

BNP Paribas Open

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Marta Kostyuk

Press Conference



M. KOSTYUK/A. Potapova

6-0, 7-5

THE MODERATOR: Marta, first off, congratulations. Can you talk about your feelings reaching this stage of a 1000.

MARTA KOSTYUK: Definitely great (smiling). Very interesting match against Anastasia today, because I lost to her twice before, so was very ready for the match. But good feeling.

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

Q. Like you said, the last time you played her, it was very close. Did you learn anything from that that made things difficult for her today?

MARTA KOSTYUK: I think when I was playing her in Birmingham, I was very different player also. Definitely a different match, different conditions, as well, because we were playing on grass. Not easy to play her on grass.

Definitely learned some things, but it was a new match and I just, you know, had to be ready for whatever is coming.

Q. May I ask what was going through your mind at a set and 3-0? Seemed like a bit of a stressful finish to the match.

MARTA KOSTYUK: I mean, I'm playing quarterfinals of 1000, so it cannot be relaxing (smiling).

I mean, as I said on court, you know, 6-0, 3-0, is not very good score, honestly, because, especially against good players, you know.

So I think obviously it's better than just 6-0. We were just talking about this with Sandra after the match, that, you know, I'm very happy with how I handled everything, because yeah, I mean, she was missing a lot in the beginning, and then, you know, she kind of tried to find her way, but I didn't let her. So I think that's the biggest achievement anyways.

Q. You said on court if someone had told you, I don't know, if you said 10 days or two weeks ago that you were going to be in the semifinals here, you wouldn't have believed them. Why? Why not?

MARTA KOSTYUK: Well, because in Doha and Dubai I was very sick, so I didn't know how physically ready I'm going to be, because I think I had COVID, I don't know if I did, but, I mean, a lot of people had very similar symptoms that was COVID.

Yeah, I was just, I couldn't breathe for, like, one week at all. Then, yeah, playing final in San Diego, it was a great week, but then, you know, here is even more difficult than in San Diego, because the draw is bigger, the matches are bigger. I didn't know how I am going to handle all this.

Obviously you never know. Like, I feel like of course when you are consistently top-5 player, you are not as surprised with your results.

But honestly, for me, the person who is competing and trying to achieve something, there are a lot of things that have to align in order for you to succeed, and there are not many people in the world who are better than me in my job.

So yeah, I never take it for granted, because you might not have it tomorrow. I'm taking every chance. Obviously things are aligning now, you know. You need to find every day for them to keep on aligning.

I hope in the future I will not be as, you know, surprised and as -- how do you say it? -- yeah, as surprised about my results. I just want to keep going and seeing how far I can go.

Q. My question is your beginning of the year since you also made your first quarterfinal in a slam tournament and then here, you are in semifinal. You already have more points in the ranking than last year. Wonder if that surprise you or is something, I don't know, you were kind of forcing or expecting from yourself beginning of the season?

MARTA KOSTYUK: I was not expecting anything



definitely, because I had a lot of seasons on tour, and to be honest, they were not going the way I would want them to go most of the time.

Yeah, I mean, I was just, you know, I kept on working all these years and hoping that some day it will actually align, as I said.

So it did, and I'm very happy with the people I'm surrounded with right now. You know, we are just patiently keep working. You know, as we say here before every match, even if I lose, we will wake up happy tomorrow, because it was a good couple of weeks for us, you know.

I think that's the most important thing, to not lose, like, general perspective. Yeah, I have a great start of the year, but this is what I'm working for and, you know, I don't want to look at this as, like, Wow, I did already so many points more than last year. Wow, you know, it's only March. I don't want to -- and I don't look at it like this. I just do what I love.

Q. Marta, why do you say that 6-0, 3-0 is not a good score?

MARTA KOSTYUK: Because there is a very fine line between being too passive and kind of let another player get back in the game. Because you are up with a very big gap, but at the same time you were in the position where every point if you lose it feels a lot, because you're like, Oh, it's getting closer.

Yeah, I think if you consistently keep on doing what you are supposed to do, it's going to eventually, like, align and you're going to win the match.

