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**Charleston  
Open**



**Friday, April 7, 2023**

Madison Keys           7   4   2  
Daria Kasatkina       6   6   6  
Quarterfinal

**THE MODERATOR:** We'll get started. Dasha, congratulations. Back into the semifinals here. Just give us your thoughts on the match and how you were able to overcome after dropping that first set.

**DARIA KASATKINA:** It was a tough set, especially for me to play Madison. I don't have a great head-to-head with Madison, so it was a tough mental battle.

But I'm happy that after the first set I was able to forget about it as soon as possible and to win at the end. It was a really important win for me.

**Q.** It seems that Charleston has been very kind to you over the years. Just talk about what makes you feel so comfortable on the green clay.

**DARIA KASATKINA:** Well, yeah, that's true. Charleston is a nice place for me, I don't know why. Honestly, from my side, I love Charleston, I love the people who work here, the atmosphere, the city, everything.

It probably just takes me back or something because, at the same time, the transition from hard court to clay court, it's not that easy, and we don't get much time between Miami and Charleston to prepare.

But the green clay is something between red clay and the hard court, so it's a very nice transition, I would say. It's not that slippery. The bounces are a bit more equal. I mean, Charleston is a really nice tournament to make this transition also from hard season to clay court season.

Media Transcripts Provided By:  
Kelly A. McKee  
Savannah Transcripts, Inc.  
P. O. Box 8552  
Savannah, GA 31412  
kadmcr@yahoo.com



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Q. How do you feel now?

**DARIA KASATKINA:** Now? I got a sunburn. I feel great. I mean --

Q. You implied that you maybe were feeling a little bit bad.

**DARIA KASATKINA:** I feel good right now. Of course after wins, you feel much better than after the losses. I'm happy to be in the semifinal. The beginning of the year was a bit rough. Just so happy to finally be on the right track.

Q. You say the beginning of the year was a little rough for you, but when you arrived here, Dasha, where was your confidence? Is there a part of you that kind of thinks, oh, like we've made it to the clay, the clay season, and does that help up your confidence at all because of your record?

**DARIA KASATKINA:** So honestly, the confidence wasn't on the good level, especially after this not good hard court season. Also on the practices, I wasn't in the best shape. But as soon as I start to play matches here, it starts to be better.

To be honest, I didn't have this feeling of finally we're on clay because I was a bit scared that this part of me will continue even on clay. So I was just trying to be focused on tennis, first of all, on what I can control, emotional part. And little by little, especially after winning yesterday tough match, and the second set was very tricky, was a mental battle for me, was very difficult. I think it was a very important set, which I won very important match, which helped me for sure.

Q. If you think back to last weekend or Monday, and if you told that Dasha that she'd be in the semifinals, what would she say? Would she be happy?

**DARIA KASATKINA:** Of course she would be happy, especially winning a match against someone who Dasha was losing most of the times. I mean, of course, I've been already -- even though it's my eighth year on tour, and I went through ups and downs a few times. Now I know more or less what to expect and how to deal with these things.



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Still every time you face one downhill, it's tough, but this is what you call experience. It's to know how exactly to get out of the situation.

Q. You mentioned a couple close matches, some tough ones. What would you say, what aspect of your game did you rely on to kind of get you through those?

**DARIA KASATKINA:** Moving, a lot of moving and bringing all the balls back. On clay it's very important thing because, as I said before, on clay, if you fight, you always will get a chance, always. And this is how these matches were going.

I mean, the most important is the mental part. Sometimes you cannot play your best tennis but still manage to win a match just being always there because also the opponent -- I mean, if the opponent is able to keep the focus and the level of the game on the highest performance, okay, it means that it's very -- I mean, we're all good players. But it means that it was an unbelievable match, and that happens.

But most of the times, you will always get a chance where the girl will lose the focus or will get a bit nervous. For example, it's also very difficult to close the matches sometimes. So this is the moments where you can actually correct.

Q. Next up against Ons, you were talking about it on the Tennis Channel. I think the last time you played was Rome, semifinals, you had a match point. How do you see that matchup against Ons? Is there anything taking into account sort of how she's playing, or what will you focus on?

**DARIA KASATKINA:** Yeah, I remember that match perfectly, and actually the only match I think which has from match points after which I do have regrets because actually I'm not sure if I would win that match and after that I would make semifinal. I'm not sure about it. So this is the only match which I'm not regretting anything.

Ons, she also had a tough beginning of the year. Now we are in Charleston, we are getting back, both of us. Let's



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see who is going to make it better tomorrow. I hope tomorrow because the weather has sucked.

I mean, it's going to be another nice match. We're good friends, and it's always nice to share these moments like this, like playing big stages against each other and just I hope we're both going to enjoy it.

Q. I was here the day you won the title here in Charleston. What do you remember about that day?

**DARIA KASATKINA:** I remember every single minute.

Q. You were so excited.

**DARIA KASATKINA:** Yeah, I was, I think 19 years old still. Winning my first title was -- I mean, I couldn't like fully believe that I am able to win a title. Of course, I was already top 30 and everything, but this is some step which is very important for every player to win their first professional title.

It was here, and I couldn't ask for -- of course give me a slam -- but the atmosphere here, the people, I mean everything, how they treated the players. And to win in this atmosphere was just amazing memories honestly. I still have so many pictures with the trophy because they didn't give the cup of the trophy. They give a plate. At home I have the copy of the trophy that's standing in my parents' house. So beautiful, very heavy.

It's always going to be special for me, the first trophy. I will never forget, of course.

Q. Do you remember what you said after you won? I do.

**DARIA KASATKINA:** What I said?

Q. You said, "I won with my head."

**DARIA KASATKINA:** I remember the speech of second person (laughter). That speech is unforgettable. Me, actually, I don't remember. I was so nervous honestly. I couldn't connect two words. So I don't remember what I was saying, and I never watch it because I never watch my interviews or like speeches after the matches because it's just I don't feel comfortable.

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Kelly A. McKee  
Savannah Transcripts, Inc.  
P. O. Box 8552  
Savannah, GA 31412  
kadmcr@yahoo.com



But the speech of the finalist, I remember every word.  
It was ten words. Every word of it.

End of Interview

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Kelly A. McKee  
Savannah Transcripts, Inc.  
P. O. Box 8552  
Savannah, GA 31412  
kadmcr@yahoo.com