the top players, getting into 2018 kind of.

I felt like we improve a lot my game anyway. But I'm happy with the final.

**Q. How do you explain, you were with Conchita at Wimbledon, won the title, you were with her in Doha, made the final? What clicks between you guys?**

GARBINE MUGURUZA: Well, I don't think it's something magical that happens, you know. I do a lot of training before. It's good that when I'm with her, I get the results.

But I think we know each other since, what, since I was very little. She's a very good person to have around. Yeah, makes me play good, I guess.

**Q. What are your professional and personal goals for this year?**

GARBINE MUGURUZA: Well, professional goals? I always want to be in the big tournaments, in the finals, you know, hopefully win the titles. That's a really normal objective.

Personally, I don't know. It's a little bit of an unknown (smiling).

**Q. How important is getting back to world No. 1 for you?**

GARBINE MUGURUZA: It is important. I always have it in my mind, you know, to be able to fight for that. I remember it was a great feeling to be there, even though it's tough. But I want to fight for that. I know it's the hardest one, but...

I'm going to be there, try to.



**Q. When you say it's tough, explain why getting to world No. 1 and being No. 1 is so tough for the sport of tennis.**

GARBINE MUGURUZA: When you're No. 1, you feel like every tournament you play, you kind of almost have to win it, you have to always maintain a super high level to everyone you play because everybody's playing, you know, like super relaxed, nothing to lose. You feel a lot of pressure.

I think it's a lot of things to control.

**Q. Is it almost like the poison chalice, a lot of the women, are they looking to avoid being No. 1 because of the pressures of being at the top?**

GARBINE MUGURUZA: What?

**Q. Getting to world No. 1, is it almost a poison chalice?**

GARBINE MUGURUZA: Oh, 'poison'.

No, it's just you realize a lot of things when you're there. You're like, okay, I'm here, I can't go more up, all I can do is go down. There's all these girls that want my spot, I have to defend it. You have this, like, alarm all the time.

I don't think it's a poison.

**Q. We asked Svitolina and Pliskova what their thoughts were on Serena coming back. Serena's performances so far, Abu Dhabi, doubles in the Fed Cup, what are your thoughts on how quickly she can, if at all, attain the level she had before?**

GARBINE MUGURUZA: I don't know how a pregnancy can change you. Not only a pregnancy. It's just, you know, a period where maybe you feel different, you maybe change a little bit. They say always once you become a parent, you are different.

I didn't see any of her matches. I guess if she's not coming back yet, it's because she knows she's not ready, or she knows.

Right now it's tough. We all are in a very good, high level. It's very competitive. It's not easy, not even for her, to be so long outside and just come and still be Serena. I think it's not easy.

But we'll see how her body responds also, how physically she is. We all know she's very dangerous. If she comes back, I'm sure she's going to be a tough one in the draw. But we'll have to see when she comes.

**Q. It's into the unknown really?**

GARBINE MUGURUZA: I know if she wants, she's going to be back. I don't know if it's going to be the Serena we all know, if it's going to be an incredible Serena. I don't know. It's a little bit unknown, yeah.

**Q. The No. 1 ranking, it's almost in play every week now on the tour.**

GARBINE MUGURUZA: Yeah.

**Q. How much are you paying attention to that? Do you go into a tournament knowing actually it might change or you might get it, someone else might get it?**

GARBINE MUGURUZA: You know, last year I was kind of more aware of that. This year I'm trying to be a little bit less because I know already since last year. Now with the type of game and the players, it's going to be a lot of movement, I feel. I don't want to be thinking every tournament what are the options for this and for that, no.

And also because I already was No. 1 last year, it's less dramatic. I always know there's a chance. That's fine for me.

**Q. The year-end tournament in Singapore, you suddenly come into the top eight. Is that part of your goal for the season or do you just look for it to happen?**

GARBINE MUGURUZA: Singapore is like a way of saying, I was one of the best players of the year. I'm here competing against the best.

