

BNP Paribas Open

Monday, March 11, 2024

Maria Sakkari

Press Conference



M. SAKKARI/C. Garcia

6-3, 6-4

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

Q. Congratulations.

MARIA SAKKARI: Thank you.

Q. Fourth straight win over Caroline. Talk about your form in the match today, the keys to it, and how it feels to be in the round of 16.

MARIA SAKKARI: I would say I had a clear plan on what I have to do. Obviously I'm not going to give you details.

But, you know, serving was something very important today, because she takes a lot of risk when she returns, and she also has a good serve.

Just holding serve. Obviously, at the beginning, it wasn't ideal. But then just getting that break back and then just finding a way to hold serve and breaking her in -- what was it, 2-All? Yeah, no. I don't remember. 3-2? 3-2 in the first. In the first.

It's just that, you know, sometimes she's so aggressive that you know what to expect, but at the same time you don't know what to expect.

But you have to buy into the fact that you have to make balls and you have to make it physical. That's what I do when I play players like her.

Q. I saw you practicing earlier today. Looked like you were working really hard on the practice court. How do you balance getting warmed up and practicing on a match day when it's this hot out and not exhausting yourself?

MARIA SAKKARI: It looked hard?

Q. Looked like it was hard.

MARIA SAKKARI: Okay, okay (smiling). That's good to know.

Well, I usually do, like, 30, 40 minutes' warmup. That's not too hard for me. If you, you know, think about the fact that I do my preseasons four-and-a-half hours on the court only and then plus fitness.

I like the heat, I like to be out there, just not against the sun so I don't get wrinkles (smiling).

But I don't mind it, like, I like it because then I feel like I'm awake, I'm ready to go. I just don't like it when it's too relaxed, too quick. I just like to, you know, sweat it out and be ready for the match.

Q. It's so soon into this new coaching relationships to maybe point to any big changes. How is the day-to-day different after being in one routine for so long?

MARIA SAKKARI: I just feel very relaxed with David. He's very laid back. That's something that really helps me, being a very stressful person. I think I haven't really stressed for anything the last few days I have been with him (smiling).

He's so funny. I think he's one of the funniest guys I've ever met in my life. I'm laughing all the time.

I just really enjoy my time with him on and off the court. He's a very nice guy. You know, which is the most important thing, but he's also an amazing coach. Like, he keeps it very simple, and that's what I like, because I don't think I'm a player that you have to complicate things.

So I like the way it's going. You know, I hope he does too (smiling).

Q. You were talking about Garcia and how she plays, which is a very unique way. I remember one time talking to Swiatek about Garcia and she was, like, I don't understand how somebody can play that aggressively and be willing to accept that level of risk. I'm kind of curious, when you see how all-out

aggressive she can play, could you ever imagine being able to play that way?

MARIA SAKKARI: No. No way (smiling).

Q. Why?

MARIA SAKKARI: I just, I also don't understand how she does it, and I just feel like she's one of a kind.

When she's on, it's impossible to play her. That's why she has those tournaments, like Cincinnati, where she's unplayable, or the Finals. You know, there is nothing you can do. She's just swinging at every ball. She's just very talented. You know, she's gifted.

But I could not do it. I think that that's a game style that you either have it or not. I don't feel like now if I was to go and try and play like that it would be very successful.

Q. Do you think you couldn't do it because you mentally couldn't get yourself into that, or because technically -- she said she can't return serve taking two steps back.

MARIA SAKKARI: I mean, that's acceptable.

Q. Like she has to be that close. If it's a technical reason why you wouldn't be able to do it, or if it's totally I just would not be comfortable playing that way?

MARIA SAKKARI: It's more of a game style I wouldn't be comfortable playing. I just feel like she's tall, she's long. I don't feel like we are any similar in that.

I just feel like if you want to play that way, your body type has to be in a certain way. You can't have someone that is 165 playing this way, or even like my height, 170. Sorry. I just don't know the American way.

Q. We'll convert it later.

MARIA SAKKARI: Yeah (smiling).

She's one of a kind. That's for sure. Okay, you have Giorgi, maybe she plays similar, but obviously Caroline is a lot more successful. Not being disrespectful to Giorgi, but Caroline has had more success. When she's on she's one of the toughest players to play, for sure.

Q. Just in terms of making it into the round of 16 and getting these wins kind of quietly in a lot of ways, does it feel big? Does it not feel big?

MARIA SAKKARI: It does feel, it feels good just to get a couple of wins and comfortable wins, you know, under my belt, and just feel like, you know, I'm getting to where I was before.

Obviously there is a long way to go. Round of 16 is not like a "wow" result, but at the same time, I just feel like I'm doing what is right and I feel like good things are going to come, as I told you previously.

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