

BNP Paribas Open

Thursday, March 14, 2024

Maria Sakkari

Press Conference



M. SAKKARI/E. Navarro

5-7, 6-2, 6-4

THE MODERATOR: That was a tough match but you're into the semifinals. Your thoughts on your performance today.

MARIA SAKKARI: I think it was one of the best matches I have played in a while. Probably last time I played a match at that level was Washington against Jess, so it's been a while.

I'm just very happy that I'm finding form again and finding myself again.

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

Q. What meant more to you, the form or the result?

MARIA SAKKARI: I would say the form, just because I felt like, you know, even if I had lost, I would still have a lot of positives to take away with me. But obviously the fact that I found a way to just, you know, close it out and just take that win against a player that is playing so well right now, you know, it means a lot to me, because as I said, it's been a while.

Now it's been, like, two, three good matches in a row. I cannot remember the last time I played that well in a lot of matches.

Q. Quite a match. Are you watching videos of yourself this week? If you are, do you see something different, either like in your play or just in your demeanor, or do you feel anything different when...

MARIA SAKKARI: Do you see anything different (smiling)?

Q. I do, actually, yeah. I mean, I don't know.

MARIA SAKKARI: Well, no, I haven't watched any highlights of my matches. Only the ones that I see on Instagram.

I just feel like, you know, I'm really buying into the new -- not the new, because we haven't really done any changes, but just trying, you know, play the way I played two years ago when I had a very good run, just going to the net and being aggressive and just going after my serve.

Just being brave, basically. Not playing to lose; playing to win. It has really helped me this week.

Q. After your first match here, you said you were almost a little bit nervous to play in front of David for the first time. Are you fully settled into that now?

MARIA SAKKARI: I think so (smiling). I don't really think about it. When I walk on the court or when I walked on the court the last few matches, you know, obviously girls, you know, we overthink those things and we just make it a lot more complicated.

Of course that first match was not ideal. But again, I mean, he has a lot of experience. He's not going to be, like, what the hell am I watching?

Q. Schedule-wise, it's a little bit tricky tournament because the first week is kind of slow. You have day off between matches. But all of a sudden, you have to play three matches in a row against tough players. So physically or, like, mentally, how do you feel about that?

MARIA SAKKARI: Well, I was actually trying to remember the last couple of years how the schedule was. Was it the same, was it different? I just don't remember.

You know, it is what it is. There are tournaments that we play every single day, like the 500s, so I'm kind of used to playing every day. Obviously, you know, I finished late today, not too late, like I finished a lot later in other tournaments.

It's fine. You know, you cannot have, like, a perfect tournament. There are always going to be things that are not going your way. Maybe that's schedule, maybe that's the weather. And if I have to play three days in a row, that's what I train for. If I cannot play three days in a row,

then I have to go back home and train a little bit more.

Q. Can you look ahead to Coco, please.

MARIA SAKKARI: Yeah, I mean, I can, because I know I'm playing her. It's going to be very tough, but I'm playing great tennis right now. Just, you know, going to challenge myself.

Q. Are you, like, aware of trying to be on sort of better behavior with a new coach in terms of you used to have some spirited interchanges with your box?

MARIA SAKKARI: Oh, when?

Q. Just with Tom.

MARIA SAKKARI: Like, in the past? Oh, yeah.

Q. And when you have a new coach like this, do you, like, Okay, be nice or be... You're a nice person. You know what I'm saying.

MARIA SAKKARI: I know what you're saying (smiling).

The thing is that it's a lot different now, and I feel like that's something that I want to have for the rest of my career. I just don't want it to be just because he's a new person in my box, I'm behaving well.

No, I'm working on that, and I think that I'll get there. I don't have any doubts.

Q. Looking ahead to facing Coco, what is the key when you play somebody who can match you for physicality, for speed, you know, for where maybe your physical advantage is not as big as it might be against other players? What's the key to facing her? It's going to be the eighth time you guys played.

MARIA SAKKARI: I would say that was the case today, too. Emma, she's very fast. She gets a lot of balls. She's very solid. She doesn't give a lot of unforced errors and gifts.

When you play Coco, you have to accept that she's going to get two, three more balls than anyone else. You just have to be patient. That's what I did today in order to win today's match. I just feel that's my mindset going into tomorrow's match against her.

Well, it's nice to have girls that are actually athletic and fit. Then you feel like, okay, it's time to challenge myself and play against someone that is equally as fit as I am.

Q. At one point the camera showed David giving you a timeout symbol, I think when you were about to go for a second serve. What is he telling you? Just to pause for a moment or what does a timeout mean in tennis?

MARIA SAKKARI: I don't know. I probably didn't see.

Q. Go down the T?

MARIA SAKKARI: Probably go down the T. It's good my opponent didn't see. I know what -- it was the last point. It's okay. It's okay. I went down the T, and I actually won the point. It's all good.

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