

# Miami Open presented by Itaú

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Miami, Florida, USA

## Danielle Collins

Press Conference



D. COLLINS/C. Garcia

6-3, 6-2

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

**Q. (Off microphone.)**

DANIELLE COLLINS: Yeah, I think physically, yeah, played really well. Yeah, I'm not really sure. (Laughter.)

**Q. When you say you're not really sure, is it like you're stumped as to how this has happened or you're just stumped as to articulate how it's happened?**

DANIELLE COLLINS: Well, I think a little bit of both, right? I mean, I'm playing well. You know, I feel like anything I say, I don't want to be tooting my own horn here. I want to be able to articulate some thoughts on the match.

I'm curious to hear what you guys have to ask. (Laughter.)

**Q. How would you compare how you're playing now to other times when you have played well in your career? Is there a certain feeling you have at this moment? Is it different, better, worse than other times when you've gotten on rolls?**

DANIELLE COLLINS: Yeah, I mean, I think a lot of these sports psychology books and things that they talk about, like, high-level sports, they talk about being in the zone, almost feeling like you're hitting beach balls, I think it can feel like that at times. That's a good thing.

In other times that I have played well and have had deep runs in tournaments, it's been like that, and then, you know, in other times, there's days, it's like going out to the golf range and having a bad day and you're missing shots.

But right now I'm timing the ball really well. I think I have made some physical adjustments too that's kind of helped me be able to kind of control my shots more and hit them with more accuracy and precision. I have been working on that for a while.

It's hard to sometimes make those types of changes. They're not big changes but small changes. So I think that that's kind of just helped me, like, get a little bit more consistent in these points and bring it in the court a little more.

**Q. These little changes, is it something you thought of, someone else thought of it? Is it, like you said, at this stage of your career when you do have to make a change like that, how hard is it? And your dog, you mentioned that you have your dog with you when you're close to home, that it feels just more comfortable maybe to be in Florida, close to home, you can bring your doggie along. What's your dog's name and what kind of dog is it?**

DANIELLE COLLINS: Yeah, so two different questions. So going back to the first part of that, I don't want to give too many of my secrets away, right? Yeah, but I can give a little bit of insight.

I feel like one of the things that I have been working on over the course of my career is having good body control. I think in our sport and it being a rotational sport, the tendency to rotate and to use a lot of power and force -- well, I'm still doing that. I think I have improved a lot of my core strength. So that's helped me be able to stay a little bit more still. So I think that's helping.

That is something I think a lot of coaches I have worked with over the years and people in general, like, even at a basic level, if you're taking tennis lessons, they tell you to do. Sometimes it's the really simple things you have to kind of remind yourself of. I hear coaches on court with really high-level players here telling their players to stay still and keep their body under control, and I hear that at the country club when you're playing next to a 4.5 player and they're working on their forehand.

So, yeah, I have been working on that. I have gotten that idea -- I have been in tennis for a while, so yeah.

And the second part, Quincy is my little dog. He is very adorable. He is a sophisticated gentleman. I call him Mr. Q. He has been here with me during the entire event.



He's at day care right now. He is a very spoiled gentleman with a very big personality.

I'm sure some of you have probably seen him running around here at some point, but he doesn't come with on the match days because he's my Velcro dog and he doesn't like leaving my side. He has a lot of anxiety when even if, like, he was sitting there and I'm here, he doesn't want the distance.

Yeah, so he's my little baby. He's lived a very spoiled life. I like to cook. Quincy gets to partake in some pretty fabulous meals.

**Q. What kind of dog is Quincy?**

DANIELLE COLLINS: Quincy is a mix. Yeah, he's cute. I think he's mostly poodle. Yeah, he's a cutie. I'm sure people can check him out on my Instagram.

**Q. I saw on television you were saying that these kind of positive results don't really make you change your plans for the future in terms of leaving the sport at the end of the year. But has it actually, in a way, has it helped you, do you think, psychologically? Do you play with more freedom when you don't have the stress of looking beyond the horizon as much?**

DANIELLE COLLINS: Well, I mean, I guess it just depends, right? You can think about it in many different ways. I don't really think about it that much, to be honest.

I mean, I feel as a professional athlete you're so consumed in your day-to-day and your routines, getting ready, preparing, recovering, maintaining your strength, all of the things that go into our day-to-day can be really consuming.

I don't really have a lot of time, quite honestly, to be, Well, you know, I'm retiring at the end of the year, so yeah, I think I don't have as much pressure on me because I only have a few more tournaments left.

Or I could sit there and be like, Well, I've only got a few tournaments left. If I don't do this now, what the heck am I doing?

You can have different ways of thinking about it. But I just don't really feel like I have the time to kind of sit and ponder and get too deep into the thoughts, because honestly, yeah, the day-to-day, like, with us as athletes, is a lot. I feel like the fans don't get to see that as much.

It's more than a 9:00 to 5:00 job, because it's just around the clock. Honestly, I'm just so consumed with doing all the things I need to do to get prepared for the next day.

Yeah, I mean, I think I feel pretty relaxed, because that could be due to a number of things. I've got a new hobby. I'm playing some more golf, running more, Pilates, all of these different things.

My dog is here. I'm feeling relaxed because I get to be with him at night. I don't know. Yeah. But it's a good question. I'm still trying to figure it out too (smiling).

