

Australian Open

Wednesday, 17 January 2024

Melbourne, Victoria, Australia

Alycia Parks

Press Conference



A. PARKS/L. Fernandez

7-5, 6-4

THE MODERATOR: Congrats on the win today. How do you feel about your performance so far and you moving on to the third round of the Australian Open?

ALYCIA PARKS: I feel pretty good. The first set was a little tough. I didn't really feel myself out there. I got down 4-1 pretty quick, but I don't know. Something told me to just lock back in and then take it point-by-point. Then I ended up coming back 7-5 in the first set.

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. In terms of turning that match around, when you say that you were locking back in, what did that mean game-wise for you? Was that like focusing on the serve, focusing on your footwork? What does it mean to get you locked back into a match?

ALYCIA PARKS: I think I was kind of rushing in the first set a little bit, especially on my serve. My serve is definitely one of my best weapons, so I just had to tell myself to slow down, breathe, and, I don't know, focus.

Toss is like the biggest thing for me. Once I started to get my serve back, then I started to get back in rhythm. Then that's how I turned the match around.

Q. Can you tell us if there's a backstory to your coaching situation here? I don't think you have been working with Mark for very long. How did that unfold for you?

ALYCIA PARKS: Yes, Mark has been working with me this week. It's kind of new. Well, he's helping me out for Australian Open and hopefully in the future.

I think we're a good partnership, and we look forward to working together in the future.

Q. Did you guys just in the last few days start working together?

ALYCIA PARKS: Yes. He flew in I think Friday. Thursday night or Friday. Then we had one day to prep.

Then, I don't know, we're in the third round, so I think we're doing pretty good together, yeah.

Q. Just talked to Coco, and you obviously play her next. She said that you've known each other for years. What are your kind of memories in Florida when you were younger? What are your memories of hitting with Coco when you were younger?

Q. That was so long ago. I don't really remember the training part. I just remember practicing the next court over from her.

So this match will be obviously our first meeting. I think it will be a fun match, so yeah.

Q. Just in terms of looking ahead to facing Coco, what excites you the most about this match, third round Australian Open, facing the reigning US Open champion, it's Coco? You have known each other for so long. I don't know, when you think about it, what gets you excited about it?

ALYCIA PARKS: I think both of us are doing actually pretty well. I know everyone else wants to see the matchup, but I think it's pretty good to run across her in a slam, third round. I mean, I guess we're both going to go out there and play our games and see where it goes.

Q. Coco just mentioned earlier that she looks to the likes of Djokovic's and Serena's practices over the years to fine-tune her own game. Are there any players in the team that you've been on tour or in the juniors even that made you stop and watch their practices?

ALYCIA PARKS: I would say not so much practices. I like to watch Serena's matches, which I actually ran across one of her matches maybe two days ago. But I think Serena, yeah, I like to watch her matches a lot.

Q. Any in particular that come to mind?

ALYCIA PARKS: No. I just like to see how she is on the court and in certain situations, if I'm ever in that situation to feed off of that and, yeah, bring that to my own match.

Q. When you were younger, you didn't play much junior competitions. Curious, did you always believe



that you were capable of getting to this point without kind of measuring up against people your age?

ALYCIA PARKS: Yes. My dad took me out of the juniors only because I was growing so fast, and he didn't want me to get injured. He wanted me to develop.

I always wanted to go pro, and that was the goal ever since I picked up the racquet. So I think it panned out well, and I wouldn't take any different route.

Q. I'm curious, how quickly did you grow and what was that like when you were younger growing quickly, playing tennis and adjusting to your game?

ALYCIA PARKS: I don't understand the question.

Q. You said you grew really quickly. What was that like in terms of your game? How did that look? Did that change much in your game? Did your style change at all?

ALYCIA PARKS: No, my dad was always my coach growing up. We just practiced a lot on technique. Kind of like a machine. We did the same drills almost every day. So I think now that it took me a while to get into playing matches. Yeah, I don't know.

Q. Are you someone who tends to like the big stage? You've been kind of on these secondary but big courts so far. Going to go against Coco, you'll be on a pretty big court. How do you approach that sort of situation, and do you go inward, back to any breathing techniques or listen to music or anything to get yourself ready for something like that?

ALYCIA PARKS: I would say I'm actually better on the bigger courts only because it puts me in a more serious zone, which may sound weird. But I definitely play one song, then I walk on the court. Then obviously the crowd. But then I just stay in my own tunnel and focus and see what I can control out there, yeah, so...

Q. What's the song?

ALYCIA PARKS: The song is the last song I posted on my video after the first round that I've been listening to.

Q. Just talking about Serena, it seems like a goofy question because it's Serena, but in your own words, when you watch her, what do you see? What resonates with you so much as being the player that you want to absorb stuff from?

ALYCIA PARKS: I would say definitely her calmness when she's in certain situations. When things are going too fast, she'll actually slow down and rethink her serve. That's definitely one of her weapons.

I kind of just look at her serve and then be like, okay, if she's in trouble, then she'll come back on her service game. I'm trying to think what else. Yeah, I don't know.

Just the way she carried herself on the court, she's very focused. She doesn't, like, rush. I tend to rush a little bit and then usually that's when I start to kind of snowball. So I have to slow it down and take it point by point.

Q. The match against Daria, she's a tough matchup, and she plays such quirky tennis. I think you lost the first set and then things were pretty tricky. What was the mentality there? Have you surprised yourself by escaping that and now getting into the third round? When you think back to the first round, what goes through your mind?

ALYCIA PARKS: The first set I was not expecting that. I think it was more of... Well, nerves played a big part in that before the match only because it's the first round of a slam. That's the first thing. It takes me a little time to kind of warm up a little bit.

Then her balls were a little tricky the way they were bouncing. I had to adjust and kind of hug the baseline and cut the ball off on the return, so then that helped me turn the match around.

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