

Miami Open presented by Itaú

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Miami, Florida, USA

Sloane Stephens

Press Conference



S. STEPHENS/A. Kerber

6-2, 6-3

THE MODERATOR: Sloane, a tough opponent today. Always tough to play another Grand Slam champion. Just talk us through what you thought you did really well.

SLOANE STEPHENS: Yeah, obviously it's a tough match to play someone else, obviously someone who is coming back, someone who has had amazing results, had an amazing career.

Obviously Angie is a great player. I knew it was going to be tough but just really happy to be through today and also play some solid tennis.

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

Q. I know you were born in Plantation, Florida, and you live I believe in Fort Lauderdale. What's it like playing at the Miami Open with your history when you attended the event, I'm sure? Can you talk a little bit about that?

SLOANE STEPHENS: Yeah, it's been awesome. Obviously I've been coming to the Miami Open since I was 12 or 13 years old, so it's been incredible to have been, like, a fan running around the grounds and seeing all these players, and then to obviously be able to play here and then to win here.

I have experienced obviously Crandon Park, Key Biscayne, and then now here. It's been really incredible to be able to play in front of South Florida fans, and to play at home, to stay at home, is really nice obviously. I have always enjoyed playing here. Obviously when you always have, like, a home crowd, it's always very nice.

Happy to play here every year and just happy to get wins and happy to be able to play in front of friends and family. That's always been really special for me.

Q. Happy Birthday. What is it like to get this win at home but also on your birthday? Obviously a great

way to start the day, but what else are you going to do to celebrate?

SLOANE STEPHENS: Yeah, it's always nice to get a win on your birthday. I don't know how many times -- obviously my birthday is always during Miami Open. I don't know how many times I have actually played on my birthday.

So, yeah, it was a little bit different today, but obviously really happy to get the win. It's very different to play on your birthday. I was happy that I was first match and not last. That was really nice.

But last night I had a seafood pajama party in my room, and that was really fun. Everyone, like, dressed up in their favorite PJs. I wore, like, a very old-school Juicy Coutour. Remember, like, that was the thing? Juicy Coutour two-piece pajama set. That was fun.

Yeah, everyone was there, my aunts, all my friends, so it was very nice and fun. Very low-key obviously because I had to play today. I didn't know when I was playing or whatever. So was able to do that last night. Then tonight I'll just have, like, dinner (smiling).

Q. I see so many players from Florida here in the Miami Open, but what is the secret of Florida except the sun?

SLOANE STEPHENS: Yeah, I think everyone, if you are, like, a junior tennis player, you are a developing player, I think everyone comes through Florida. There are so many academies, so many places to play, so many tournaments, so many opportunities.

I think Florida is just kind of like the Mecca of tennis where everyone knows to go. Like, if you are serious about your tennis, you go to Florida. You make your way to Florida somehow. Obviously an extremely popular destination between South Florida, between IMG, between all of the academies that they have here.

Yeah, it's always been, like, a hub for tennis and a very strong place. I think a lot of pros still live here. It's a great training environment. The weather is pretty good every



day except for at 3:00 p.m. when it storms, you know, the normal (smiling).

Yeah, it's, like, a good environment, good training base. It's always pretty consistent, I'd say.

Q. You're in the midst of an incredible career. Sometimes when you're in that career it's hard to kind of look back and look forward and get perspective, but what have you learned in this journey and what do you look forward to learning and what do you hope to accomplish moving forward?

SLOANE STEPHENS: Yeah, it's been obviously a difficult journey, a lot of ups and downs, a lot of heartbreak, a lot of strong, incredible performances on incredible stages and great trophies and just very low lows.

It's definitely been a journey in itself, and I think obviously when I started playing tennis I would have never even dreamed of winning a Grand Slam or being No. 3 in the world. I think I was playing because I really enjoyed it and I loved it.

Somebody asked me this the other day, like, does it matter that you were never No. 1 in the world? I'm, like, absolutely not. I maxed out what I had, I won a Grand Slam, I had a great career-high ranking, played the Olympics, done all these amazing things.

I think when you start a sport, you can have a dream, obviously something that you really want to do, and if you do that, you get there, it's always incredible, right? But when you do that and then you do so many other things on top of it, it's just like icing on the cake.

I feel like I have done so much, but there is still a lot left. Again, today I'm 31, but who knows how much longer I will play, but there is still a lot left. Hopefully some more, like, accomplishments and fun things to come.

Q. You mentioned the Olympics. What are your expectations for this year's Olympics? Is that in your objective?

SLOANE STEPHENS: Yeah, I think the Olympics is everyone's objective for this year. Obviously when the Olympic year comes around, we have, again, playing for the U.S., an extremely strong nation, so only four people make it. We have four people in, like, the top 15 or in the top 20.

So it's obviously really difficult to make it, but you play through the end, you see what happens, you see where your ranking ends up, where you land. If you can make it,

amazing.

Obviously the Olympics is no money, just pride. If you don't make it, you still have an opportunity to go and play another tournament and make money and continue. So that's not too bad. But obviously I have played an Olympics before, super grateful to have played in Rio. It was an amazing experience.

If I made it again, obviously that would be super special and I'd be super excited, but again, there is a lot of tennis left to be played and a lot of tournaments left to be played and a full clay season ahead of us. Obviously just going to try to do my best to make it. If not, I'll be watching on TV.

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