Everybody wants to be in that tournament. It means I've been, you know, playing good, winning. So it's definitely a goal every year.

**Q. When you say the top players are playing at a very high level now, can you compare that high level to maybe two or three years ago? Is it different? Is it more solid now than it was two or three years ago?**

GARBINE MUGURUZA: This is only my point of view. Before I felt like there were few girls that were really dominating, especially Serena, and that the other ones never really get the chance to win the big titles. There's always few.

Now I feel like, Dubai, can win it any girl of the draw. I think this is something that is changing because now

all the girls took this from their eyes, and they realize they can also win a Grand Slam.

I think last year already we have seen people that unexpectedly ended up winning. That gave a lot of vision to all of us, saying, If she did it, I can do it. It's not only the same three players that are winning.

It's a little bit more open now.

**Q. Would you say in a sense Kerber sort of changed that in 2016 when she came through and won two majors, world No. 1, that the door sort of opened at that point?**

GARBINE MUGURUZA: It can be a certain way to look at it, it's true. Maybe Serena was dominating for a lot of time, suddenly Kerber came and cut that. That year she made incredible year.

But a lot of different winners start coming up. Yeah, more and more we see that it's just people that have a good week and they win the tournament.

**Q. You said earlier playing the big tournaments is always the biggest motivation for you. You mentioned before sometimes the smaller tournaments, it's hard to approach it with the same intention. Are you able to do that a bit more, to try to get consistent throughout the season?**

GARBINE MUGURUZA: Yeah, I think I'm trying. I think I improved that a lot. When you're younger, you're always dreaming about winning Grand Slams. Okay, this is going to sound...

You don't feel that excited, you know, when it's not Wimbledon. But it's normal. Every player has that. Once you are in a Grand Slam, you're like, Okay this is history.

I learned with the years that all the WTA events are important. We have even huge tournaments. Is the key also to be in the top spots because you need to perform constantly good, constantly moving forward in the big tournaments. Only with magic and few tournaments a year, it's tough to be in this spot.

**Q. Petra's stretch of winning back-to-back tournaments, 13 matches in a row, after what she's been through, what do you make of her run, back in the top 10?**

GARBINE MUGURUZA: I heard the news. I saw the picture of the hand. I never talked to her about it. Obviously I'm like not even close to, you know, personal.

But I think it's incredible. I heard she doesn't really feel certain parts of the hand. I'm like, I don't even

understand how can you play that good.

I remember in the trophy ceremony, they gave her it, and the man asked her, You're winning 13 matches in a row.

She is like, Yeah, it's magic. I was one year ago in a different situation.

Then I realize, Yeah, it's true.

Maybe she sees now so different. Maybe she's playing good also because she realize like, Hey, who cares. I play good, I'm happy. Sometimes you need this to suddenly kind of... So I'm very surprised.

**Q. If you look at the younger players, you're obviously very young, there's a few 19-year-olds, 20-year-olds, if you would have to pick one of them to be the first to win a slam, is there anyone that catches your mind?**

GARBINE MUGURUZA: You know what, in fact I'm starting to see I'm not that young (smiling). I remember at the Australian Open, I'm looking at the draw, especially Australian Open, I don't know why I always have this feeling in that swing, I'm seeing these girls I don't know. I'm like, Who is this? They're playing really good. I'm starting to feel of the change a little bit.

I don't know. The one that I've been more seeing was CiCi Bellis. She's playing all these tournaments and she's doing good. Not more, I don't know.

**Q. What are your memories and expectations this time around here at this tournament?**

GARBINE MUGURUZA: Well, the first year was my best year. I remember I lost the semifinals. I have good memories. I think it's a very nice tournament. It's very easy. We are like in a resort. The courts are different from Doha, but they're good. So hopefully I can do better. Last year I didn't play really.

Yeah, I think it's my third, fourth time. I don't really remember.