

Roland Garros

Tuesday, 1 June 2021

Paris, France

Maria Sakkari

Press Conference

M. SAKKARI/K. Zavatska

6-4, 6-1

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. I actually want to ask you a question about Carla Suarez Navarro, who is perhaps going to be playing, definitely playing her last Roland Garros. I know you faced her many times and many times on the clay, but I wonder if you can comment not just on her tennis but maybe a little bit about her character and the type of person she is. Do you have any strong feelings about her in that regard?

MARIA SAKKARI: Yeah, of course, I mean, I know I know Carla. She was actually -- I think I played my first, no, second main draw match, or third, against her in the Australian Open 2016? I lived in Barcelona for a long time. So I know her well.

I mean, she's a lovely girl. What she went through, it wasn't easy. She won the biggest battle of her life, bigger than playing the biggest match of her career.

Actually so she's a big inspiration for all of us, I'm sure. She's a lovely girl, as I said. An exceptional good player. Her tennis was so nice to watch. So tough to play against her (smiling).

I'm wishing her -- I know it's her last year, but she had an amazing career. I'm sure she's gonna enjoy her time off after tennis.

Q. Tell us a little bit about your match, 6-4, 6-1. After the first set do you think everything was there once you won the first set? The second came easily?

MARIA SAKKARI: Yeah, I mean, first round of a Grand Slam, it's never easy. Against a player that she played three matches already, I knew it was going to be a very close match and especially a close first set. I had just to stay with her, as I did in the first set.

Then I just -- you know, my confidence went up and just felt a lot better on court and on my game. You know, the result was clear.



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Q. Your next match, Paolini from Italy, what can you see about this match coming?

MARIA SAKKARI: Last time we played was when I was 12 or 11 (smiling). A long time we haven't played each other.

As I always believe, everyone's tough. Everyone has their level of difficulty.

It's going to be a very tough match no matter what. I'm just -- you know, I trust myself. I trust that I can bring a better level than today, so I'm just very confident on myself.

Q. It's all about peaking at the biggest tournaments, and you have had a pretty solid clay season but I wonder how do you feel about the way you have progressed through the clay court season? What are your hopes in terms of not necessarily the result but your hopes of how you can perform in the next few days?

MARIA SAKKARI: As I mentioned already, first rounds of a slam are very tough. Maybe I didn't play great tennis, you know, in Rome and my last match in Madrid, but I know that I can do a lot better. I have been practicing really well the last few days.

I had some time off after Rome, which was much needed. You know, I'm just confident that if I can bring out my solid game, I'll be okay.

Q. How much better are these conditions in the spring compared to what we had last year in October with the cold and the chilly and the crazy, weird conditions? Is it much better for you?

MARIA SAKKARI: Yeah, they were awful conditions back then. I mean, last year it was so cold. I remember like the balls were brown because of, you know, of the water and the clay.

For me, the hotter it is, the better it is also for my tennis. Everything, the ball bounces more, the ball is faster. You know, I think not many players like to play in slow and heavy conditions. Roland Garros is much more nicer with nice weather.

Of course now that we have the crowd, it feels like we're getting back to reality at some point.

