



*CreditOne*  
**Charleston  
Open**



**Sunday, April 9, 2023**

Ons Jabeur            7   6  
Belinda Bencic    6   4  
Final Round

**THE MODERATOR:** Congratulations on the match today and the championship here in Charleston. Just give us your thoughts on the match today, please.

**ONS JABEUR:** You know, a difficult match against Belinda always. Tricky start of the game. I mean, I don't want to start with a break down, but I'm glad that I broke her at the best moment and played an amazing super tie -- I mean tiebreak. It was almost super. And, yeah, it was very tough to serve from the other side where I was hitting with the wind and the sun, but I'm glad that I managed to win my serve at the end.

**THE MODERATOR:** Questions, please.

Q. Yes. I noticed that you lifted the trophy over your head in the tournament. You took it over to the Tennis Channel; now you're bringing it in here. Are you ever going to let that go?

**ONS JABEUR:** The --

Q. The trophy.

**ONS JABEUR:** This? No, I'm sleeping with it. I'm kicking my husband out of the bed and sleeping with the trophy tonight.

Q. Can you tell us what that means after coming so close last year?

**ONS JABEUR:** Really means a lot, you know. I've been wanting to win this tournament for a long time. People -- you guys have been amazing to me. So it's nice to have a great memory here in Charleston, and, again, this is a pretty good start to the clay season. I don't want to stop here. I want to continue to do more. Definitely I'm happy, and probably will celebrate for one day and then get back to training and get back to hopefully winning more matches.

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Q. We know you're excited about the photo shoot, "The Notebook" style photo shoot. I was wondering what else you're doing to celebrate your win here in Charleston.

ONS JABEUR: Honestly, just the photo shoot, spending more time with Laura, you know, and Danny and the rest. It's going to be amazing. You know, the worst part about it is to pack. I always hate packing because I'm leaving tomorrow. But I'm very excited to go to Paris and celebrate with my family and with my little nephew, who was just born like three weeks ago. So I'm really excited. This is his gift. He doesn't know it, but it's his gift.

Q. Ons, you said yesterday that you were using some past finals to learn what to do next time. Can you say any highlights of what you learned from playing Belinda last year that made a difference for you this year?

ONS JABEUR: I think playing better the first set. That was definitely one of the better things that I did. I didn't want to start the match like this, but it was very difficult, you know, especially with Belinda, playing someone like her, different style that I didn't play, I think, this tournament. I didn't play someone that plays like her. And playing from Daria to her is like completely different, so adapting to that game was kind of difficult. But I know she was such a fighter. I know I had to be patient and just run, like Daria yesterday, and get every ball. And I think that that really helped me. Also knew that she's really not going to give me like the match easy, because from 4-1, double break, 40-15, it was like very, very difficult for me. But you know, hanging in there and not getting angry was part of it. And I'm really glad that I maintained calm and just stick to the plan and continue to do what I am supposed to do during this match.

Q. How much, if at all, did you think about last year's final going into this week and obviously going into today?

ONS JABEUR: I didn't think a lot about it, because I had two matches after with Belinda. I had one in Madrid, one in Berlin. So I got used to playing her. And coming like last year, I knew her game, but I didn't know her that well, but I think knowing her more and more helped me to win today, you know. And, again, I tried to focus more on myself and do what I'm supposed to do on the court for sure.

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Q. In the past this tournament has kind of adopted their favorites, people that have really played to the crowd, Patty Schnyder back in the day did it and Sam Stosur. What does it mean to kind of be the next in that group? You saw the crowd was really behind you the next day. And, also, after the photo shoot what's the plan for tonight? What do you do to celebrate a title?

**ONS JABEUR:** Yeah, definitely. I'm happy to be part of the champions here in Charleston. It was nice when they show, you know, the names. I always wanted to have my name there. Definitely the crowd, they're amazing, and just amazing because they're not just following me from this tournament, but all over the other tournaments, and they told me that they watch also the Netflix show. So that's really amazing to hear that I have support and not just for one tournament, but the whole season.

Honestly, I'm really tired. So I'm going to just eat and go to sleep and not much to do. Probably have a nice dinner with my team. And I'm just tired from all the matches, but we'll take the time when I go back home or in Paris, for sure.

Q. Congratulations.

**ONS JABEUR:** Thank you.

Q. You characterized Belinda's game as, well, you said no one else plays like that. What is it that Belinda -- what is that "plays like that"? How does she play that separates her from the rest of the girls that you met here?

**ONS JABEUR:** Well, first, tennis wise, she doesn't give you time. She goes for a lot of winners, and she has like certain -- takes the step open to hit the backhand or the forehand. Doesn't give you a lot of time, which is not great for most of the players and also not great when you're moving on clay, because you never know where the ball is coming. And mentally she's someone that doesn't give up. Like she's always there, making you hit one more shot, and even on the difficult points when I was 40-0 up at 6-5, I was like, okay, but I could not do anything about it. She really served good. She went for her shots. And that's what makes Belinda Belinda. She's really amazing in that, and I feel like also maybe her serve did not help much in the second set. Maybe I returned good. I don't know. That makes it also very, very difficult to have a

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complete player, you know. And that doesn't really help me, you know, as a player. But my style bothers her; her style bothers me, and at the end of the day, you can see who will get the win after.

Q. In the first set, the match was tied at five. Can you take us through the tweener there and how important was it to win that point?

ONS JABEUR: I honestly thought I was going to lose the point. I saw her going with her backhand like this, and I'm like I'm done. And then she hit at me. I think she chose like the safer side. I reacted very fast. I saw the ball coming at me. So I was like, okay, I'm just going to give her one more ball to play, and see. And I'm surprised that she didn't anticipate on the cross, because that's where I usually play my shots. But I think I was lucky and creative with that shot, which was amazing, and it changed up the game a bit, I think, for the first set, for sure.

End of Interview

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