

Western & Southern Open

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Cincinnati, Ohio, USA

Sloane Stephens

Press Conference



S. STEPHENS/E. Cocciaretto

7-5, 6-2

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

Q. (Question about the weather.)

SLOANE STEPHENS: Yeah, obviously it's been tough. I would say this whole series so far has been tough. D.C., there was rain. Last week, Montreal was rain. This week again, rain.

So a lot of adversity, but I think it's all-around for everybody. Everyone is waiting, just sitting around. Yeah, just trying to manage it the best I can: eat, relax, nap. It's nice here they have a new recovery center and places for players to go so it's not too bad, but obviously it's tough for everyone.

Q. Iga was talking about the difficulty of late finishes and rain delays. Seemed to be advocating perhaps against a longer night session versus an earlier night session. Given what's been going on in Rome, Madrid, and last week in Montreal, what you make of what changes could be made to make it easier for players.

SLOANE STEPHENS: Yeah, I don't know what the secret is, but obviously the tour has to do a better job with scheduling. We have to find a solution for the late matches, there being unfair timing for people not playing at the same time.

There are just a lot of things that need to be fixed in terms of scheduling and how we manage that, because there is obviously always going to be someone that's at a disadvantage, as we saw in the Montreal final.

I mean, it's not something that we can control, but in the actuality of things, if the scheduling was better perhaps at the beginning of the week it may have made a difference towards the end of the week.

Just giving players the best opportunity to perform and do their best comes down a lot to the tour and the scheduling.

Q. You have been on tour for a good many years. Does it feel worse than usual this year, or is it just sort of the way things have fallen?

SLOANE STEPHENS: I'm on player council, so I won't dig too deep into it. I won't put salt in the wound. But it has been better, and I think we need to do better for our players.

Q. As a player council member, do you have players coming up to you with issues?

SLOANE STEPHENS: Yeah, all the time. This is, like, my full-time job that I do for free (smiling).

It's definitely tough, but I think we all have the same sentiment when it comes to figuring out what works best for the players. Like I said, one week it's one player; next player it's a different player. Everyone's going through it just at different times with different situations and different scheduling and rain and whatever it is.

Just trying to manage that and, yeah, everyone, of course, if they have a complaint, they are coming to the person they think can change it, which I have no control (smiling).

Yeah, it's a lot of our discussions, a lot of locker room discussions and things like that, just because it's something we would like to change.

Q. The calendar is going to change a bit next year, new rules. How do you feel about that? How much, if any at all, you find...

SLOANE STEPHENS: Yeah, we can say how we feel, but at the end of the day, this is a business. So it's where we are now obviously on the way to equal prize money, the tournament is getting longer, I think it will be a new dynamic for everyone.

Obviously when I came on the tour, it was very different. The tournament schedule was very different to what it is now. I think next year will be an interesting year for everyone, because it will just be a new dynamic, be very



different.

We kind of take it in stride, and I will say that I'm optimistic for a good schedule and outcome and players will be happy next year. But we don't know until obviously we get to Indian Wells, Miami, Madrid, until we are actually in it.

So we just stay optimistic and we'll see how it goes. The tournaments will try to do their best and players will try to do their best, be good sports about it and manage the things the best they can and we go from there.

Q. You're talking about people coming up to you with their problems. How do you compartmentalize those things? Do they know when is the appropriate time to drop those sorts of things in your lap?

SLOANE STEPHENS: I think they have been pretty good, but I think it's definitely our problems. It's not my problem or your problem. I think being on the player council has taught me a lot of patience, I think amongst all of us, everyone on the council.

But I think that people are pretty respectful of, like, Are you playing a match? Are you about to play? Are you warming up for something? Like, what are you doing? Just giving that precursor to, like, I'm about to dump shit on you (smiling). So, like, Hey, are you ready for this type of thing?

So, yeah, players are very, like, aware of what's going on and if you're about to play or whatever. I really haven't had any trouble with that.

Q. Do you like the role you have now after starting out...

SLOANE STEPHENS: I would say no. It's a lot of work. I do care deeply about my council position, and I do like to help. It's just my personality, my nature.

I think all of us on council are all pretty similar, like, we like to help, we want to make the tour better, want to leave it better than when we arrived here.

I think, yeah, we are a bunch of suckers because we keep coming back (smiling). I'm in this new election, and I'm, like, Why am I doing this?

It's for the greater good, it's for the tour, it's for the girls, so the girls that are 15, 16 years old now who aspire to be professional tennis players, like, they have a good place to play and have a good job, they have people like Catherine who take care of them.

Yeah, you know, it's a lot, but at the end of the day it will be worth it.

Q. When is the election?

SLOANE STEPHENS: Oh, God. The election is at the US Open? I just try not to think about it.

Q. You don't campaign, I take it?

SLOANE STEPHENS: No, not at all (smiling). If they don't vote for me, it's totally okay (smiling). Yeah, who knows?

Q. To your point about younger players, when you have girls who are 16, 17 on the tour, do you seek them out? Do they know to seek you out? How does that work?

SLOANE STEPHENS: Well, they have WTA University. They kind of are able to see, they know who all the comms people are, they know who all of the chair people are, they know who's on the board, who the player board reps are, the player representatives. They get taught and shown all of that and pictures so they know who everyone is.

Yeah, I try my best, when I see a new player on tour, I introduce myself. Like, half the time I go, Hi, it's so nice to meet you. They're, like, I know who you are.

I'm, like, Okay, great. Nice to meet you. Let me know if you need anything.

Yeah, at some point you'll have random conversations was them. But the girls I see now in the locker room consistently are girls I have seen my whole career. So there are some that break through that you see a lot and it's more consistent, but most of the time I just try to say hi and, if you ever need me, reach out. I know they are not going to because they're, like, You're intimidating and old.

I do my best where I can and go from there.

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