

Australian Open

Saturday, 20 January 2024

Melbourne, Victoria, Australia

Storm Hunter

Press Conference



B. KREJCIKOVA/ S. Hunter

4-6, 7-5, 6-3

THE MODERATOR: Storm, obviously a tough result today, but a fantastic battle from you in that three-set match. Can you give us your thoughts on your performance today?

STORM HUNTER: Yeah, it was a tough match. Really wanted to win that one, and I would say I had a few chances, but Barbora played some really good tennis under pressure. She hit some cut serves when I had some break point opportunities.

I absolutely loved it out there. It was a lot of fun. Even though I didn't get the win, this whole week has been a win for my singles I would say. I don't want to look at it as disappointing today because I enjoyed every minute. It's not every night you get to play on Rod Laver Arena after Novak and have all the fans out there.

Yeah, I'm definitely seeing it as a positive. Obviously I've played six really high-quality singles matches here. Any other tournament, that would be probably a win of a tournament.

Yeah, super positive.

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. We asked Ajla last night about you and your singles, and she spoke about you might have to make a decision at some point to play singles or doubles to get the most out of your singles. Is that something you would ever consider?

STORM HUNTER: It's definitely a consideration. I wouldn't say it's a consideration right now. I think where my rankings are I can still kind of do both at the moment. There potentially may be that decision down the line, but for now, no.

I'm kind of just working out my schedule over the next few weeks and how it looks post-AO depending where my ranking goes and whatnot. At the moment my focus now is on doubles and mixed doubles. I have doubles tomorrow and then I think mixed on Sunday.

Yeah, kind of just focused on that. Yeah, trying to kind of get a bit more doubles practice in. Obviously I've been preoccupied this week. Yeah, I'll get out on the court and get some doubles practice in now and focus on that.

Q. Get that doubles slam title and move over to singles, is that the plan?

STORM HUNTER: Maybe. It definitely sounds a lot easier than it actually is. Yeah, to be honest, if I'm playing at that level singles, which I have been for the last week, then I think it would be a tough decision because I think to play at that high level and to play doubles is very hard physically to be able to back that up.

That would have to be a decision. But yeah, definitely not a decision for right now.

Q. Do you rue the second set, those breakpoints that you had, or is it more a point of pride given how far you've come?

STORM HUNTER: Some of those breakpoints, she hit an ace down the T and literally hit the line by nothing. There were a few points there where she had to come up with something good and too good. She's a hell of a player.

I kept looking down to see if she was going to crack, and she was tough the whole way through. To have the crowd against her as well, and she came up with some good stuff.

I think out of all those breakpoints, I maybe had two little chances, which is I didn't quite convert. Even at the end of the second set, I saw I had 28 winners, 21 unforced errors. We were even on points. There's nothing more I could do. I could look at those points as opportunities, but you know what, she played well. Yeah, I kind of just crashed.

I think I had to play at such a high level to kind of stick with it in the second. Yeah, once I kind of lost that, I definitely felt that I just lost my energy, just started feeling a bit fatigued.

Yeah, it ended up being only one break, but she was hitting her spots on serves when it count and would give

me a freebie on 40-love, and that doesn't really help.

Q. You spoke about belief in yourself and that being kind of something that you've have to deal with. Where do you think that comes from, this maybe lack of belief originally? Where does that come from, and what are you doing to address it?

STORM HUNTER: Yeah, I think it's just my nature. I just feel like I'm such a normal person that to be in this environment as a professional athlete and being I guess, yeah, No. 1 doubles player in the world, to play on that stage, it almost feels a little bit like it's not for me in a way because I feel like I am so normal.

I don't feel that I have ever been this huge talent. I've always had to work hard for it. I guess working hard part of it has instilled that belief in me. I kind of have to almost keep telling myself that.

Obviously I've been around for, yeah, a long time now on tour. So just having these experiences and having the experiences playing slams and doubles and stuff, that just I think naturally helps.

It's definitely easy when you have the crowd cheering you on and supporting you no matter what. And that's I think playing at home in Australia, playing for Australia, it's very easy for me to do that because I'm doing it not for myself, but for the country, I guess, which a lot of people would find maybe more pressure, but I actually find it easier.

Then when it's me, I kind of want to almost make everyone else proud and make everyone who has stuck by my side proud as well. I know that's not result-driven. It's also how you behave and attitude and everything.

Yeah, I think this definitely gives me a lot of belief in my singles. Not just one match, but yeah, having six really good matches. We'll go back and analyze and look at what we can keep working on and go from there.

Q. This week has been amazing for you, career result in singles. Have you enjoyed the spoils at all? What's it been like being the last woman, Australian woman, left in the singles draw? Are you getting recognized more and that kind of thing?

STORM HUNTER: A little bit. I would say there's definitely been a bit more attention, which it's fine. I don't say I love it, but I'm happy with how everything is for me now. Yeah, it's been really nice to have I guess everyone excited about women's tennis in Australia.

That's probably the biggest thing is it can be easy to be negative about it, but it was nice that we could just have a little bit of positivity. Ajla played really well as well and was unlucky against Ostapenko. We've got Dascha who

is on the way coming back from injury. We had a few younger girls in qualifying. So to me that's more important than myself I think, is the growth of, yeah, women's tennis in Australia.

I think the last who weeks have been really positive. And I hope next year that I'm top 100 and in main draw and that we have a handful of girls inside the top 100 as well.

Q. Just on that high level you spoke about and the crash at the start of the third, was that something you felt like you were playing out of your skin, or did it feel like a level that you can now replicate and that's where you're at?

STORM HUNTER: I think it's definitely a level I can replicate. I guess in that moment obviously being third round of a slam and being on Rod Laver at night, a night session, that was my seventh match here at the Australian Open.

I think I can replicate it, but it was a high level. Like, I knew that that's not probably my base level. That's definitely up there. At some point if I could maintain that, that was a two-and-a-half-hour match, if I could, that would unbelievable. I think I maintained for about two hours, which is still pretty good.

But yeah, to compete obviously with the best players and to beat the best players, you need to be able to do that for a lot longer. Yeah, it gives me confidence that if I can keep building on that and the belief now is there that I can do that, and I have the game and the aggressiveness to actually hurt players, it's just being able to do that consistently.

It takes a lot of energy because I am taking the ball early and moving onto the ball and having to back myself to go for those shots. Yeah, I think that's more being able to do that on a consistent basis.

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