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Karolina Pliskova

Press Conference

Ka. PLISKOVA/M. Sakkari

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THE MODERATOR: Congratulations on your win. Strong performance today. What do you think helped you the most on court?

KAROLINA PLISKOVA: Well, definitely my serve today, because I didn't lose my serve not even once. I thought I had many free points, a lot of points on the second serve, so that was the key, good start of the match. Then I felt like I was aggressive enough to make a lot of points also from the baseline.

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. Obviously former champion here, and you've got a lot of experience on this court. Everybody is saying that it's playing a little bit different this year with the different court, so how did you find it today in the match?

KAROLINA PLISKOVA: Yeah, I mean, a little bit different but not like way different compared to last years. I think you can actually move a little bit better on it than the last couple of years. It was more like slippery.

But still, it's clay. Still you have these bad bounces. I don't think it's like huge difference. Maybe it's a bit slower, I feel like, because there is more clay, but, yeah, on the other hand, we are still indoor. The balls are quite fast.

Together with the bad bounces, I feel like you can still hit like couple aces and it's not like you need to play -- for example, Indian Wells for me was so far the slowest tournament in the last five years. It's nothing compared to that. You could still make a lot of winners, as you could see today.

The match completely different from my last match with her in Indian Wells. Yeah, I felt aggressive game is quite working here.



Q. How much confidence does just the performance, not just the win over Maria, just how well you played today, how much does that help you going forward this week?

KAROLINA PLISKOVA: No, I mean, overall I think this year I had already quite lot of matches compared to maybe last year, so I feel like once I start, you know, the match going, I feel like the confidence of playing like from the baseline and just like overall the game is quite there.

So of course like sometimes you can have, you know, not the best day, but I feel like the serve is quite good. Even my shots. So I think this was a good start. Of course I think I play Donna next, right? So it's going to be maybe a bit different match because she also hits big.

Yeah, I won this tournament before so I know how to play on this court (smiling).

Q. How would you rate yourself today, your match? Also tactically, did you do everything that you talked about with Sascha before the match, or...

KAROLINA PLISKOVA: Yeah, I mean, look, I played her in the last, like three weeks or four weeks I played her already two times. I won one quite easy. I lost one tight. I played her last year end of the year, so I felt there was many matches now like in the last year or so against Maria. There is not really a surprise, you know, which would come from her way.

Of course like depends, there can be days where she's not playing the best, which was in Dubai. Then she was playing really well in Indian Wells. But I was more ready for, you know, for the tougher game, like she can be very tough. She cannot miss many points.

But I think I did quite well. I need to still stay aggressive, which is my game, and the serve is a big key, which I did well today.

Q. Next round you play against Donna Vekic. What you can say about your next opponent?

KAROLINA PLISKOVA: Also like nobody new to me,



because we played many times. Last one I lost. She played really well in San Diego.

Ah, we played once on clay I think last year in Paris or the year before. Yeah, also like I know her very well. We didn't really play like now lately like any match, but she has a big serve, big forehand. It's going to be a bit different compared to today. But still, I believe I have to play my game, serve well, and then there is a chance.

Q. I know it was just one match, but it looked really good. You spoke about that it gives you confidence, but last year it wasn't the best clay court season. How optimistic are you that the season is going better? Have you any specific goals for this clay court season?

KAROLINA PLISKOVA: Yeah, I mean, I feel like, you know, in tennis the confidence is everything, like everybody's practicing, playing, you know, like they're trying their best.

But of course if you can find this confidence where you are like a bit more relaxed on the court, I feel like this can win you matches a bit easier. Especially the hard matches and the first rounds of the tournaments where you don't know which shape you're coming into the tournament.

Yeah, of course it's a good start. It's always important to start well. Then you have another chance. You feel like you already won one match, you can relax a little bit.

Last year, as I said, I was not the best because I was coming back from injury, and I was struggling with not having many matches and not really finding the way how I want to play.

This year is a bit different. Of course I can still play bad, I have days like this, but I feel like there is more of the days where I feel I'm playing quite solid, like today, hopefully tomorrow too.

So let's see. Of course the goal is always the same, win matches, win titles, if possible, which on clay is not impossible because I won couple, but it's still the hardest for me, so let's see.

Q. When we talk about all-surface players, players who can play on all surfaces, have games that can adapt, over the course of your career, how have you seen the tour change like that? It used to be that once you hit the clay there was maybe three or four players that everybody would say, okay, this is now their section of the season, and now we are on grass, Serena, that sort of thing. Is that different now? Does

the surface matter as much?

KAROLINA PLISKOVA: I feel like maybe the tournaments and the surfaces got a bit more like even so it's not completely different than it used to be. The clay used to be much slower, I feel like maybe 10 years ago. So it used to be much slower so somebody would, for example, play well on hard court and then they would never play well on clay.

But look, I mean, I did title on every surface. I would never really think that I would be playing quite well on clay too. I feel like it's possible even for the players which they don't move that well and they have this aggressive, you know, game. So I think it's possible to play well everywhere, but I think grass is the only surface where maybe some players they can struggle, you know, because that's different.

Also for the movement it's different, you know, like you have to really like be used to it. Somebody who is used to slide, because now girls and guys they slide on the hard court as well, which on grass is not possible. So I think it's also a lot to do with the movement, not just with the game by itself.

But I felt like, yeah, maybe the speed of the courts is more even. Of course there is something more faster or slower, but it is not like huge gap in between the surfaces.

Q. Do you feel then with grass it's specifically a surface that like you need experience? Like we have these teenage champions winning Roland Garros and the hard courts, but it's been a while since a young -- well, Rybakina, I suppose -- but a super young person won Wimbledon. Is it because you need years of getting matches on grass?

KAROLINA PLISKOVA: I don't know. I don't actually think so, because look at me (smiling). I was doing quite horrible in Wimbledon, especially.

But also, I feel like you have just two, three weeks, so it just have to be the timing, you have to be, you just have to time also like your shape in that year, to have couple matches that year already that you won and just to feel good, because then you have two tournaments and then you have Wimbledon. Some players, they just play one. You try one tournament and then you go straight to Grand Slam.

I feel like there is not enough time to really like find the timing. I think sometimes can be lucky. Sometimes you just, of course, like Wimbledon is a tournament where you can play, you can close your eyes and you can, I mean, win it. You know, not like Rybakina would do it, but for

players like this, which are playing aggressive, I think that's the tournament where she can have really good two weeks and she can easily win it.

On clay, I think you have to like struggle. It's not going to be that easy.

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