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Cincinnati, Ohio, USA

Zhang Shuai

Press Conference



Z. SHUAI/N. Osaka

6-4, 7-5

THE MODERATOR: It was a tough competitor to have in the first round. Talk us through the match a little bit.

ZHANG SHUAI: Yeah. Today, yeah, I mean, yeah, really good win for me. Also, start of match, my serve not feeling so good. Things last two weeks I try to, yeah, get some feeling, but other baseline I play really well. Yeah, I try to focus on myself.

Yeah, that's what I'm always doing. Yeah, I think without serve I play really good (smiling). I will try my best to improve every day.

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

Q. You were feeling like it was not a good day for your serve? You were winning points a lot on your serve.

ZHANG SHUAI: Yeah, sometimes number good, but the feeling is not really. Sometimes you feeling good; number looks no good.

But anyway, yeah, the goal always is win the match. Yeah, if we won, yeah, that's the best, no matter feeling. Yeah, after win the match, always feeling better and better. More confident, yeah.

That's the tennis, yeah. Sometimes we don't know (smiling). Even every day we practice, but some day good; some day not feeling well.

Q. You've played Naomi a lot. Six times now. You have won three times; she's won three times. What do you think has been the consistent thing from you when you have won? What do you think has been the key to beating her the times that you have beaten her?

ZHANG SHUAI: I don't really know. I just go be natural when we on court. Sometimes we taught to do something you don't like or you don't normally doing, so you have to be yourself. What you practice, you just go really natural.

I think maybe sometime some player you just like her ball or her speed or spin, you feeling really good. Some player you feeling really tough or you don't really like. Not about ranking high or low. I think just -- you know what mean? You totally understand, right?

Sometimes they make you feeling so good or sometimes everybody say sometimes you play not well but maybe because the opponent ball give you always really feeling tough, yeah.

So, I mean, I didn't do anything special, yeah.

Q. So then do you like Naomi's ball?

ZHANG SHUAI: Maybe. Or maybe her ball is strong, or maybe because I always hitting with my coach, coach, man, muscle bigger, much bigger than me and much bigger than normally the girls.

So it's different. I mean, totally different. That's why when my coach go back to States when I'm in Nottingham, Birmingham every day hitting with Bia, I feel like, Oh, different. Even balls lefty, I'm feeling totally different girls more like play early, ball like faster. But men's stay one second hitting very strong. So I think, and then I play perfect two week.

Also Bia's, that's why I'm the best woman hitting partner for her (smiling). I say like, yeah, always when I'm warm up with her, she never lost. She all the time win.

Q. Coach of the Year?

ZHANG SHUAI: No, I'm the best hitting partner. Special for warmup. Yeah.

Also, when I play against Simona, after, she always win the tournament. I'm so good like them get feeling. Yeah. I don't know. But everybody different. Yeah. Sometimes tough match, but after, you feeling good.

Q. Even when you're at tournaments, do you prefer to practice with your coach rather than other WTA



players?

ZHANG SHUAI: Oh, I like it, but sometimes you want to do something special or you really like someone. You always want to play with someone you feeling good, yeah.

Q. Who do you get the most excited to practice with on tour?

ZHANG SHUAI: Yeah, mostly time with my partner now. I change more than 15 partners this year (smiling). Yeah, depends. Like at San Jose I played with Kudermetova. We practice together a little bit. The one during Wimbledon with Elise Mertens, we practice every day. Yeah.

Also warmup with Bia sometimes. Nottingham, Birmingham every day play with Bia. Yeah. Every day different. During the French Open, I practice a lot with Caty McNally. We play doubles together, yeah.

Q. Talking about the players whose ball you like and good matchups, is there a player whose ball you think is the toughest for you?

ZHANG SHUAI: Who?

Q. Yeah, whose ball is the toughest for you? What player, their shots you find the most uncomfortable?

ZHANG SHUAI: I mean, when I play with Camila Giorgi, we play first round French Open, oh, my God, so fast. But sometimes after match we say, We have to practice together. Because we are always same time, like 7:30 something on court.

She like really early. Me too. I like really early. Also, she always play with some guys. When we were in Lyon, yeah, any tournament, always, 7:30 or before 8:00, we both already on court.

We say, We should practice together. She can make me improve the faster ball. So strong.

Yeah, but I like to watch her play. Oh. So clean. Yeah, I hit every day three hours for one match, you know. I'm not young anymore.

And also, I play singles and doubles. Tough to play after three hours how can play doubles. I want to, yeah, try to keep up a little bit more energy for if I can win for the next round or keep healthy. Yeah.

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