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# Charleston Open



**Saturday, April 6, 2024**

**Danielle Collins def. Maria Sakkari**

**6-3, 6-3**

**Semifinal Round**

**MODERATOR: Danielle, congratulations in back-to-back finals. Can you give us your thoughts on your performance today?**

**DANIELLE COLLINS: Yeah. Coming out against Maria, she's a warrior, one of the most consistent players on tour, and someone that never gives up, and it's not easy to beat someone that never gives up. So all of those games were really close and came down to a few points here and there, a lot of deuce-ad games.**

**But, yeah, I think my aggressive game style helped me. I had to stick with it. And she was throwing a lot at me and doing a lot of different things. So I had to try to counter that and use my aggressive game style as much as I could.**

**Q. Danielle, congratulations. It's been 2013 since Serena won in Miami and then won in Charleston. That hard court to green clay, is that difficult, and what do you think about doing that yourself?**

**DANIELLE COLLINS: Yeah. I think it's definitely difficult transitioning, especially from hard to clay. I think clay to hard is a little different, but hard to clay you have to be very versatile. You have to think a little bit different athletically. There's a lot different movement patterns that we do on the clay. You have to get used to**

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the tough bounces pretty quickly. Especially if you haven't been playing on clay, that can be tough to kind of react. But I feel like one of my athletic strengths is I have really great hand-eye coordination and I'm able to react quickly. So that definitely helps me being able to make that transition. But it's not easy. You have to be very versatile and flexible. And I know I came into this tournament knowing it wasn't going to be perfect; the entire week there would be little bumps on the road and adjustments that would need to be made in the match, and sometimes that can be hard to do, but I've been flexible this whole tournament, with myself.

Q. Any preparation you'll be making for the final?

**DANIELLE COLLINS:** Nothing crazy. That's for sure. Nothing too out there. I mean, I think keeping things pretty simple. Just sticking to my routines, ordering in at night and enjoying a nice meal in the room and spending some time with my boyfriend, Bryan.

These last couple days has been really nice, because the first couple of days it was a bit of a transition coming from Miami where I had a lot of family and friends there, and then it was like back to reality. Everybody had to go back to work and back home and I was here solo the first couple of days. So that was kind of like -- I had so many people around me in Miami.

But it's been really nice having him here. He flew in yesterday after a very long workweek. So, yeah, it's nice having my best friend here.

Q. Sounds good.

**DANIELLE COLLINS:** Yeah.



Q. Danielle, congratulations. It's been a whirlwind couple days for you, I'm sure. But just curious, besides the fact of wanting to win every match possible in your final season, have you had a chance to sit down and think about or reevaluate your goals for this year?

**DANIELLE COLLINS:** Well, I would say I'm a pretty high achiever. And so I have pretty like strong goals, I would say. So I have thought about that a bit. But for me right now it's all about the process, especially when I'm in tournament mode. I think it's good to sit down a couple times a year and get your stuff written down and do your vision boards and focus on what you need to do and the adjustments you need to make in your process in order to reach those goals, but right now I'm just very focused on my process. I have to be, because I'm in tournament mode and playing back-to-back days, so it's all about preparation, recovery, strategizing, making technical adjustments, those kinds of things. So I'm so consumed with that right now.

Q. What's been the key to this streak you're on?

**DANIELLE COLLINS:** I don't know. I'm not sure. I mean, it could be, you know, any number of things. I feel like I've been asked a lot of times, do you think because you announced your retirement you're playing more freely? I think when that's being said, it's kind of like a vague thing or assumption to kind of make because it's easy to say, oh, well, she's retiring at the end of the year, so she must be playing so freely. But the reality is is that I've made improvements each match, and a lot of those improvements have been technical, tactical. Athletically, there are things that I've improved, not tremendously, but little by little. And I think it's important to highlight those things.



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**I think if we look at all of the matches in Miami, I started that tournament, I lost the first set 6-3 against Pera, and she kind of won that set very decidingly. And I think I came back and I won the match 1 and 1, because the rest of the matches I was -- I feel like each area of my game I was improving just a little bit each match, forehands, backhands, volleys, serves, returns. Everything was just getting a little bit better, a little bit better.**

**And of course, when you're trying to reach certain goals -- going back to your question, when you're trying to reach certain goals, so much of getting to those goals is about making those little improvements, and so it's been really rewarding getting to the point where I feel like, okay, I'm making these little improvements, things are clicking. I'm understanding how to work through different challenges when they come up on court a little bit better, how to be a little bit more mentally resilient in those moments. And just being more adaptable. So that's what I feel like it's come down to is just little improvements day by day.**

Q. And drawing on your experience against Daria, what do you feel like you need to do tomorrow?

**DANIELLE COLLINS: Yeah. We've played so many matches against each other over the years and battles. She's one of my favorite players to watch because she makes these matches so interesting. The way that she plays and her tennis IQ, how creative she is on court is phenomenal.**

**I think against Daria I have to be very flexible. She has just about every tool in her toolbox. She can hit big. She can hit with shape. She can hit slices. She can come into the net. She does everything very, very well. She serves and returns well. She mixes**



up her pace. She's just solid all over. And so it's going to be a battle, and I have to be ready to play a long, tough match, if that's what's needed.

And I'll have to kind of take a little bit more of a look statistically at some things and some different patterns, but I think the biggest thing is just fighting until the end and being adaptable out there.

Q. Danielle, when you're on a run like this, are you able to appreciate how impressive it is or are you just more focused on the next match and then what's right ahead of you?

**DANIELLE COLLINS:** Yeah. I think I'm just so focused on my process, to be honest. And like I said, in order to achieve your goals and to get to where you want to go, you have to be that focused. And I do get to enjoy a little bit of it during it, but it's not like, oh -- it's not like we can go and get margaritas after the match and kick up our feet on the couch and eat cheeseburgers. It's a little bit different.

But I think it's good because I think we get little tastes of having a lot of fun out there, and then after the match, you know, feeling really rewarded when you're making those little improvements. And I think for someone like me, athlete, and someone that's kind of a perfectionist, making those improvements is so rewarding. And I've been trying to do that now for a little while, and it should give me a lot of confidence, I think.

Q. Can you give us a little insight -- you mentioned stats -- into what you like to look at? Is there a service you use or data or what are you looking at?

**DANIELLE COLLINS:** Well, I think -- I don't want to give away too many of my secrets, right, because, you know. But I do think at



the end of my career I might write a book, and in the book I might share some of that. So, you know. I talk about a lot. I mean I talk about my health. I talk about my challenges. I talk about my life.

Q. (No microphone)?

**DANIELLE COLLINS:** What's the book title going to be?

Q. (No microphone).

**DANIELLE COLLINS:** Yeah. I might have to get a little bit more creative. But -- because I don't know if that would sell very well.

Q. (No microphone).

**DANIELLE COLLINS:** Yeah. I'll have to ask you guys and get some feedback on what the title should be. But, yeah, I might have to save some of that for my book. Yeah.

**End of Interview**