

# Porsche Tennis Grand Prix

Stuttgart, Baden-Württemberg, Germany

Wednesday, 17 April 2024

## Ons Jabeur

### Press Conference

O. JABEUR/E. Alexandrova

2-6, 6-3, 7-6

THE MODERATOR: Welcome, Ons. Congratulations on the first win. How are you feeling after the match?

ONS JABEUR: Thank you. Yeah, very happy with the win. I've been waiting for this one for a long time. I've got to say tough draws everywhere, any tournament right now. I don't know what rule they changed (smiling) to play great players on first rounds already, but pretty happy that I got to fight until the last moment and get the win.

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

**Q. You didn't appear on the net, for whatever reason. You didn't come to the net apart of shaking hands. Usually, your game is more than just staying behind.**

ONS JABEUR: When you play a player like her, to be honest with you, it's very tough to go forward, because basically she keeps me, like, going behind and behind. Her flat balls doesn't help me go in, and definitely she doesn't give easy balls. She either misses or makes a winner, and that makes it very tough for me to go to the net.

Yeah, to be honest with you, today I was focusing on changing up the rhythm more and trying to get the slice in, some dropshots, but I think with these kind of players it's very tough. And especially with my game right now, with the level of confidence, I think it was smart to stay behind and just try to win the match.

**Q. Can I just ask about your level of confidence? I mean, it should be high, but obviously that's not what you meant. Could you just explain.**

ONS JABEUR: Well, it is not the best, obviously. It's been couple of tough months. I didn't expect that an injury could affect my mental so bad.

It was affecting me, the knee was affecting so bad, and I



didn't realize. I kept going and try to play matches even though I knew I wasn't ready, and that didn't help with the level of losing basically against anyone on tour.

And that was really the time when I start to play really well and I start to play pain-free, you play against Collins in Charleston (smiling). So her level of confidence was in the sky, and mine was trying to survive somehow (smiling).

But it was a positive match, and I was trying to get the positive out of it. But when you don't get the win, it is very tough. And again, I look at the draw and I play Alexandrova, so I was, like, God, stop testing me (smiling).

But, yeah, it is what it is. I think this tough period is helping me a lot, and I will take back the confidence from before to build up this one and be ready for the next few matches.

**Q. When did you hurt your knee? I remember in Australia when you lost very early on, and I can't remember if you said anything about the reasons then. Did you hurt your knee then?**

ONS JABEUR: No, the knee has been going on for years now, since 2016 I think or '17. It's an old injury that I have accepted to play with it.

But sometimes it's a bit weird. It became like more and more painful, and for some reason after Australia it was getting worse. So that's why I had to pull out from Dubai.

It didn't bother me as much in Australia, I've got to say, but yeah, I guess the hard court, when you play matches on it, even one or two, it does bother me a lot. I'm very happy to be on clay right now.

**Q. Given everything you have just said and having some tough results this year, how did you turn that around today?**

ONS JABEUR: I kept doing what I was doing the last matches. You know, keep fighting. Maybe the light will come up somehow (smiling).

It was really, really tough, because I think the second set I didn't even believe that I could win, but, you know, I



remember there was a woman, I know you're going to win, and the team was supporting me.

You know, these moments, you just need one or two chances, one or two points that would make you believe again.

And it's okay. You know, it happens. I don't believe players that go, I always believe.

No, you have this belief somehow (smiling). I feel like it's my duty, and to be honest, for the next generation when they watch you, not to think that everything is perfect on the court. No, there are some tough moments, some up-and-downs, but the most important thing is that you give it all on the court.

I did that in Charleston, but I lost and I'm doing it right now, and I'm keep going and I keep practicing. Even some days I'm not motivated at all. I have thought about withdrawing from this tournament so many times because I couldn't take another loss. You know, it was very, very difficult.

**Q. In terms of, going back to health, are you 100% now? It's just a matter of finding level?**

ONS JABEUR: Yes, yes, I've got to say, definitely playing on clay really helps my knee a lot. I'm getting the movement much better. No more, like, trying to get more weight on, stronger on my leg, and try to move up like I was moving before.

So I think just matter of matches and definitely more training and keep being patient, because I feel like that's the key for me right now.

**Q. And you said that you thought about not wanting to take the court here because you didn't want to take another loss. Do you think back maybe five years ago before you had your big rise, losses are regular? You know what I mean? First, second-round, third-round losses were more consistently what you were doing. So why is it so hard now, given where your success has been the last couple of years, to take early losses?**

ONS JABEUR: I think it's not losses but, like, just not winning any matches. And I really thought about not even playing Charleston, because after Miami I was heartbroken.

I thought I was trying to play, and my level wasn't there, you know. But I have a great team behind me, kept pushing me. It's, like, It's okay.

I was, like, Okay, you either be coward, go back home and

not face, like, the reality of what's happening right now, or just, okay, go there, try everything. You lose, you lose; you win, you win. And I lost again, obviously (smiling).

But again, the same thoughts, the same negative thoughts, even though it was a really positive match against Collins. I'm the only one that got a set out of her (smiling).

But when you're in such a bad position, losing, losing, your brain tries to focus on the negative thing. I was, like, switching, trying to be positive in that, but I think losing a lot of times in a row, that's the difficult part. But if I, like, win two matches and lose, that's better. Not the best, but at least better.

**Q. Can you comment who is with you in the box in Stuttgart? Is it Issam?**

ONS JABEUR: No, Issam is at home with his family. He's taking a bit of time off, but we are on contact a lot. I have my husband Karim with me, my physio, and my family, actually my brother, his wife, my sister, the kids, the husband. So I'm surrounded by a lot of love, for sure.

**Q. Ons, you said it when you noticed the matchup against Alexandrova, you said it was pretty difficult to see it. How do you feel about the next match that you get against Paolini? How does that match up for you?**

ONS JABEUR: Well, it's definitely not an easy match. You know, she has been playing good this year. She's a tough opponent.

Kind of difficult, different style from Alexandrova, but every match is difficult right now. I'm going to keep focusing I think 80% on myself and try to get the rhythm back and get the game that I want to play with on the court. Definitely 20% focusing on her and try to play tactically correct.

I know she's an amazing player, and definitely it's going to be a tough matchup.

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