But a lot of times, I'm not just talking about me but generally, you want to just put the ball in and wait and maybe she's gonna miss. Oh, I don't want to miss, you know.

So it's about perspective. It's not an easy score, because you are winning but tennis match is like a little life. It has ups and downs. It can turn around very quickly, especially against, like, solid players.

So it's not that I'm playing and thinking about it, oh, it's going to turn around now, obviously not, but it's just not an easy score because you are doing certain things and the other person is missing a lot, and then the moment they start to put more balls, like a little more in, you're, like, Am I doing something wrong? Things are changing? And you need to adjust quicker.

You need to stay in the game all the time. It's not an easy

score. Especially I would say not even 6-0, 3-0, but 6-0. Was very important for me to start the set very well. I think that's what saved me at the end, because the gap was still too big, you know, for her to come back. So I'm happy with that.

Q. Can you talk a bit about Sandra and what she brings to you on and off the court? Are you surprised that there is no more woman's coaches on tour?

MARTA KOSTYUK: I mean, we work on a lot of things at the same time in different aspects of my personality even, not even on court.

We do everywhere little by little so I'm not overwhelmed with changes, in a way. All of us are changing all the time, so it's just a matter of how much and in which direction, in a way. I'm very happy it's growing little by little everywhere.

About woman's coaches on tour? I mean, I don't know. I'm not that surprised, because tennis is a very demanding and difficult sport, because we are traveling, like, 45, 50 weeks a year. I mean, yeah, depends where you live and where you practice, but a lot. You know, someone has to stay home with the kids (smiling). I mean, what can I say?

Yeah, and especially like these years, Sandra's age, she's 32, and it's kind of like, you know, it's only couple of years until she has to decide if she wants to keep on coaching or if she wants to have a family. Because you cannot do both really, especially when you have, like, little baby. What are you going to do with the baby? Where are you going to put it, you know?

And of course for tennis players, for girls, it's easier in a way when you are, you know, getting pregnant, giving birth, slowly coming back, you have a nanny and travel. Coaches are in a little bit different position.

I'm surprised and I'm not at the same time, because I just think, you know, we're talking also about it with Sandra that women coaches need more confidence. Like, they need to be more convincing that they know what they are doing. Because the bar is not that high in woman's tennis, in woman's coaching world. Don't get me wrong, there are a lot of good people and nice coaches, but these things are not, I'm not saying -- don't get me wrong. I'm not saying the people are bad, but it's just really not that big of a gap, you know.

So would be nice to see, but, you know, I think it will still take some years. And clearly, you know, the coaches that will travel in the future, they will, yeah, I mean, either their kids are grown up already so they don't have to stay home

or they just decide to not push through their career rather than the family. So it's personal choice.

Q. After the San Diego final, you made some very moving comments, great comments. Could you expand on that a little bit? At home is there still a lot of fear day to day? Do people take it for granted? Does the world take it for granted? And finally, if I could just ask, are you disappointed that my country not been able to get you more aid?

MARTA KOSTYUK: It's a good question. Yeah, I mean, you never know what's going to happen tomorrow. I think it's pretty much, like, I mean, all the people have this feeling, but we're having this feeling a little bit extra, because it's kind of like our lives are not in our hands, in a way. We don't have that much control over things.

Yeah, I mean, I honestly cannot speak for people who are living in Ukraine because I'm not living there. I was just visiting couple of times. And I feel like people are just, you know, it's very tiring and difficult to live in these conditions for years already. It's just exhausting for everyone.

Yeah, I feel like the world doesn't understand how quickly things can turn around. You know, you think it's 6-0, 3-0, but in fact, it's much closer, you know.

I'm doing everything, I feel like I'm doing everything I can in order to -- wherever I have influence, okay. But, you know, you still feel like it's not enough, I should do more, what else can I do and so on, and try to talk to people. But it's very difficult to understand what we are living through and how many things were breached and memorandums and all the things we were promised.

