



# WTA 500

Wednesday, April 1, 2026

Iva Jovic def. Alycia Parks  
6-3, 6-2  
Round of 32

## An Interview With Iva Jovic

**THE MODERATOR:** Iva, congratulations and great match. Your thoughts on playing your first match here in Charleston.

**IVA JOVIC:** Yeah. It was a good match. Obviously just happy to get the win and start off the tournament in the right way.

**Q.** Iva, you said the other day that one of your goals was to add some variety to your game, and I wondered if you did anything today that maybe was a little off centered for you that worked for you.

**IVA JOVIC:** Yeah. I was trying to mix up my return positions a little bit more, which I think I did a better job. I mixed up my serve quite a bit with the second, and I think that made it a little bit more effective. I didn't get broken after that first game still.

Maybe could have mixed in some more drop shots, but there was one attempt. So I'll take that well and definitely be better on some defensive skills. So it's getting there. I would like to see even more, but I think it's on a good program.

**Q.** Congratulations. How do you feel like the movement is different here than maybe on red clay? Do you do anything different or anything other than the fact that the court is just a little bit faster than regular red clay?

**IVA JOVIC:** Yeah. I think the movement is a bit different. The red -- this clay is a little bit grainier, and it's quite slippery. So kind of -- someone plays back behind can get wrong-footed very easily, so you have to kind of -- it's a little bit more icy, I would say, and the slides are a little shorter, because, again, it's not as fine as the red clay.

So it's a little bit more tactical. If you can get people wrong-footed, you can almost make them like fall on your face, and I almost fell on my face like once or twice today, too. So it's a little bit more tactical, where the red clay is much easier to slide and maneuver.

**Q.** When you were at the desk there was a Tennis Channel bracket that said this time last year you were ranked 150th, so I'm just wondering if you remember how you were feeling this time last year and maybe what work you thought you were going to have to do to get here.

**IVA JOVIC:** Yeah. I played her this exact week last year in Bogota. So it's kind of funny that I play her again first round here.

But, yeah, it's crazy to be in the position that I'm in, because I don't feel that I'm close to maximizing myself yet. But I realistically didn't even think that I would get here, maybe, honestly. And when I was younger, I just wanted to play. I just dreamt about playing tennis and being good enough to be in the slams. So this is all already above what I expected for myself. But now that I'm here and I see how much more room I have for improvement, I see that there's a lot of opportunities ahead.

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Q. Iva, I believe the last 500 level tournament you played you won in Guadalajara, and you were around 73 in the world. Now you're a seed. How has that transition been going from that position of being relatively a little bit more under the radar to now having more eyes on you being a seed and being obviously like a big fan favorite here in Charleston?

**IVA JOVIC: Yeah. I'm going to knock on some wood. I was looking for wood. This isn't wood. There's wood down here. So hopefully that gives me good luck.**

**Yeah, I guess -- I didn't even know that, but I guess this is my second 500 only. I don't even think I've played since Guadalajara.**

**So it's amazing. Obviously Guadalajara was incredible. It was a crazy tournament. I saved match points in my quarterfinal match. Obviously a similar result would be incredible here, but I'm just proud of the position that I've put myself in, and to be entering these tournaments with a seeding and being expected to make good results gives me a lot of confidence, and I've been working really hard to get used to the clay. So hopefully that's going to show up this clay season.**

Q. How does a California kid who grows up in the land of cement courts, get a feel for green clay?

**IVA JOVIC: Honestly, I didn't even know what clay was until I was 13. And then I came to Florida. I went to Europe for some of those ITFs and played for the first time. Did not know how to slide, did not know how to play, did not know how to move on it.**

**But I've spent a lot of time in Florida in the past couple years. They have much more clay there. And I've just been doing movement drills every single day. Right? So I haven't really played a ton on clay in my life, but when it's clay season, I'm working on my movement every single day.**

**So it's improved rapidly because of just the volume of movement that I've been doing. So there's no secret there. You just gotta do the drills.**

