

Roland Garros

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Paris, France

Daria Kasatkina

Press Conference

D. KASATKINA/V. Kudermetova

6-4, 7-6

THE MODERATOR: Daria, congrats on the win. Your first time in a Grand Slam semifinal. How are you feeling right now?

DARIA KASATKINA: I feel great, thank you. Everything happens for the first time and I'm really happy to be in the semis and, I mean, dream coming true and everything is fine. Thank you.

THE MODERATOR: Questions?

Q. A question on you reaching the semifinals, a big stage. But the stadium was largely empty when you started, mostly because of the schedule and with the women's sessions in the early sessions. Do you have a comment on that? Thank you.

DARIA KASATKINA: Well it's Wednesday, 12 o'clock and it's, who has to play at that time so the stadium is fully packed? I mean, I'm not expecting everyone to come and the stadium to be full the first match of the day. So, I mean that's fine.

Q. Can you talk us through your emotions in the second set, the nerves, everything, what did you tell yourself to get out of all that and come out a winner?

DARIA KASATKINA: Well, yeah, it was a roller coaster the whole set. I was serving for the match once, having good chances. Then on the 5-5 having break points and still lose the game.

Yeah, it was tough to manage because basically I wanted to win a lot and in these moments you feel like the win is slipping out of your hands.

But just happy with the way I stayed on the court and didn't, you know, didn't put myself in the situation where I was like disappointed and stuff. So really happy with this mental part of myself.

Q. Is it going to be easy or difficult for you to relax and kind of refocus again, because obviously this is a great moment for you, but will it be easy to put it in



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the past and focus on the semifinals?

DARIA KASATKINA: I have no time to relax, I'm playing already tomorrow. So, no, a little bit of time, you know, to enjoy, because still it's special for me and, I mean, first semifinal.

But I know that tomorrow is another, it's another mountain in front of me which I have to climb and that's it.

Maybe it's even better that I don't have much time to think about how good was, you know, how good is to be in the semifinals, so I have another battle tomorrow.

Q. I guess to play your best tennis you need to feel good on the court and off the court. So how much of your success right now is because you are playing great tennis and how much of your success is because of the French fries?

DARIA KASATKINA: (Laughing) French fries makes a lot of difference, I must say, and here it's a good one, in France.

But obviously, all together, if you play good, you have to treat yourself. Even if you are not playing good it's not bad to treat yourself, because you are pushing and you are trying.

So it has to be balance in everything. And it's not easy to find it, but with years and experience it's coming together.

Q. You said earlier in the tournament that maybe you were surprised by how well you responded after the loss to Ons in Rome and how quickly you recovered from it. What do you think it says about you that after that in Rome that you've come here and put your best result of your career, basically?

DARIA KASATKINA: Well, I took that loss in a good way, let's say. So I learned a lot from that and I just kept going because I knew that I have another big opportunity next week. This is the most important, this is what I was trying to learn many, many years I'm on tour.

Because, as I said before, when I was losing, like match like this, it was drama for the next few days. Now I'm taking differently this kind of losses or matches.

But it's not, it was not easy way to come to this point.



Q. To go back to the last question, do you feel right now you're the strongest mentally you've ever been and do you feel you're safe from the tough players you'll play?

DARIA KASATKINA: Well mentally and physically I feel the best I ever was, which is good, because it means that I'm improving.

No, but I don't feel safe, because when you're in the comfort zone it means there's something wrong.

So I think it's better to feel something behind so you don't relax much. So I think, yeah, I'm always ready, you have to be always ready for shit (laughing), so, and accept this.

So doesn't have to be like, Oh, I'm so bad, and, you know, like, What I have to do now? No.

But if you are ready and you know how to get out of this, so this is also what I learn.

Q. What does it mean to you to make the semifinals and then also you said that sometimes it's just the right time, the stars are aligned, all that sort of stuff, but why do you think that the stars have aligned for you here?

DARIA KASATKINA: You never know, but, first of all, I've been working really hard for the past years, mentally and physically.

Also, as I said before, it has to be everything, draw, how you feel, without injuries, you know, health is the most important. And so to get all together in one point, it's, you never know if you will get it in one point.

