

Australian Open

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Melbourne, Victoria, Australia

Marta Kostyuk

Press Conference



M. KOSTYUK/M. Timofeeva

6-2, 6-1

THE MODERATOR: Marta, congratulations. First quarterfinal at the slam level. Can you just give us your thoughts on your performance today.

MARTA KOSTYUK: Was definitely a very good performance. I played very aggressive, just as I wish I would always play.

Yeah, it was a good match. She was on a roll, and I knew I had to be there. I had to be solid. Yeah, very happy with it. It ended very quick, and getting ready for the next one.

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. How happy are you to be in your first Grand Slam quarterfinals?

MARTA KOSTYUK: Yeah, it's definitely a great feeling. I've worked very hard for it, so I cannot say that I'm, like, not surprised. I was always trying to find the good things, like right things, to do. I'm very happy that they're working out. So I just want to keep going, and yeah...

Q. Obviously it's the first time three Ukrainian women have made it as far as the fourth round. Are you in close touch with Dayana and Elina? Do you practice together?

MARTA KOSTYUK: I practiced with Elina I think twice or three times last year. Yeah, we're all good. Everyone is doing their thing. So very happy for the girls. Hopefully they can join me in the quarters. It will be amazing.

With Dayana, for example, we had very different schedules, so there were tournaments that we were just not together on them. With Elina, whenever we kind of agree on it, yeah, sure. We go out for dinners with Elina and myself, so it's fine.

Q. Will you try to play for doubles together for the Olympics or anything like that?

MARTA KOSTYUK: I don't know about the ranking

because I played semis here last year, and I didn't defend these points, so I have no idea what my ranking is and if I'll even qualify for Olympics doubles.

I was thinking too that if I would have a chance, I would play with Lyudmyla Kichenok, but I think she will play with Nadia. It sounds so bad because we really didn't talk about it at all, so I don't even have a clear answer to this.

Q. Two games into the match, you and your husband were taking photos or something like that. One of the biggest matches of your career. It seemed like you were quite relaxed. Do you have any sense as to why you felt no pressure today?

MARTA KOSTYUK: Honestly, I had extremely difficult last couple of nights. I used all the possible techniques I know to relax and fall asleep. But honestly they were not working well.

Yeah, I think I was going through a lot of emotions. The match with Mertens really, really messed my sleep cycle. I went to sleep at 3 a.m. Still very emotional. It was a big win for me, but not even in terms of the opponent, but just in my head, you know. But it got better.

Today I felt like, okay, I can finally let go a little bit because I was kind of going into all of these matches, especially after Elise, I felt like the bar is now so high I have to perform really well, how I performed with Elise. I couldn't do that in the third round, but there was a lot of pressure there.

Generally for me, because I was expecting for myself to pass the third round and so on. Yeah, when I walked on court today and we started playing and we had this rain delay, and I spoke to Sandra for a little bit, and I said, You know, I'm on this court, and I don't even feel like I play fourth round.

I was just out there, and I knew exactly what I have to do, like how I want my game to look like today. I was just keep going with it. I'm very glad it worked out.

I managed to separate completely the idea that it's match for the quarterfinal of a Grand Slam and all the other things.



Q. It's been five years since you had your first big breakthrough here.

MARTA KOSTYUK: I think six (laughing). 2018, yeah.

Q. Six years then. Just how would you describe the journey from then and also how different you are as a person from 15-year-old Marta?

MARTA KOSTYUK: Well, definitely a lot has changed. I really feel like it was in a different lifetime. A lot of things have happened in the past six years. I've changed probably six times already.

I always say that I think the change is always good. That means I'm not staying in one spot. Whether you feel like you're changing in the worst way or in the better way, I think it's good to keep all the change happening.

Yeah, it was a hell of a journey so far already. It's been a lot of years, and I'm very happy I still feel fresh.

Q. Just coming back to the political situation in Ukraine. You said the last time you were here that every time you step on the court, you have a message to the people that the war is still going on. Do you think now that there are three women from Ukraine in the focus, that this might sort of become more an issue again?

MARTA KOSTYUK: I don't think, first of all, why it's an issue.

Q. I mean an issue in the sense that it's a topic that people talk about.

MARTA KOSTYUK: I hope so because, as I said, it really seems for a lot of people that it's over. Something incredible happened. The Ukraine managed to not be captivated in three days, in Kyiv as well. So it was kind of like all a miracle, you know.

I feel like it's not a miracle anymore, so why talk about it? Yeah, I hope that the girls can keep on doing what they're doing and reminding as much as possible.

