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Charleston Open



Sunday, April 9, 2023

Ons Jabeur 7 6
Belinda Bencic 6 4
Final Round

THE MODERATOR: Belinda, obviously a tough loss today, but a great tournament for you overall. Can you just talk about the match and then your overall experience here in Charleston?

BELINDA BENCIC: Yeah. Absolutely. I'm very happy I made the final here again this year. I think also for the tournament it was the best scenario possible, you know, to have this final again from last year. And today I just felt like Ons was too good for me. She was really pressing and pushing me, and I think it was meant to go her way today, and she really deserve it. So congratulations to her, and for me at least I didn't -- I mean, I won a match today. So -- kind of. So that was also very important. I mean, it's a very difficult -- I mean, I just woke up. I was just focusing on the Pegula match, and then you win and like 15 minutes later you're playing a final.

It's very special. I didn't -- okay. I mean, I know Ons, but it's still different when you are sleeping and when you're preparing mentally for the final. And for me it was a bit trickier today, but this is normal for us players. We always have to adapt. And, yeah, last year went my way, and this year it went Ons's way.

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

Q. How hard is it to beat an opponent like her two times in a row in a major tournament like this?

BELINDA BENCIC: I mean, it's tough to beat her just anyhow. I think she's really a high-quality player, and she really has all the tools in her box. And, of course, you know, when I'm playing my best, I can try to press her and push her. But I think today she just also moved very good, and she was really counterattacking very well. And, yeah, I mean, she did all the things a little bit better today.

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



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I wish at 6-4 in the tiebreak one of her balls would just go a little bit wide or a little bit long, but sometimes this is tennis. This is how you win the matches. As I said, I felt today was meant to be her way.

Q. Belinda, congratulations on a great week. A lot of positives to take away from your week here in Charleston. What would you say impressed you most about the way that you were playing on the clay here?

BELINDA BENCIC: I mean, it impressed me again the most that I'm capable of winning high-quality matches on the clay. I felt I'm moving okay. I still have a lot of potential in that part. But, you know, I stayed tough. It was not an easy week, coming from Miami. Also, I had a tough three-set match against Shelby. She was the home favorite crowd. And, again, you know, to stay tough, to stay tough today in that tiebreak. Yeah, I really felt like it was a very good week for me, and I played another finals. It's been a great start of the year for me for sure, and I'm taking this confidence to go to Europe.

Q. Is there anything you adjusted the past few days strategically or in your routine? Because the conditions were just so much different; it got so much colder and wet, obviously. Is there anything you changed?

BELINDA BENCIC: Yeah, for sure. I mean I strung my racquets much looser. So I had two options. At the start of the week it was a completely different tennis. Yeah. I love when it's fast and quick, but still, you know, this is what happens, and we have to adapt to the conditions because we are tennis players. It's what we have to do.

So that's the only thing I did, and then I mean I was just warming up the same way and everything. But it was like very cold. So, yeah, just trying to stay warm and move around and, yeah.

Q. Hi. Congratulations on a good week. At 3-5 Ons hit an amazing point. You pegged a ball right at her feet. She did a tweener, and then she sliced cross-court, severe cross-court. And then it progressed into a tiebreak, which was wiggy, I guess is the only way. How much did that whole scene, like when she won that point, up through the tiebreaker, how much did that affect you mentally?

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BELINDA BENCIC: I mean, for sure, you think at this point there was nothing better I could have done. You know, like even the point she played like between the legs, to play that on a break point is just, I mean, well done. Like what can I do? You know, I will have to accept the fact, and hope that maybe I will play her in the Grand Slam final and she will not do this, you know. If she will do this, I will kill her. (Laughs).

No, I mean, also, you know, the tiebreak at 6-4, I think three out of the four points she hit just a straight line, you know. And this is well done because she went for the shot, and it paid off. Maybe in another time it will not pay off.

Last year, I won against her in Charleston; she beat me in Madrid and Berlin final. So maybe she won this year and I am going to beat her in Madrid and Berlin final. I don't know. But this is tennis somehow, and this is how you win the matches. And, I mean, we have a chance every week. And, of course, now it's very bitter. For sure, I will go to sleep thinking about this shot, like it will be in front of my eyes, but next week I will not think about it anymore because we have a new tournament. And my career is so long. I will play many finals. I will lose many, I will win many, but there is no regrets for that.

Q. Belinda, talk about how you adjusted your game from the semis to the finals. Obviously Pegula and Ons have very different game styles. So how do you feel like you matched up to Jessie versus Ons?

BELINDA BENCIC: Yeah, it's much different, of course. With Jess you really have to have long rallies and you know that she's a very, very good baseline player. With Ons it was the same kind of today. I felt like she was moving very good and playing great defensive shots that was keeping me in the back. So I couldn't attack and really like step into the ball. And then, of course, you have to watch out always her drop shots. It's, of course, very different, and also, the serving is very different.

So, I mean, I didn't have a lot of time to prepare, obviously. I had like 15 minutes to think about what I'm going to do, and still I had the stress from Jess's match. And then like when you win, it's always like, you're like, the stress

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goes away. So I had to be very careful not to be like, oh, I'm in the final and then you're in the final and you're like too loose. So I tried to just not celebrate too much and just stay focused. But, yeah, I think I did good.

End of Interview

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