

# Dubai Duty Free Tennis Championships

Wednesday, February 21, 2018

## Johanna Konta

### Press Conference

D. KASATKINA/J. Konta

4-6, 7-6, 6-2

JOHANNA KONTA: How is everyone doing this morning?

**Q. It was a tough one.**

JOHANNA KONTA: It was a tough one.

**Q. A midnight match, three hours, two match points. How do you react to the whole thing?**

JOHANNA KONTA: It would have been nice to have taken one of the match points, however that's part of the game. So I think I can only really look back on this match, obviously not now immediately, it has just finished and it's quite late, but just to be able to look back on it, take the good things, because I did do a lot of good things, then learn from the things I can try to do better.

**Q. What were the good things?**

JOHANNA KONTA: I felt I did try to play the right way. I actually think I'm playing better and better as the matches go on, as the season is going on. Definitely going to take a lot of good things from that. I feel I'm serving better and better.

I think Daria, she's also quite a tricky player, the style of play that she has, the amount of rotation she also has on the ball. You don't play too many girls that play with that racquet head speed, especially on the courts here, which are quite lively. It definitely spins out, it kicks out. She's quite tricky in that sense.

I think I did a reasonable job at trying to still play my game with that, try to move forward. I think sometimes I overplayed a little bit, which obviously is what you're always looking to try to find the balance with.

However, yeah, unfortunately I ran out of a bit of steam at the end, and she just had more left in the tank.

**Q. How was the body feeling? You say you ran out of steam. It did appear to run away quite quickly at the end.**

JOHANNA KONTA: I wouldn't say it ran away too



quickly. I think I still fought the best that I could in that third set. I mean, I don't feel amazing. At one point I was laughing, I did think we were playing two separate matches because she looked fresh as a daisy. That was not a great feeling (smiling).

But, yeah, I think I did the best that I could today, quite honestly.

**Q. Where we sit, we couldn't see, but the umpire had to come out and get a towel. Was there a leak?**

JOHANNA KONTA: No, the ball girl was bleeding in the back. I brought the attention of the umpire that the ball girl was bleeding. The umpire asked if there was any blood on the court. I think that's why they took the towel.

**Q. Your first time here, what has been your impression of the tournament in Dubai?**

JOHANNA KONTA: I think it's a great event. I think the conditions and the courts here are actually quite similar to Indian Wells, which is a great preparation. Obviously it's a strong draw. It's a strong draw every year. So it's a great tournament to play in that respect.

Yeah, I mean, so far I've only had a good experience.

**Q. I know you don't tend to think this way, but I'll ask you anyway. In terms of you do have a big title coming up where you're defending. Do you think you'll be able to approach it just like any other tournament?**

JOHANNA KONTA: I'd like to think so because I've been very open and honest in the way I've approached the season, especially off the back end of last season. I'm going in with every belief that I can defend my title. But I'm also going with every trust that I'm going to do just the best that I can. It will take me where it will take me.

I mean, as it showed here, again, every tournament now, there's no easy matches. I think to win any title for any player is a great achievement right now because of the depth and the kind of test that everyone has.

I mean, look at Petra last week. Look at the matches she played every single round. I think it's not easy winning titles in this day and age of the women's game.

there.

I think I'm just going to be working towards trying to do that.

**Q. You've been a top-10 player. Can you see Dasha making it top 10?**

JOHANNA KONTA: I mean, I think she's a great player. I think there's not much separating the top 20 from the top 10. In that respect, why not?

Again, I think a lot of it is timing, a lot of it is luck as well, to be healthy enough to play enough to be able to accumulate enough points.

But, yeah, I think she's a great player.

**Q. Do you think the way she reads the game is perhaps a bit even more mature than her age?**

JOHANNA KONTA: How old is she?

**Q. 20.**

JOHANNA KONTA: You guys are speaking about her like she was 15 or something. I'm like, How old is she?

**Q. She has the spins and the slices, as well as she can hit.**

JOHANNA KONTA: Like I said actually at the start of the talk, the way she plays is not a common style of play. There are other girls who play similar to that, but I think just because you don't play that kind of player as often, it takes a bit of adjusting to.

However, I think yeah, she definitely maximizes on her ability. I think definitely works around her weaknesses.

**Q. Who would you compare her to, playing a similar sort of style?**

JOHANNA KONTA: I don't know now. I don't know.

**Q. You said there were other players.**

JOHANNA KONTA: You don't think there are?

**Q. I'm wondering who they are.**

JOHANNA KONTA: Well, can you give me some names? It's 10 past 12 at night.

THE MODERATOR: Shall we leave it there?

JOHANNA KONTA: Carla plays similar. She uses the slice, as well. She puts rotation on the ball. Errani puts a lot of rotation on the ball.

**Q. That's enough.**

JOHANNA KONTA: Kuznetsova, she plays with a lot of rotation on the ball.

THE MODERATOR: I think three is fine. We'll leave it