

Billie Jean King Cup

Wednesday, 9 November 2022

Glasgow, Scotland, UK

Emirates Arena

Team USA

Danielle Collins

Press Conference

D. COLLINS/M. Frech

6-4, 3-6, 7-6

Team USA - 1

Team Poland - 0

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. Congratulations on the win today. Just talk us through your assessment of the performance. Looked like a great start, but the longer it went on, it felt like more and more of a battle and you becoming more of a frustrated figure on the court.

DANIELLE COLLINS: Yeah. You know, I think when you're playing for your country and your team, you want to do the best you can. I think when you're not playing your best tennis, it can be a little bit frustrating, especially with the challenges she was presenting me with. I think she was serving really well, placing it really well. It was hard to anticipate where she was going to go.

Yeah, she just made a lot of balls and really made me play a lot of really long points. Yeah, I kind of had to run down a lot of shots and had to be selective at times too, because she was anticipating, even though I was playing pretty aggressive, she was anticipating a lot of shots that would normally be winners and making me win the points three or four times.

I think any time you play against someone like that, it can be a little bit frustrating and challenging, especially because, you know, we are here playing for our country and our team, and we want to do the best we can. I felt like today I sometimes didn't have my timing and was missing some shots that I would normally make.

Yeah, I just kind of let that get to me a little bit and have to try and continue to work on that and stay positive in those



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moments.

Q. I think afterwards you talked about you just wanted to win for your team. Did that feel like that inhibited your performance today as you put a little bit more pressure on yourself than usual?

DANIELLE COLLINS: I don't think it necessarily inhibited me. I think if anything it kind of motivated me to get through the finish line even more, because a lot of the girls on the team I grew up. We have known since we were little and have been great friends.

So I don't want to let them down. I want to be able to, yeah, be able to get through the finish line, but also I was thinking about Maddie going on court. And I was, like, Gosh, I hope she's not watching a lot of these shots I should be making, and I hope I don't, yeah, kind of inspire a lot of not-so-great mistakes on court.

So, no, I don't think it inhibited. I think it motivated me a lot to just try to get the win even more, because I think a lot of times if you're just playing for yourself, you know, you could easily say, You know what, she's serving too well and making some really good shots, and I could have just rolled over and in many ways let her beat me.

But I think I really had to tough it out and, yeah, I just felt like I really kind of had to scrap it out today in ways that maybe I haven't had to do this year. Just was a much scrappier match.

Q. As you say, sounds like you are quite frustrated with obviously the way you played, but how do you take the positives from coming through with the win, and, as you say, battling to get there?

DANIELLE COLLINS: Yeah, I mean, I think any time you play a match and it's not like your best performance or you feel like you could have done some things differently or, you know, like for me today, I was a little bit frustrated with how many errors I was coming up with, you know, you want to try to problem-solve through that, because if you don't, you know, the match can get away from you very quickly, especially when you're playing against someone

that's challenging you so much and playing so well.

I really had to work through that. I think any great champion of the game, too, would say that, you know, they never play a full tournament where they played perfect tennis. So I think a lot of like the great champions and people that I admire the most, that's what they are really good at, and what makes them so good is that they can win even when they are not playing their best tennis.

That's something that I need to continue to work on and try to be able to challenge myself a little bit mentally through those types of performances, because I think for me, I'm a pretty aggressive baseliner, I'd say. A lot of times I come out, I'm in full control, I get off to a really great start. Sometimes when I don't get off to as great of a start, I can kind of get down on myself. I just need to, yeah, just work on being a little bit more positive.

I think one of the good things that I did was, you know, I just tried to figure out a way to win. Sometimes I felt, you know, my timing was off and it still wasn't like the way I wanted to hit the ball or what I wanted to do with my serve or I wanted to do with my return, but I somehow kind of figured out a way to maneuver through all of it.

Q. What's the atmosphere like in the team? You guys seem to be really, really relaxed off court, but are you all, sort of with so many high-ranked players, are you all battling for those singles spots?

DANIELLE COLLINS: You know, to be honest, no. I think we have a really laid-back group. I think everyone is really happy to be here and grateful for the opportunity.

We do have some really high-ranked and successful players on the team, but I feel like all of us are very selfless and just want the team to do well and do whatever it takes for the team to be at its best.

To be really honest, I think, no, I think we have been really lucky in that sense, because I think everyone is just such a good team player.

Yeah, it's really nice being a part of a group like this, because you feel the support all the time, and, you know, I know I was thinking of my matches. It almost took some pressure off me today knowing that Maddie was going to play after me, and then we had the doubles, as well, because we have such strong players on the team that can pull us through.

So it gives us so much confidence, I think, when all of us are so strong. But, yeah, we just have such a nice group. Honestly, we have so much fun together. Practices have

been really laid back.

I think Maddie and I were playing points the other day, and I couldn't figure out if a ball was in or out, and then she hit a dropshot, and I was like laughing in the middle of the point. I'm like, I never would do that probably the rest of the year, but because I'm with my friends and people I have known for so long, it just makes it so much more enjoyable.

Q. I wanted to ask you a little bit about your serve. You talked about your ground game, but your first-serve percentage kind of went up in each of the three sets that you played. I'm curious, even at the end when you hit the ace, unreturnable, did you make any adjustments, like did you kind of feel a little off with the serve at the beginning? Did you make any adjustments kind of throughout the match?

DANIELLE COLLINS: Yeah, I'm glad you brought up that stat, because I have been trying to work on my serve a bit the last couple of weeks. That's been one of my goals. I actually didn't realize that stat, so that kind of makes me feel better about my performance.

You know, I kind of felt like I was doing the things that I have been working on technically and trying to execute that. You know, a lot of times when you work on something, it doesn't come right away. It takes weeks and months of trying to, you know, get the repetition in over and over before it comes automatic.

So I felt like I was sticking to the things that I have been working on in practice. I was really kind of locked in on that more so than, like, the percentage on my serve.

But I think it probably did get better as the match progressed, because I was hitting so many serves and really getting into rhythm. But, yeah, I think any time you have a stat like that, you can walk away feeling like positive about your performance, because, you know, I think all of us on tour are always trying to serve our best and work on that area.

Q. I was going to ask you about your stats on return of serve. Looked like you stood further back than I have seen you stand before. Was that because she was serving so well? Was that part of your approach to finding a way to win?

DANIELLE COLLINS: Yeah, for sure. I think any time you are playing against someone and they're serving well, whether they're serving at really high speeds or if they are just really great at placing and mixing up their service targets, I think the good returners mix their stances up a lot

to kind of give them different looks.

You know, a lot of times I like to stand close, but I think I have proven over the years I can actually return pretty well from the back of the court too. Sometimes you get a little bit more time. You can kind of have an extra second to read the toss and see where they are going.

Yeah, I think today I was just really trying to figure out where she was going with the serve, because she was mixing her targets really well. Yeah, I think a lot like this year when I have watched her play, I think her serve has improved so much, because even when we played in Guadalajara, I was really impressed with her placement and being able to get it consistently towards the sidelines and deep in the service box.

So I just wanted to give myself a little bit more room today.

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