

# Mubadala Citi DC Open

Sunday, August 6, 2023

Washington D.C.

## Maria Sakkari

Press Conference



C. GAUFF/M. Sakkari

6-2, 6-3

THE MODERATOR: Tough result today, but can you share your thoughts here on a great week in D.C.

MARIA SAKKARI: Obviously I'm disappointed, I'm not gonna lie. You know, she played good, and I didn't bring my best tennis on the court today. But at the same time, you know, I have to give credit to her.

But as I said on the court, like, a month ago when I lost that first round at Wimbledon, I never thought that I would be playing a final that soon and beating very good players.

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

**Q. You mentioned in your on-court interview and just now how a month ago you wouldn't expect to see yourself here. Can you speak more on how you were able to bounce back from that disappointing Wimbledon defeat?**

MARIA SAKKARI: Yeah, I mean, it was tough, because when you're a top-10 player, you don't expect losing two Grand Slam first rounds in a row.

It's tough to accept it. Okay, I played semis in Berlin, but still, it wasn't as good as I expected.

So the last, you know, maybe two months haven't been ideal for me. But the same time, I just trust in myself. As I said, I spent a lot of hours on the court and in the gym. That's how I get it back.

There is no secret behind it. It's just that I have to put the hours in order for me to feel good with myself, with my body, and with my tennis.

Then as long as I'm working with my mental coach, then I know that, you know, it's going to come.

**Q. You also said you didn't necessarily play your best**

**tennis out there. Do you feel like perhaps the weight of the final and how much it might mean to you, playing for a championship, did that possibly contribute to you not playing how you would expect to play?**

MARIA SAKKARI: For sure. I mean, you know, I cannot lie that it's always in the back of my mind that I want to overcome that obstacle. I'm sure I will.

You know, there is no secret that, you know, I have done it once. I can do it again (smiling). I have beaten so many good players. I know it's gonna come.

You know, it wasn't meant to be this week, so it's gonna be, you know, soon. I'm pretty positive about it.

Yeah, I was nervous. I didn't let myself play the tennis that I know that I can play, but at the same time, as I mentioned, she played really good and she played very good the entire tournament. Yeah, she deserved to win.

**Q. Kind of speaking of Coco, what improvement or changes to her game do you see since the last couple of times you have played her?**

MARIA SAKKARI: Obviously we all know that, you know, her forehand was always her weaker shot. I feel like now she's improving that. She's making more balls. She's working on that.

She's solid. She has a great and she had a great backhand, a great serve. Mentally she looks a lot more, you know, mature. She knows what she's doing on the court.

You know, she's a top player. There was all this hype for a reason. She wasn't just, you know, a one-off thing that she was just good when she was 15. She's consistent and that shows her level.

**Q. Did you feel or have anything different in your service game today? It was connecting a lot more your service game winners and points yesterday against Jessica, or was Coco able to figure something**



## out on your serve today?

MARIA SAKKARI: Well, it was obvious I didn't serve well. I think my ball was just way too low. That's something that I have been working with Tom lately that I need to toss the ball higher in order for me to get my serve, actually to have an accurate serve.

So I think that, you know, fatigue played a role and also nerves. You know, the lower I toss the ball, the worse my serve is. I know that in order for me to serve well, I have been feeling lately I need to toss that ball higher.

You know, it didn't really help me today. I was a break up in the second. Like, if I could have, hold serve a couple of times, you know, things would happen differently. But it is what it is. Nothing we can do about it.

The only thing I can do is just, going into Montreal, just, you know, try and work on that ball toss and on the things that didn't go as planned today.

**Q. Your first time here in Washington this week. A very compact time in Washington. Three days and you were able to get to the final. You probably wish you could do all your tournaments that quickly. Just your reflections and looking back on what you were able to do here in your first final of the year.**

MARIA SAKKARI: I loved everything about this tournament. I'm just very grateful that we have the opportunity to play in the city where it's actually everything is nice about it. The hotel was great. The city was beautiful. The food was very good.

You know, these are little things, but they always play a huge role for us. You know, like, above everything, the fans are amazing, because you don't see that final of the women's being sold out. I don't want to say anything negative about the men's, but I feel like we had big crowds compared to the guys. You know, that always makes a tournament a lot better for us.

**Q. You haven't necessarily had the best results in the slams as of late, as you mentioned, the Wimbledon defeat. Do you feel making the first final of the season, having such positive results this week, will help you and give you more confidence for the next slam to do well at the US Open?**

MARIA SAKKARI: You know, that's the goal. That's what I want to, you know, have the good Grand Slam. It's the last one of the season, so for me, it's gonna be big if I can do well.

Starting the U.S. swing with a final and playing good tennis, it's actually one of the few times I have done it. So I believe it's gonna help me, but no one knows for sure.

Last two Grand Slams I have played two very good players in the first round. Hopefully if the draw can also help a little bit, that would be ideal (smiling).

I'm positive. I'm playing great tennis. I still have two very big tournaments ahead of me before the Open. I'm hoping for good results in those two, and then hopefully things can go my way.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports