

# Western & Southern Open

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Cincinnati, Ohio, USA

## Karolina Pliskova

Press Conference



Ka. PLISKOVA/V. Williams

7-5, 6-1

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

**Q. You have played a lot of big matches in your career against the Williamses, had some big victories. What's it mean for you to play them at this stage of their careers? What do you think their legacy is going to be at this point now?**

KAROLINA PLISKOVA: No, definitely they are still huge legends no matter which age they are, which like tennis they are recently playing. Of course Venus didn't win many matches in the last, whatever, year or so. The same with Serena. But still, they are great players. You kind of have the respect going on the court to play against them. I felt it today.

Actually, she played really good the first set. You know, I was surprised because I saw some of her matches last week and in Washington, and I thought she was not playing so well.

So I was a bit, like, surprised. But, I mean, I should not be surprised because she's a great player. But, no, I mean, still they did so much for the sport and you can see how much people they follow and they speak about them. Especially in America, of course. They are quite big. I didn't see the movie about them, but there is so many stories about them and movies, like interviews and everything.

For sure, they are like big for the sport. Let's see how long Venus gonna play. Of course Serena, we know she's not going to be around much. Yeah, she surely is going to be missed.

**Q. I know you're a pro, but does it ever cross your mind when you are playing somebody that she's over 40 years old?**

KAROLINA PLISKOVA: Yeah, of course.

**Q. Do you think about that during the match?**

KAROLINA PLISKOVA: Yeah, like a lot of credit to her she's still playing, but I don't want to lose. I mean, I would feel bad. Of course I play also girls which are like 10 years younger or even more, but I think this is a bit different, you know, if you are 30 or if you are over 40.

I just felt like, come on, physically I have to win this match. But I was actually close to losing the first set because she was really playing well. But I thought the longer -- actually, the match was close to two hours, so the longer the match goes, the bigger chance should be for me. If I lose, then I'm doing something wrong (smiling).

**Q. People say when players do certain things, like you watch Ronaldo in soccer, almost 40 now, or Roger, does it make you, who has been a great player, any part of your career you think you might go much longer than you think you might have imagined?**

KAROLINA PLISKOVA: You know, this is a tough question. When I was 20 I was thinking, okay, I play till 30 and that's it. I'm 30 and I'm still like here. I don't really want to like quit at the moment.

So I think I just want to see how it's gonna go like this year, next year. Then I will make decision. Of course I still need to enjoy. I think that's the most important thing. I think they still enjoy it. That's why they are playing, Venus and Serena.

But I also want to keep some level. I don't want to be after, like if I start to lose like too much and not playing good level and maybe people don't like it that much, I just don't want to be around.

Since I think once you kind of reached the top, you just don't want to then after be like 300, 400, just playing like small tournaments. I don't see myself there, but I love the sport a lot. So I think it's gonna be very difficult for me to also say like the last word, you know. Yeah, I'm still not thinking about that. Let's see.

**Q. At what point were you and Kristyna aware that**



**there were these two sisters playing professional tennis alongside each other when you guys were growing up? Did that have any kind of influence over both of you believing that, yeah, wouldn't it be cool if we were sisters on the WTA Tour together?**

KAROLINA PLISKOVA: Well, since actually always since we are small, because already like they were very young they were playing good tennis at good level, and as I said many times, we watched like so much tennis since we were small.

We watched them a lot, and I mean, they did so well. They reached final of every tournament. If not Serena, then it was Venus.

Of course I watched a lot when they had this hair, you know, and there is a lot of stories about that. Of course there was like couple of like Czech good players. I think all that era, when I was maybe like 10 years old, watched a lot of tennis, and then of course I was lucky to play them both, lucky to beat them both.

But, no, I don't think, because, I mean, still we are twins, I think that's still a bit different compared to sisters. And they were in America. Somehow in America it's completely different if you are from America and if you are from Czech Republic. You cannot compare.

Yeah, but of course they were like kind of like idols. I never had idol. I never wanted to be like them, but fortunately we were growing up watching them. They played really good tennis. They were both tall, playing aggressive, so for sure it was maybe like close to the tennis what we want to play.

**Q. You were saying on court that you would go home and watch more tennis after this and go back to the hotel and watch. Who are your favorite players to watch? What do you like watching?**

KAROLINA PLISKOVA: No, it's not about favorite players. I think it's sometimes about the matchup, you know, like players I saw yesterday. I watched Tiafoe with Berrettini. I thought it was amazing match.

I just like later in the day, if there are some matches, especially these night sessions, and, I mean, Europe is sleeping, I have nobody to talk to. That's sad, right? I just watch tennis (smiling).

No, and I like to watch tennis. No matter if Europe is awake, I still would watch tennis. So I just like choose, you know, this always over like Netflix and movies, I would choose always tennis. There is so many good matches I

feel like now these tournaments, because there are so many top players which they kind of dropped. Then you can face them in the first, second round.

I feel like from the first round there is really interesting matches. Like Petra was playing Jil in the afternoon, so I think there are really some good matches to watch.

**Q. Are you going to watch Serena and Emma tonight?**

KAROLINA PLISKOVA: For sure.

**Q. Do you feel like you still learn a lot when you watch tennis now, or more just for the entertainment aspect?**

KAROLINA PLISKOVA: I think maybe both. I don't really like learn, because of course it's different games than I have. Maybe I kind of like make my own strategy for the players, but it's not that I would like take something from them.

But, I mean, depends. If I watch with my coach, then he sometimes tell me what I should do or not, and what they do better than me. But, yeah, it's a bit of both.

**Q. People often say about Venus and Serena they kind of changed women's tennis. When you were younger, how different did they seem to other players that you were watching growing up?**

KAROLINA PLISKOVA: I'm sure they were different. They are sisters. I think there were not before sisters like this. I think they really took the game to different level, like they start to play much more aggressive. I think before the tennis was completely different.

I'm sure they just like start to play much faster, aggressive, and just like going for it. I think there was Martina Hingis, which she was always like there in the finals with them. She was just playing more like baseline game where you kind of like not really wait for the mistake but you don't have like a huge weapons.

And I think they changed the course. The bodies are different, right, like Martina never can hit aces and stuff like that. But I think the tennis before was more like smart game. Now it can still be smart or it should be smart. Sometimes the power just wins.

So if you play just like fast enough, I think you can win the rallies and you don't need to like think, okay, like I need to play here, here. You know, I think before was more about that. They definitely changed it.

**Q. You said that you didn't have any idols. What kind**

## **of inspired you to play your style of attacking tennis?**

KAROLINA PLISKOVA: I think the fact that we just watched all these top tournaments. You just watched the big courts, the big stadiums, and just the fact like, you know, maybe one day I can play on these courts, maybe I can be in TV, I think, you know, and then the game is beautiful and we always liked it.

Okay, not always (smiling). Yeah, I never thought about like quitting, even though I was losing or in juniors we had tough times. "We" means me and Kristyna.

Yeah, so there were some tough moments. I think still this was the main motivation why to play. And of course the best feeling is if you win a match. So I think this is something what you cannot really find in normal life after.

## **Q. Does it feel different having Kristyna not playing these days?**

KAROLINA PLISKOVA: Yeah, I play much worse when she's not around (smiling).

## **Q. Why do you think that is?**

KAROLINA PLISKOVA: No, no, I'm joking. I think there is more reasons for that. No, I mean, of course Michal was with me like many weeks. But the weeks when he's not around, she was always kind of around.

Yeah, so she was like my friend for, and she still is my friend forever and for like every situation to talk about tennis, family, and, you know, all these things.

But I don't really have like anybody who would replace her on the tour. Not that I would like need. But she was, like, yeah, the best, but I'm pushing for her to come back, so let's see.

## **Q. Does it make it less lonely? Tennis can be a lonely, hard sport.**

KAROLINA PLISKOVA: Yeah, I'm quite okay with myself, so I don't really like struggle to be alone. I know some people, they can have depressions. I don't have. But of course still she's something like more to me. We have like the relationship, it's tough to describe, because we somehow like understand each other so well.

So you kind of have like friends, family, like everything in one. Then of course she's doing the same sport, so many times she would understand my feelings. We would play doubles sometimes, so there was like many things we could share.

## **Q. Moving forward through the tournament and through the rest of this season, obviously injuries caused a slow start and you weren't able to play as many matches as you would have liked at the start. Do you feel like you have your legs back under you? How do you feel about your level of tennis these past few weeks?**

KAROLINA PLISKOVA: I feel I'm slowly getting there. I feel last week I played some great matches and maybe the best what I have played this year. There have been some better and like worse weeks of course, you know, like definitely not my best this year so far.

But I know like usually when I had some kind of breaks where I didn't have injuries but it was like this COVID break somehow took me time to get back and just to feel, you know, good on the court again. Something else is in the practice. I still feel quite okay, but of course the matches is something different completely.

So I feel like slowly I'm there now. Of course tennis is a game about confidence, so much so you can train how much you want. But then if you don't kind of win many matches, it's tough.

I think everybody experience this, but, yeah, I'm still here fighting. I think I finally got it to a better level. Hard court is my favorite. I always do well in America, so hoping for more matches here.

## **Q. Last week you were talking about working with Jez for a few weeks there on your fitness, and you said it was life-changing, crazy. What was it about what he does that made it so different than the trainers that you had in the past? What kind of blew your mind about it?**

KAROLINA PLISKOVA: You know, I think he's like so much experienced with actually like similar players to me, of course like mostly male players because he was with Andy Murray, with Zverev. Zverev has a similar body to me, so I think he just knows how to work with tall athletes, and he just made the plan like so just like for me, you know. It's not like a general plan which, you know, if I just go to some fitness coach, he tells me, Okay, today run, tomorrow you do gym. He made it so specific.

The way he like, I mean, understand things and understand my game was for me was like quite like shocking, not shocking, because I knew he was always good.

But, yeah, just like so professional, and he told me like

working with Andy Murray, like it was quite tough for him. Andy asked him so many questions, so now he's kind of like ready for anything. I don't give questions. I just like do what he says.

But, yeah, in case I have questions, he can really answer anything about every exercise. Yeah, it makes sense all the things we did. Finally, I feel really much better on the court, so that's the most important thing.

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