

WTA Finals

Saturday, November 13, 2021

Guadalajara, Mexico

Paula Badosa

Press Conference



P. BADOSA/M. Sakkari

7-6, 6-4

THE MODERATOR: Paula, a great match from you today. Talk us through your thoughts on the match and what you think you did very well today.

PAULA BADOSA: Well, I think it was quite a tough match. I served well. I fight for every point. I knew was going to be a battle against Maria.

I think I stayed aggressive. I was moving well. When you win these kind of matches I think you have to do a little bit of everything well. I think the key was a little bit in the important moments I was quite brave and I played very good.

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. You mentioned in 'the important moments'. It seemed like earlier in the year - maybe you'll disagree with this - you were very close, but in the important moments you weren't winning the points. What's different now that is making you have your way when it counts most? Are you thinking differently? Are you approaching those moments differently? Is it just experience?

PAULA BADOSA: Experience. I was going to say that. I think it's experience. To be honest, I'm quite new. I was quite new in the beginning of the year. I was 70, 80 in the world. It was one year of being top hundred. COVID happened. I was quite new on the circuit, on the tour. I think I won my first top 10 win, I don't know, maybe four months ago. Everything was very new for me. I needed experience. I needed to pass through all that.

I think when I got the experience, all of that things, it went well. I think I'm quite competitive. I think I needed a little bit to adjust myself, to be here and play these kind of matches, to learn.

Q. There was a lot to adapt to today: playing in the

daytime, windy, playing an unfamiliar opponent. What was the toughest thing to adapt to?

PAULA BADOSA: Yeah, when I went to warm up, my first thought was, Oh, my God, I have so many things today to adapt. It was going to be a challenge because I went to court and I was like, Okay, it's windy. I play in the day, so the ball flies more. I play against an opponent, I don't know her. I'm playing for the semifinals. So many things.

But that's why I'm super proud of myself, because I went through all that. I think we did a quite good match. It's always tough to do good matches in altitude. I think we both fight a lot. I think it was quite good one. I came through all that thoughts. I'm really happy that I could play a good level.

Q. Had you ever practiced with Maria before? What was it like adjusting to her ball?

PAULA BADOSA: Yeah, we practiced a few times lately. We know each other since long time. We practiced in Barcelona a lot of years. Yeah, I know Maria quite a lot.

At the beginning maybe I needed to adjust a little bit. For sure same as her. Was the same conditions. I had very clear in my head it was going to be tough, that she was going to fight for every point. That's why from the 5-2, 5-All, it didn't surprise me because I know Maria, she's like that.

Q. I'm wondering about the importance of sports psychology in your development. What is the most important thing that you've learned?

PAULA BADOSA: A lot of things. I don't think I learned one thing, one specific thing. I've been through a lot during a lot of years.

I don't know if I want to call him psychologist. I call him maybe like my best friend. I call him anytime. He's there for me 24/7. We have an amazing relationship. He helps me with my fears, when I have a problem, when I'm too nervous, anything. He helps me a lot.



I think when you're in this kind of level, you have a lot of expectations, a lot of pressure. To have somebody that you can count on anytime, I think it's very important on these levels.

Q. How did you block the frustrations in the second set when you got a lot of breakpoints, couldn't break her serve? After you held your serve from love. How did you deal with that mentally?

PAULA BADOSA: Yeah, well, I'm quite emotional player. Sometimes I get angry. But it's not bad for me. Of course, if I get super angry, it's bad. Sometimes I need these kind of things to get loose, to play better. I think I play better when I'm a little bit angry (smiling).

Still, I think that game I had opportunities. But she played amazing breakpoints. The only thing I could do in that moment is accept it. That's what I did. I accept it. I thought, Okay, I still have a break up, and I have my serve, so try to stay focused, to believe on that, to go for it. That's what I did.

Q. You talked about adapting and accepting when things aren't going your way. To win Indian Wells requires a lot of ability to adapt and accept. You said today all of the things were managing on the court. Have you always been good at adapting and accepting the circumstances on the court? Is that one of the big things that you've really taken a step forward in this year?

PAULA BADOSA: No, to be honest I think I was super bad on that. Few years ago mentally I was a typical player: Oh, she can play good, but mentally she's so far away. She needs to improve a lot on that. I listened to that a lot.

I think maybe COVID helped me because I was two months at home and I started to work very hard on that because I didn't want to listen that anymore (smiling). I want to prove people wrong.

I did an extreme change. I pass from being super bad mentally. Now I think I'm maybe one of the best ones, or that's what I try. I fight for every point. I couldn't accept on myself not to do that. I think I did an amazing change on that.

I think it's one of the things that I'm more proud of myself because, of course, I improved on my tennis and physically. That's tough. But I think the toughest part to improve is on the mental game.

Q. On your next opponent, Iga, it sounds like you two have developed a bit of a rapport here in Guadalajara.

She's mentioned you a few times that she really enjoys you, got to talk to. What do you know of Iga off court and how you've gotten to know her? And on court, what do you think the match is going to be like?

PAULA BADOSA: Yeah, I knew Iga when we were both like outside the top hundred, maybe 180. We were playing quallies. She was always a very nice girl. We used to practice a lot. We had a good feeling.

For me was amazing when she won Roland Garros, the steps she was making. It didn't surprise me because I always thought she was special. For me, it's amazing.

She's a very nice girl. She's shy. I think when she competes, she totally transforms herself. I think that's how champions are.

I know the other day she had a bad day. It's normal. Sometimes in altitude you have to adapt yourself. I still think her game can suit quite well here, so let's see how she's feeling today. I expect a tough match.

We practice every tournament. Any tournament we're together, we practice. It's like a routine. I learn from her. I think we learn from each other. It's nice to have people like that on the top because maybe some years ago was complicated to have these kind of relationships. I'm happy I have Iga, Karolina, Barbora, Ons, I can call them my friends.

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