Q. What did you think of Charleston your first time here and the reception you got today?

**IVA JOVIC: Yeah. Charleston is incredible. I've heard great things from all the players. So I had high expectations. But it's definitely exceeded that.**

**And there's so many people that show up to watch, and is it's only second round. I mean, the stadium is pretty much full from 11 a.m. first match.**

**So I love playing in front of people, and everyone is very nice. The southern charm is real.**

**There's a lot of kids as well. I love when there's little children that hopefully can be inspired and pick up tennis racquets as well.**

**So Charleston has been great. The food is really good, too.**

Q. I have one more. I've read a lot about your maturity as a person and as a player. To what do you attribute that, do you think?

**IVA JOVIC: I think my parents, my family. I'm lucky I'm the younger sibling. So I think I can learn from my sister's mistakes in a way, and my parents can learn from that experience. So that's helping me through my tennis, right?**

**She was older and I would see her kind of being stubborn and fighting with my dad in practice, and then I learned, oh, okay, that's probably not the way to go. Let me do it a little differently.**

**So trial and error. But it's just a value in my family to work hard and to dedicate yourself. My parents, you know, never limited me and my sister. We could do whatever we wanted. But whatever you pick, you have to try to be very good at it. Right? So kind of just striving for excellence.**

Q. Following up on not feeling like you've maxed out yet, but obviously doing what you're doing has gotten you here. So what is the work like of adding and growing and changing without getting away from what's clearly been working?

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**IVA JOVIC:** Yeah. That's a great point. And I think that's the biggest -- the trickiest balance, because I'm -- and I think a lot of tennis players, we're very stubborn and can be a little bit extreme, extreme views because we're just perfectionists, right, and tennis is one of those sports where it's never -- it's physically impossible to be perfect and to not miss.

So you have to stay with your identity. I try to identify who am I as a player, what is my game style. And then you just build around that. And I try to just emulate certain people, think about players that have been extremely successful in this sport and what do they have that I don't have. So someone who plays similar to you, but maybe you don't have all those little fine tunes that they have. So I look at Belinda Bencic, I look at Jessie Pegula, Andreescu as well. I might play her, I know, but the tennis that she was playing, even now, but when she won that US Open is something that I look up to.

Q. You mentioned just seeing the stands and the really great crowds they have here. I know you always want to play at every event where you are in front of a bit crowd. Does it mean anything to you, though, extra seeing that knowing that it's a women's only tournament and this is a women's sport event?

**IVA JOVIC:** Yeah. It's incredible to have this many people, knowing that it is only a women's only tournament, and I've said this before, but the dedication that Charleston and this tournament specifically has put towards women's tennis and putting it on the map and the step towards quality is really special.

So playing this tournament, being a part of it is definitely more than just the tournament, and I think it's amazing to have tournaments like Charleston, and Ben Navarro and all the sponsors who have done so much.

So I feel it's a privilege to be a part of it, and hopefully women's tennis can keep making strides and I can be a part of that as well.

Q. And the money.

**IVA JOVIC:** Yeah. Win the money. Exactly.

Q. I talked to Akasha Urhobo yesterday, and she mentioned how you, already on the tour, are helping her sort of like see what's possible and talking to you and like learning what it's like to be on the main tour. You're already so young. You just got here. What is it like being an inspiration to someone else already and what does that relationship?

**IVA JOVIC:** Yeah. That's incredible. I didn't know she said that. But I'm actually really good friends with Akasha, and I'm not just saying that. I've known her for many years, and she's one of the sweetest people, so I always want to help her.

And we practiced together right before the tournament as well. I spent a lot of time with her, worked with her, and she's one of the good ones. She's very sweet. And she has a very tricky game style. She's unique. She has a lot of fire power, and I know she's going to do really good things in the sport, and she had a great run in this tournament as well. So I know she'll be out on the tour very soon, and I'm looking forward to it.

End of Interview

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