I had a very long break because I finished my season in Beijing, and I only restarted in Brisbane. I was out for almost three months. I really wasn't around these players. I wasn't on tour, so you get used to not being on tour.

It was not talked about at all. When I came back, I was, like, Wow, okay, everyone is back to normal life like nothing happened ever.

Yeah, I think it's not right. I think that it's not easy for specifically for me - I will talk about myself - that in order to bring out as thorough information as I can on

everything that's going on in Ukraine, I need to follow the news all the time, and I need to know what's going on because I don't have anyone calling me from Ukraine, like, Hello, Marta, this, this, this happened today, these are the highlights or whatever, you know.

I have to go through all the information myself and see what's the best way to present it to people so they understand it in the most easiest way, I would say. It's an extra duty that I have that I don't think other players have, I mean from other countries.

Yeah, sometimes the news are not great, and it can really, really - how you say- shift the mood and shift your fighting spirit and so on because there are times where you really are like on the edge of giving up and on the edge of not understanding why world is like this and not the other way.

I just try to grow through it and I try to establish myself in different ways, not even for people, but for myself, first of all.

I think we will just keep on going and winning.

Q. Coco was saying earlier in the tournament that what she learned recently, especially in New York, was that the difference between winning a Grand Slam and not winning a Grand Slam is actually not that big. You don't have to play lights-out for seven matches. I'm curious what your perspective is on that. Does that gap seem far? Is it hard to make it this far, or is it easier ultimately? I don't know.

MARTA KOSTYUK: It's every day and every slam and every tournament is so unique and so different. We play in different conditions, different balls, different... Everything is different opponents. Everything is different. I think a lot depends.

Someone can have a very easy draw, and someone can have extremely difficult. I have an easiest example of when Leylah and Emma were playing the final, what draw Leylah had and what draw Emma had. Emma, no offense, but Leylah was really fighting for her life every single match.

I don't know. It depends. I think there are players who really win this Grand Slam and they're like, Wow, I don't think I will ever recover from this physically and emotionally. There are players who are, like, Oh, it was fine, I might do it again.

I don't know. I think it's so unique. I wish I experienced this to give you a proper answer, but I'm working for it. We will see.

The first three matches that I had were extremely difficult. First one, I don't know. First one was just it was like I

was first round and first round is always a little shaky, but the other two were really solid and very tough matches. Today, for example, I had much easier. I was, like, Oh, okay, well-deserved, you know.

Then we see. I don't know. I have three more to go. We will see. Maybe I will sit here in one week and be like, Oh, you know, it was not that bad. It was actually easy.

We will see.

Q. This has been obviously a historic tournament for Ukrainian players. At the same time you've talked about how traumatizing the last two years have been. Why do you feel Ukrainian players have been able to succeed despite the difficult personal circumstances?

MARTA KOSTYUK: That's a very good question. I don't know. I really don't. I think it just shows that there is no limit in human possibilities withstanding stress and all around it.

For me personally, it was very difficult, but at the same time I've grown a lot as a person. The oddest things that have happened, they helped me to grow this quick. If there was never a war in my life, I don't think I would be able to grow this much as I grew in the last two years.

I don't know. I think it's about the perspective, how you take it, because there are different things that happening. But I think if you take them as a burden or, like, Oh, why is it happening to me and it's not happening to other people, or if you victimize yourself, which I think it's normal. I think every person goes through this kind of feeling all the time. Not all the time, but from time to time. I think the more you can minimize this feeling of being a victim, I think the easier it is to get through life.

I mean, very proud of all of us, honestly, for standing for so long and not losing faith and still fighting and fighting for our rights and fighting for everyone basically. I don't know. I think it just shows how strong Ukrainian people are.

Q. Just on the next match, tough task obviously against Coco. What do you make of her as a competitor, as somebody on the tour, and what you do you think is the challenge for you?

MARTA KOSTYUK: I think she was on tour as much as I was. I think she played really good the year after I played. Yeah, she played fourth round Wimbledon and third round US Open I think in 2019. So it was like a year after me. I think she's two years younger than me. Yeah, she's pretty much as much time as I am on tour, and she definitely achieved more than I did (laughing).

Yeah, she's young, but very experienced because she

just has been for so long around. She's a tough competitor. She runs. She has very fast serve, especially first. Very solid backhand. She's coming out from the title in Auckland beating Elina in the final. Definitely she's in good shape, I would say.

We have played two years ago. It was very close match. I don't know. It will be exciting. I have nothing to lose really. I'm in my first quarterfinal. She's a top-5 player. I just want to go out there and really play aggressive. Yeah, and just enjoy still having this journey.

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