**Q. In January, the loss to Iga, from the outside it would have been very easy for us, for me, I guess I'll speak for me, to assume, wow, it's going to take her a while to get over that, she was so close, things like that. But you continue to play so well, especially in the Middle East, and bounce back well. I'm curious, given the circumstances of everything, why do you think that was, that it didn't sink you in a way that it could have sunk any player?**

DANIELLE COLLINS: Well, I do think, you know, I am a professional athlete, and I think professional athletes have a different mindset between success and failures.

The reality is is that match was very close. I had some opportunities. Iga played extremely well. I didn't do a whole lot wrong. Iga played at a high level. The reality is that she's No. 1 in the world. She has a whole list of accomplishments. I was the underdog in that match. I was not supposed to win that match.

You know, I think it would be worse if I lost to someone who was ranked outside of the top 200. It would be worse if I lost 0-0. It would have been worse if I would have rolled my ankle.

So at the end of the day, yeah, the match was close, but it's really, like, we have tournaments every single week, and I don't think anyone's defined by one match or one loss, and I don't think anyone's -- you know, it's certainly something I haven't been hanging my head up over.

I think people that aren't as involved in professional sports and maybe fans probably think, ouch, like, that really hurts. But we are really resilient. All of us are. I think our ability to recover quickly from when things don't go our way, whether it's a tough couple points on court, whether it's a tough match, whether it's injuries, whether it's losing a loved one, we are very resilient people. I think that's the biggest difference is that for professional athletes, we have a totally different mindset with how we deal with success and failures.

**Q. I wanted to ask, back to the question that was asked, what if you just have a great year right now,**



**you're on this roll right now, if you just have tremendous results, is the decision to retire, is that a hard decision or is that a soft decision that could maybe change based on how you do this year?**

DANIELLE COLLINS: You know, I find it so interesting, because I kind of felt like when I was announcing my retirement, everyone has been so, like, congratulating me and so excited for me, but then on the other hand, I feel like I have had to justify my decision a lot. I feel like if I was a guy, I probably wouldn't have to justify it that much.

**Q. I don't think you would. If you're playing really well, or you're a guy or a girl, if any guy is playing at the top of his game and rolling through tournaments the way you are, you would think, I don't know, maybe there is more in me, maybe I should stay. I don't view it as a gender thing.**

DANIELLE COLLINS: No, but I think it's really interesting how in a lot of different situations I have had to kind of justify the reasons behind retirement. I'm living with a chronic inflammatory disease that affects your ability to get pregnant, and so that's, like, a deeply, like, personal situation. I've kind of explained that from time to time.

Yeah, I think it's a good question, but I think at the end of the day, like, my choice, like, this is my personal choice. This is so much more to do than just tennis and my career.

I'm enjoying my career. I'm having a lot of fun. I love coming out here and competing. But at the end of the day, like, this is a really big, like, life decision, and yeah, I think that that should be, like, pretty understandable, yeah.

**Q. That thing you said before about mindset and being resilient and things like that, did it take you a while to learn that, or did you always have that from the moment you started on the tour? And what was the process like of adopting that?**

DANIELLE COLLINS: Yeah, I think as we go from, like, being young juniors and learning how to play tennis and then competing, right, and at a young age in junior tennis, you play a lot of tournaments. A lot of those weeks you're not always winning. You have sometimes, you know, more tournaments you're losing in than winning.

Then you go to college and you play for a team, you play for something bigger than yourself. I think through each different stage, you're trying to evolve mentally, right? You're trying to make improvements in your game physically. You're trying to evolve tactically. You're trying to expand your skillset. But the mental part is, like, one of the most important things.

I do think that the evolution of that for me has been something that I have focused on just like pretty much every other player on tour. I don't think that when you start your career you always handle wins and losses in a way that is super healthy. I think it can take some type of -- it takes a concentrated effort. It takes reframing how we talk about wins and losses, how we sit down and talk about the matches and draw on the positives and the negatives or the things that we can improve on.

So it has been something I have spent a lot of time working on. I think with me I definitely have that kind of perfectionist mentality, and I'm very hyper-focused when I'm out on court. So a lot of times it's, you know, present, present, present, being in that, but then sometimes when you have a hard loss it can be really challenging. You can feel kind of down in the dumps for a few weeks.

So that has been something I have had to work on, I think just like most of the players on tour. Because it's not easy. This is an individual sport, too. You don't have the camaraderie of being on the team and having people to kind of pick you up and lift your spirits when you're down in the dumps.

So I have had to spend a lot of time working on that. I give a lot of credit to the different sports psychologists I have worked with, because I feel they have been able to help kind of train my mind to have a healthy outlook on wins and losses and that kind of thing.

**Q. Looking ahead, obviously you could play Jess in an all-kind-of Floridian semifinal in Miami or you could play Alexandrova. Could you talk about what it would be like to play Jess for one of the biggest semifinals in your career and then Alexandrova who has been a wrecking ball so far.**

DANIELLE COLLINS: Yeah, Jess and I have known each other for a long time, both from Florida and have had some really great battles. I played Jess here I think once before and then obviously many times outside of this event.

We have been teammates. We have a lot of fun together. Yeah, it will be a great battle.

Against Alexandrova, she has had an incredible run and incredible couple of months. It's been great to see how her game has evolved over the years, and the way that she's been playing has been really exciting.

No matter who I play, it's going to be a battle. Yeah, I just look forward to getting out there and playing in another semifinal.

