

Australian Open

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Melbourne, Victoria, Australia

Angelique Kerber

Press Conference



D. COLLINS/A. Kerber

6-2, 3-6, 6-1

THE MODERATOR: Angie, a very tough match for you today, but a good fight, as well. Just talk us through your thoughts on the match and how you're feeling right now.

ANGELIQUE KERBER: Yeah, it was a tough match. I don't know. I mean, I don't really found my rhythm today, to be honest. I was trying to keep fighting until, yeah, the last point.

But at the end I was not really hitting the balls so good as I played the last few days. But yeah, she played good in important moments. She hit the balls. She was really aggressive.

THE MODERATOR: Questions in English.

Q. You drew a very difficult first-round opponent, and the winner of your match goes on to meet the No. 1 ranked player in the world. How did you feel, your comeback Grand Slam, you were going to be really slammed early on?

ANGELIQUE KERBER: You know, I think there are not easy draws when you're coming back, especially after so long. But of course, for me, it was a tough draw and I was trying to play as good as I can today. But for sure it was not really the best tennis I could play. I played well, last week I played a little bit better. But of course it's the first real tournament for me, and I tried my best.

You know, I just tried to keep going, trying to having a lot of matches afterwards and trying to playing good tennis later on this year.

Q. A lot of other players have been saying how inspirational it is to see you and Naomi and Caroline coming back here. Have you felt a wave of support from the other players?

ANGELIQUE KERBER: Yeah, definitely. I mean, it is, for sure, different to be back like this. I think I'm quite open more than before, and also, the other players are -- yeah, it is a little bit different (smiling).

I'm also more relaxed, so I feel that, yeah, they appreciate it and I think it's nice to see so many moms are back on tour.

Q. Tell us a bit about what it's like when you're back on court and obviously there is a sort of a rational part of your brain that understands it's going to take a long time to get back to the player you want to be, but Naomi Osaka was talking about how there is that irrational part of your brain that, as a former champion, you almost expect yourself to be able to go out there and play kind of world-beating tennis again. Tell us about wrestling those two sort of things going on.

ANGELIQUE KERBER: Yeah, for sure it is a long way to be back and to play on a high level again. But on the other side, I have the experience, I know how it is. I played so many Grand Slams over the years. So I'm more trying to finding my rhythm, to being on court, and yeah, feeling good again, you know.

But of course, I mean, you played here, you won the tournament, and you want to get far in the draw. But on the other side, it is my first real tournament, and I know that it needs time. Also before I came back I said I need the patience to coming back, to having matches and to feeling good on court.

Also, it's a completely new situation also off court, so I have to get used to that, and that needs time. I'm fine with that. I take my time, and hopefully I can play better and better in the next few weeks.

Q. You said you didn't really feel like you found your rhythm today. But even in that second set, there weren't some moments in there where you felt a little of the old magic coming back?

ANGELIQUE KERBER: Yeah, I mean, you have to play until the last point and in the second set it was just a turnaround where I was feeling, okay, I have to go through it and to being more aggressive. But in the third set, yeah, she hit close balls and she -- yeah, she was just hitting more aggressive than me, especially the returns. I think that was the key in the third set, that she was more aggressive.

Q. There was a moment, 5-2 in the first when you



were going up to serve, and you were frustrated. You turned to Torben, your coach, and you had a bit of an exchange. Do you remember what you said?

ANGELIQUE KERBER: No. I mean, we had so many exchanges so I don't know exactly what it was. But I think it was nothing really serious. I don't know.

Q. Do you know what was said in that moment? Because obviously that had been a difficult start to the match. Do you remember what was going through your head at that time?

ANGELIQUE KERBER: I think it was maybe just asking or, like, he just told me maybe, giving me advices. I don't know exactly. Sorry (smiling).

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