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**Charleston
Open**



Thursday, April 6, 2023

Belinda Bencic 4 7 6
Shelby Rogers 6 5 2
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THE MODERATOR: Congratulations, back into the quarterfinals here again. Just give us your overall thoughts on the match and how you were able to come back from being a set down.

BELINDA BENCIC: Yeah. I think it was a really good match. I was very close to turn it around in the second set at 5-5. I think I really start to play very good. And then the third set I felt much better with my game. Sometimes in the second -- I definitely felt Shelby was playing very well, and she was hanging in the rallies. Her backhand down the line was great, and her serve is obviously very uncomfortable. I think I struggled a little bit with my decision making, which then like maybe more insecure about some things, and then you're like in yourself just overthinking everything and having a million thoughts in your head. So I'm happy in the third set I really managed to sort my thoughts and just go one way, and it worked well.

Q. You mentioned you obviously started to turn things around there at the end of the second. What would you say you really focused on in the third set to get you out with that significant win?

BELINDA BENCIC: I was focusing to keep it simple, to try to play my game, to play, yeah, fast, but still remember the tactics about her also, but mostly, yeah, focus on my things and not like overthink before every shot what to do, just do it. And, yeah, just sort your thoughts as simple as possible and focus on the serve, which I'm happy about in the third set.

Q. And you mentioned that it was obvious to you that the crowd was going to be favoring Shelby, and it did seem a little strange that it happened to be you, defending champion, against

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the local. But what I wanted to know is did you realize that you did have some fans yelling for you in the crowd?

BELINDA BENCIC: Yeah, absolutely. No, I think it was definitely not -- I didn't feel like the crowd was against me at any point.

Q. No, they're not that kind of crowd.

BELINDA BENCIC: No. Exactly, no. They're very -- obviously they love Shelby. She's the home favorite. She's from here. So I absolutely understand it, and that's why I say, I wish I would be in her position, you know, with the home tournament like that. It's a beautiful thing to have. And I definitely felt like I had some people cheering for me, too. So I didn't feel it was weird. Okay, I'm defending champion, but still, you know, she's --

Q. But turning it on its head for a moment, Belinda, does it ever help you to be the one who isn't being cheered for?

BELINDA BENCIC: Yeah. Sometimes it definitely helps. Sometimes it's -- I mean, it's not like really I was like fighting against the crowd or anything. It wasn't at that level. So I wouldn't say that it really impacted my game. I think sometimes it's very nice when you're cheered on. Sometimes, you know, you get fired up when you're not. I don't know. But today I didn't feel like it was a big factor in my game.

Q. We often talk about sort of the aura here in Charleston, the good feels, but I think it was 2014 you made the semifinals, and truly for you, now almost ten years later, does it really when you come back to a place where you've had success in the past, does that really help or what's actually going through your head when you come back to somewhere like this?

BELINDA BENCIC: It's really like a different vibe. I feel like more attached to this tournament than maybe I feel to other tournaments. It's just it's like memories they're always here. I don't know. I keep on telling my boyfriend, like, you know, back like when I played like there, I lost to Shapovalova in the semifinals. It was like the toughest match of my career. I thought I'm never going to have a chance to be in the final again. It was like all these emotions that you just have as a 17-year-old that you don't reach the first time something. And it's just so nice like to see how far I've come in these years.

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But, still, I think for me Charleston has not changed like in the emotion of the tournament. I think it's no secret that everybody really loves this tournament. After Indian Wells and Miami, you are very tired, you just want to go home, but for me, like this has always been a very nice stop, even like this -- like tired like this, I mean. And, yeah, it just has a different vibe really. Like it's not just a tournament for me.

Q. And then just for Alexandrova, you guys have played six times, including, you said on Tennis Channel, Miami. The conditions are going to be much different versus Miami just a couple weeks ago. But what challenge does she really offer? And when she is very on as she can be, how do you try to counter that either with your tennis or mentally?

BELINDA BENCIC: Yeah, for sure. I think it's -- I just have to try to disrupt her rhythm if this happens. In Miami it didn't work well. The tiebreak was very close. I had some set points, which she made some great shots. Sometimes you're like, okay, I fought this match hard and I couldn't do anything. And sometimes you have to accept it, but also like during the match you have to try everything you can to disrupt the rhythm of someone that is on fire. But I also know not like every day for her is like this. So I want to make it as tough as possible for her, and also I feel like the clay is going to change a lot of things. And, yeah, I mean I think I know her game pretty much well and she knows mine. So there is not going to be some secrets.

Q. Last year I don't know what they're called. Last year you were doing those coloring drawings. What are you doing this year to relax? Are you doing the same thing?

BELINDA BENCIC: I'm doing exactly the same thing. Today I was the players' lounge waiting because obviously the matches before me, they always go so long, and always like I warm up and then it's third set, so I have to go and do something and just like stay active and not just be on my phone. And then Ons came by and she's like, oh, my God, you're still like drawing this? I'm like, yeah, but she still haven't given me her face. You know how she said last year she will give me her face to draw. I was like, okay, just send me a picture and I will try to do it. So I still love to do it. It's my favorite thing to relax. We are playing Sequence, the game. My

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boyfriend. It's a really good game. I always beat him. He has no chance. (Laughs). And that's what I do before the match.

Q. What's the drawing thing called again?

BELINDA BENCIC: The drawing thing?

Q. What's it called?

BELINDA BENCIC: I don't know. It's like mandala.

Mandala. I have like this book, it's called "World of Flowers," and I love to draw flowers.

End of Interview

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