You know, it's just painful to live through this, you know. Obviously it's very good lessons for the whole country to, like, rely on ourselves and, you know, to be very nice to everyone, but think about ourselves first. I really hope that people just, you know, just take it -- it's a very big thing to ask, but a lot of things are happening for a reason. So I just hope that we can learn as much as possible so it doesn't ever happen again.

Yeah, hopefully we can get more help around the world. That would be great too.

Q. My question sounds so frivolous now, but your outfit today really stood out, and especially in the wind. I'm wondering how much of a choice do you get in what you wear and how do you balance function with the look that you want and the style?

MARTA KOSTYUK: I don't advise on, like, picking colors

and, like, what fit are we taking and so on. So I'm getting -- so I have, like, a file of things that will be throughout the year, and then if they want some specific pieces, for example, I tried them on, and then we work around it for the fit to be better and what to remove, what to add and so on.

Yeah, I mean, I think I participate a lot, because when I had contracts with other companies, I didn't participate as much, not even close. So that feels great, because yeah, I mean, I have to compete in it. I obviously wanted to look good too (smiling).

I don't feel like it's something difficult for me to do, because I'm very open and I say right away, Listen, this is too short, this is too light, this is... And so on and so on.

I'm very happy with, like, general fits, like, with the looks. Yeah, I mean, I hope people buy and look great and enjoy, you know. Because also a lot of dresses, you know, you can wear them even outside. There are some dresses that I just wear, like, to go out for dinner or whatever. It's, like, very cool, because you can do both, in a way.

I think that's very beautiful for the sport and very elegant. Yeah, I try to bring that in more (smiling).

Q. Wilson designed your wedding dress; is that right?

MARTA KOSTYUK: Yes.

Q. What was the collaboration process like? How did that relationship work out, who designed the dress, and what extent you had input on that?

MARTA KOSTYUK: We were sitting in Wimbledon house and was my mom, my manager, and we're looking for places where the wedding would be, and our first pick was Tuscany, but it was too cold at the end so we decided not to go there. Anyways, we were picking places.

I was, like, you know, I don't really care how my dress is going to look like. I didn't have a specific design or dress that I was, like, oh, this is my dream, I want to only have this dress, and so on. I was, like, why not let Wilson design my dress? Joelle, she's the main designer, I'm in a very good relationship with her. Then we spoke to Wilson -- I mean, my manager spoke to Wilson, and they were, like, yeah, let's do this. Joelle is excited.

So we had a couple of calls, we had some ideas. First call was like, I don't know what I want. You can do whatever you want. Give me ideas. Then we started, okay, this I like, this I don't like. And then we had, first call I was in D.C., was like beginning of August, and I had first fitting in

Beijing, because the dress was made in a factory in China.

Yeah, I mean, we did some fits, we added some things. Then I was supposed to stay for two more tournaments but I came back home. I received my dress by post, I think like 10 days or one week before my wedding, and it didn't fit me. I had to go and I was, like, Wow, we have no time.

So they took my -- how you call this? -- the measurements.

Then when the dress came back, it was too big. I was, like, after I finished in Beijing, I had, like, two or three weeks until the wedding. I was like, don't gain weight, don't gain weight, you had measurements when you were, like, certain shape.

I was really scared. Then when the dress came and I tried it on, it was so big, I was, like, Okay, I have to do some changes. And, I mean, at the end it was great. Like, it was not much to do, but it was just still very stressful, because I was, like, I don't know anyone in Monaco who can fix my dress, I don't even know where to go.

It was really an experience but it was really cool one and I'm very grateful they agreed to do this.

Q. You face Iga next in the semifinal.

MARTA KOSTYUK: Yeah.

Q. Can you talk about what you need to do to be able to get that win and also obviously what you make of her as No. 1 and as an opponent.

MARTA KOSTYUK: I mean, she's World No. 1. I think I need to do good, at least good. Let's not put expectations too high. Great competitor, she's been on top of the game for two years already.

Yeah, I practiced with her in Doha, I was really looking forward to actually play her in the match. I think it will be a great match.

I don't know what else to say, because I'm excited, and I played her in Paris three years ago, and it was a bit different match. We were both in different positions. Even more exciting now (smiling).

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