So I'm happy that now I'm in this situation and let's see, let's see how it's going in the future. But I'm now in the moment and I want to enjoy this moment and I want to live this moment when I feel good on the court, when everything is fine (knocking on wood.) And, yeah, I'm happy right now and I want to keep going this way.

Q. My assumption is you were probably sleeping when Rafa and Novak were finishing their match yesterday. What was your reaction when you woke up to find out that Rafa won?

DARIA KASATKINA: I went to sleep, but 3-0 in the second (laughing) like, Okay, everything is fine.

Then I woke up next morning and I saw the score and I'm, in the application, I'm checking how the games are going, were going, you know, and I was like, Oh, my.

So good that I to sleep, because if I see 3-1, 3-3, I'm like, Oh, I cannot go to sleep. So, good at 3-0 I just put my

laptop away and I fall asleep.

But, oh, it's a tough one and I'm really happy for Rafa because I can not imagine how tough was the circumstances of everything. I mean, he's saying that can be his last match on Roland Garros and I cannot imagine how can you go on the match with this feeling. So another time he shows like how strong he is mentally.

Q. We don't know who you're playing next, but can we talk, if it is Iga, you have a lot of experience against her this year. What's better for you, to forget the last three matches or will you look back at them and kind of come up with something from that? How are you approaching if it's Iga and a few words if it's Pegula as well.

DARIA KASATKINA: Well, first Iga. We played few times this year, but, I mean, okay, I lost those matches, but was a different story. It was a hard court, beginning of the year, I was not in the same shape as I am now.

So, me, I cannot compare what we are going to have tomorrow and what we had in February, March when we were playing. So it's going to be completely different match. I want to win a lot, she wants to win as well, and it's going to be a good match.

You never know what's going to happen in the semifinal of a Grand Slam, so it's going to be fun and that's it.

And if it's Jessica, I mean, I love Jessica, she's amazing, she's very nice person. And she's, I mean, now she, how to say, her potential now is, she's showing her potential now and she's, I mean, very good player.

So she's showing unbelievable results and, I mean, when she feels, she is really good. And I'm happy, I would be happy to share this semifinal with her basically, yeah.

Q. This matchup with Iga will be on clay. Do you think for you it's a surface you would prefer to face her on, do you think there's any advantages to facing her here, even though she's pretty damn good on clay as well?

DARIA KASATKINA: Well, she's good on hard court, she's good on clay (laughing), so it doesn't matter. But I think for me it's better to face her on clay. Also, I mean, I have now a good run on clay, so I feel good here.

And let's see, let's see. I'm not a Nostradamus to, you know, I cannot see the future, fortunately. I think it's good if you cannot see it. Yeah, just want to live the moment of the semifinal in the best manner which can happen.

Q. You've just mentioned Rafa to us there. Everyone knows about his achievements. How much of an

inspiration is he to you and if you could take one thing from Rafa's game and give it to yourself what would that be and why?

DARIA KASATKINA: Well, I said many times that he was my idol since I'm kid. So of course when I was small I was trying to copy his game.

If I say that I want to be this, to have this mental toughness as he has, it's so typical to say this because it's so obvious that he's the best fighter in the history of sport maybe. So, I mean this one is, and this is the most important.

You can have the best backhand, forehand, serve, forever, but if you cannot fight, you can not win. So I think the fighting spirit is the most important.

Q. It's not always easy to have a stable coaching relationship in tennis and I wanted to ask you about you and Carlos. You went through a lot. He was with you with the dips and now with the highs and hopefully more. Can you talk a little bit about what it's meant to you to have someone like him have your back throughout this period and what have been some of the toughest moments you guys went through together?

DARIA KASATKINA: Oh, well, yeah, we've been working together for more than three years. It's crazy how fast the time flies. I'm really thankful to Carlos because, yeah, we started to work together when I was on the bottom of the ocean, let's say.

It was tough. It was tough. First year maybe more was super tough until I get to some level last year.

So I'm thankful for his patience with me because I'm not easy person as well, on the court and off the court. So, but he always finding the ways. It's unbelievable how he can adjust the way of working and the way of talking as well, compared to how I feel.

Because, for the coach, it's very important to forget that. Especially if the coach was a player, it's very difficult to forget that he was a player and to accept that the player is here and you have to, you know, work for the player and to work with the player.

This is the best what Carlos is doing and, yeah, I'm happy with the way we are doing and I hope it's going long way.

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