

# Guadalajara Open

Thursday, 20 October 2022

Guadalajara, Jalisco, Mexico

## Maria Sakkari

Press Conference



M. SAKKARI/D. Collins

5-7, 6-3, 6-3

THE MODERATOR: Do you want to give us your thoughts on the match.

MARIA SAKKARI: Yes, it was a very close match obviously. Danielle, she's a player that she's very aggressive. She really likes to hit the ball hard. So I struggled a lot with her rhythm. Once I found my game style in the match, it was a lot easier for me.

But overall I didn't expect anything easy from her because she's an amazing player. Like, she has only played like 11 tournaments and she's almost top 10. It shows how good she is.

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

**Q. You are going to fight in the semifinals for the ticket to the WTA Finals. What do you think?**

MARIA SAKKARI: It's what I told earlier: it was meant to be. It was meant for me and Veronika to be in that spot, fighting each other to get that last spot.

I believe we're both going to be very motivated to get it. Obviously it's going to be my second time trying to qualify, her first time. But that doesn't change anything. I think we're going to give it all.

I think it's going to be nice for tennis in general, for women's tennis and for the spectators.

**Q. You said Mexican culture reminded you about Greek culture. What reminds you and what do you like the most about being here?**

MARIA SAKKARI: I see all the restaurants being full every day. That reminds me a lot of Greece. No matter if it's Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, they like to go out. They like their music. I mean, you dance more than us. Have this dancing culture more than in Greece.

You're outgoing. You like good food. You like the good life as we do in a good way, of course. I mean, everything. You're very passionate like we are.

Correct me if I'm wrong, but I think that's how Mexicans are, right (laughter)?

**Q. In the break you read a paper. What was written on it? Can we know?**

MARIA SAKKARI: No. It's a personal note for myself. I want to keep it personal because otherwise everyone will know what I write down. It's not for everyone to know.

**Q. For you?**

MARIA SAKKARI: Yes.

**Q. What is the reason for your celebration?**

MARIA SAKKARI: Nothing. It was very natural the last time. I said, I'll repeat it. It just came natural again. Nothing behind that, that it means something.

My sister was making fun of me. She was saying that every time you go to the bathroom, you are like doing rehearsals of how you're going to celebrate (smiling).

No, it was very natural.

**Q. What adjustments did you make in the second and third set?**

MARIA SAKKARI: I think that the first set was good up until when I got broken serving for the set. Just got a little bit loose. She overtook me.

I think I just kept the same tennis, kept the same mindset. Just fought hard. It was always going to be hard. Like, you don't get a lot of rhythm with her game.

As I said, she hits extremely hard. You have to be ready after every serve, after every return. It comes like lightning fast.



I really didn't change that much.

**Q. Do you like tacos?**

MARIA SAKKARI: I love tacos, yes.

**Q. Did you notice that Guadalajara fell in love with you tonight, all the crowd was cheering for you? Why do you think that was?**

MARIA SAKKARI: I don't know. You're going to tell me. I don't have the answer.

**Q. I think it has to do with the way you have with your body, your strategy on the court, but most of all I think your smile. I don't know if you heard.**

MARIA SAKKARI: I always hear the support from the crowd. Here I have to say it's the place they support me more than any other tournament.

I just want to take all that energy from everyone here, the love from the staff and the crowd. It's very unique. That's why I think I love this tournament so much.

**Q. It's very interesting to see your team in your corner with the Mexican shirt.**

MARIA SAKKARI: My team? My coach and my sister?

**Q. Yes.**

MARIA SAKKARI: They gave it to us last year. Obviously adidas sponsors the national team. It was a gift from them when we were here for the Finals. I forgot to bring mine. My sister is representing the family (smiling).

Mexico is in good hands.

**Q. Looking ahead to playing Veronika, can you talk about that matchup.**

MARIA SAKKARI: I mean, you heard what I said earlier, that it was meant to be. I cannot say anything more than that because we both had very tough draws. It was not guaranteed that we were going to play each other in the quarterfinals.

I think the passion, how much we want it, it got us to the point that we have to play each other just to get that one spot. It's going to come down to not who wants it more, but who plays a better match tomorrow.

We both have good seasons. Like, that's why we're

fighting for that spot. I don't care what people say about personally my season that has been a roller coaster, but all I know is I'm still a top-10 player, I'm still one of the two players that might get the last spot.

Yeah, it's going to be a very interesting match.

**Q. How do you manage the next 24 hours? You said it's fate. It's Guadalajara, a city that you love, the people love you. It would be a great story if you would clinch it tomorrow. At the same time you have to do the work to do it. How do you balance fate versus effort, what you have to do?**

MARIA SAKKARI: Well, first I need to just look on what I have to do today to be ready for tomorrow because it's going to be a late night for me: eat well, sleep well, then tomorrow just try to rest and prepare as good as I can.

We've played each other a lot of times so we know what to expect. I've seen some of her scores. For sure she has been serving good. I'll have to be very, like, careful with my returns, my baseline game. She's also a big hitter, aggressive player.

You know what, I'm just going to give it all and enjoy tomorrow because if I had a wish a few months ago where I wanted to qualify for my WTA Finals, it would be here. I'm given that chance and I'm going to go for it.

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