

Billie Jean King Cup

Saturday, 12 November 2022

Glasgow, Scotland, UK

Emirates Arena

Team Australia

Storm Sanders

Press Conference

S. SANDERS/H. Watson

6-4, 7-6

Team Australia - 1

Team Great Britain - 0

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. Congratulations. First of all, what happened at the end of that first set? Clearly you came out afterwards, you looked as though you were not moving quite as well. What was the problem? Is it going to be a problem later on?

STORM SANDERS: Yeah, I just had a little bit of discomfort in my leg kind of towards the end of the first set, and I just -- yeah, it kind of was feeling a little bit worse, so I thought I just needed to get it looked at.

Yeah, physio came and delivered treatment and it kind of felt okay. The first few games it was a little uncomfortable, and, yeah, kind of just settled in. I was, like, Okay, you've got two choices. Either you keep worrying about it and not play or you just suck it up and get on with it.

That's what I did. It's feeling okay for now. If we have doubles, I'm ready to go.

Q. Was it your hip...

STORM SANDERS: Not going to say anything, just in case, you know. No, no, I'm feeling, yeah, pretty good.

Yeah, obviously visibly I think you could kind of tell I was a little bit uncomfortable, but, yeah, it kind of warmed up and obviously the adrenaline of playing. I felt like I needed to try and win this match for Australia.

Yeah, so it's feeling okay at the moment.



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Q. Ready for doubles if needed?

STORM SANDERS: Yep, I'm ready to go. Yeah, see how this singles goes and then, yeah, I'm ready to play doubles. I'm preparing. Yeah.

Q. Looking at this, this is now I think 5-1 now your record in singles, quite extraordinary. Can you reflect on that just a little and just tell us what you think about the fact that your record is so good now, 5-1?

STORM SANDERS: Yeah, I think so. I try not to, yeah, think about it that much. I just go out and do my thing on the court, and I think in this format and representing Australia, like, I think rankings go out the window. I don't look on paper what players have done. I think it's definitely a different type of pressure playing for your country.

I love it. For me, I thrive in this environment, having the team around us, not just on the court but the whole week before. Then obviously during my match, to be able to look at them and get the support and energy from them.

Yeah, for me, I don't know, maybe like it's not me playing. I feel like I'm representing Australia. So it takes away that like individual part, aspect of tennis, which obviously most of the year, that's what we are playing.

This week I'm just trying to do my part for the team, and, yeah, coming up with the wins is just the cherry on top, really.

Q. You finished very positively. Was that the difference, that you prepared to pull the trigger and hit winners when the pressure was on?

STORM SANDERS: Yeah, definitely I felt earlier on in the second set I was a little passive, yeah, just got caught a little bit behind the baseline. Ball was a little bit shorter, and Heather kind of stepped up a little bit and was being a bit more aggressive.

I really had to kind of back myself and my game. Obviously I play my best tennis when I'm kind of in control

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of the points and taking on the returns, taking on the short balls.

In that second set, once I got the break back, I felt it was so close and I was having chances on her serve. Couldn't quite get the break, but I felt confident that if we did go to a tiebreak that I had more chances on her serve than she had had on my serve.

So, yeah, in the tiebreak I was, like, Okay, this is the time. It's now or never. Play your game. It doesn't matter. If you miss, it's okay, because you're going to have the momentum and control going into a third set.

So I was kind of thinking along those lines and obviously, yeah, I think I hit five winners in that tiebreak. Yeah, and lucky it came off. But yeah, I just wanted to play my game and not worry about winning the match or whatever. Just see ball, hit ball. That's what I say, Pratty says, my coach. Just keep it simple and, yeah, go for it.

Q. Well done. How important is this, even though you are saying this is a format that you really relish, being in a team atmosphere, but how important is it to be able to take this into next year, this sort of confidence and form? How do you feel about that?

STORM SANDERS: Yeah, definitely gives me a lot of confidence heading into next year and getting ready for, you know, our Australian summer, as well. It's obviously really important for us Australian players.

Yeah, gives me a lot of confidence. You know, even this year my singles ranking has dropped, but I feel like I have had a lot of good experience. I qualified for I think four or five WTA events, played quite a lot of top-20 players, and had really good experiences on big courts.

I don't think, yeah, my ranking is a reflection of the level that I'm playing at. Now it's just a matter trying to work out the singles and doubles scheduling.

I think this year was a bit of trial and error with that. So now that I'm trying to play some big doubles events, my singles, I'm having to go back and play some ITFs, so I'm trying to figure out where I can fit both and then also manage my body and make sure I don't overcook it.

Yeah, definitely gives me a lot of confidence. After I get married next week, I will reassess my plan going forward for next year.

Q. Ajla was saying earlier in the week she thought you could be a great singles player. Does that give you confidence when you hear that from Australia's No. 1?

Do you think you can be?

STORM SANDERS: That's really nice to have heard her say that. I didn't know that.

Yeah, no, it does. Even having Sam this week as well. She's been saying a lot of really positive things to me, which is awesome. Yeah, I guess it's up to me to believe in myself. A lot of people around you can say that, but you've got to believe in yourself. And definitely these weeks give me that confidence.

Yeah, I've got to sit down and kind of reflect on this year and reflect on my goals and kind of work out what I want to do next year. Obviously, I want to do well in doubles and try and get my singles up. It is kind of hard to balance both, but once I kind of, yeah, sit down and have the time to reflect, I will figure out how I'm going to go about it next year.

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