

Roland Garros

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Sloane Stephens

Press Conference

S. STEPHENS/Ka. Pliskova

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THE MODERATOR: Sloane, congratulations. Obviously you have had a lot of success at this tournament in your career. What were the keys to getting this first victory here on center court?

SLOANE STEPHENS: Yeah, obviously one of my favorite tournaments and one of my favorite courts to play on. A tough first round against Kaja, which I knew would be tough. Obviously she's seeded high here, so it was going to be a tough match regardless. Just happy to be through and playing some good tennis and continuing to get wins on this surface.

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

Q. You mentioned continuing to get wins. You won in Saint-Malo and also semifinal last week. What's it been like getting those wins and feeling confidence build?

SLOANE STEPHENS: Yeah, it's nice. Obviously coming into last season to the French Open, I didn't win any matches before, so obviously I have had a lot of different scenarios coming into the French Open, but this year my goal was to get a lot of matches. I think going to Saint-Malo was a good choice for me obviously to get more matches and get a win there and get some confidence.

Yeah, really happy with the way I have been playing. Been able to put a lot of matches together and a lot of wins, which is always good, good for the confidence. Happy to have those coming in to here. And then obviously being able to beat Kaja in the first round is a good feat.

Q. I would like to ask you about Francis Roig. I don't know if you are still with him, if he's here in Paris, and about your relationship and what have you learned with him?

SLOANE STEPHENS: Yeah, we're not working together anymore, but obviously I worked with Francis for a really long time. I spent a ton of summers at BTT. We have a



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really good relation. Yeah, we both are moving forward in different directions.

Q. In the past you have been racially insulted on social media. Is this still a problem? Did you hear about the software you can use here at Roland Garros which helps you to delete a comment?

SLOANE STEPHENS: Yes, it's obviously been a problem my entire career. It has never stopped. If anything, it's only gotten worse.

I did hear about the software. I have not used it. I have a lot of obviously key words banned on Instagram and all of these things, but that doesn't stop someone from just typing in an asterisk or typing it in a different way, which obviously software most of the time doesn't catch.

So, yeah, it hasn't stopped and I haven't used the software yet.

Q. How is your feeling about it? How bad is it? What do you think about it?

SLOANE STEPHENS: Yeah, I mean, obviously when there is FBI investigations going on with what people are saying to you online, it's very serious. Obviously it's been something that I have dealt with my whole career.

I think that, like I said, it's only continued to get worse, and people online have the free rein to say and do whatever they want behind fake pages, which is obviously very troublesome.

But, yeah, it's something I have had to deal with my whole career and something I will continue to deal with, I'm sure. That's that.

Q. Congratulations. You have enjoyed lots of success throughout your career, but you have also got interests outside tennis as well. Do you think it's possible to have a happy work/life balance and do lots of things, or do you think in terms of having to achieve a certain level of success that you have to sacrifice other aspects of your life?

SLOANE STEPHENS: Yeah, I mean, obviously my tennis career has been amazing. My professional career outside of tennis has been amazing. I have been able to do incredible things, and a lot of the work and things behind the scenes I have been very proud of.

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I think that obviously with tennis being an 11-month sport it does limit you and the things you're passionate about outside of tennis that there is definitely some conflicting time, and I do think you have to make a lot of sacrifices in terms of whether it's going to be tennis or your other passions and things that you want to do, so that's obviously tough.

But I think in my tennis career I have been able to do all of the things that I have wanted to do. I have graduated college, I got my degree, got my master's degree, done everything I wanted to do, which has been really nice. Yeah, some people may say that I didn't do everything I should have done in tennis, but I think in life when you can be proud of the things that you have done and the choices and decisions that you make for yourself, at the end of the day that's all that really matters.

Q. Two things. Talk a little bit about your master's degree, if you would. And also, another player from Fresno, Ethan Quinn, just won the NCAA doubles men's championships. I don't know whether you know Ethan or whether you can comment on that or not.

SLOANE STEPHENS: Well, we'll go with Ethan first. I love people from Fresno. They're the coolest. I think that's awesome. Obviously winning NAAs is very cool, I didn't go to college so I never got to experience it. I think it's awesome. Hopefully -- was he playing with another American?

Q. It was the singles.

SLOANE STEPHENS: He won the singles national championship? Oh, wow. That is impressive. I almost said a bad word (smiling). But, yeah, that is impressive.

Yeah, obviously he will be playing main draw US Open this year, so hopefully I will see him. Maybe I will see him, hopefully he'll get wild cards before then and I'll see him then. I cannot wait to meet my fellow -- what would that be? Fresnoian?

And then my master's degree, yeah, I always say if it's free it's for me, and the WTA was offering, for my bachelor's undergrad we did with IU East. Obviously I home-schooled all of high school so for me online school, it's a thing. I was the only person in my family who really didn't have a degree so I was not going to be the odd one out obviously.

I did that, and once I graduated that, that was the year I won the Open, I saw that the USOC offers graduate school, so I was, like, oh, I might as well do this too. Again, it was free. So again, obviously for me. Really proud of it. I don't know if I'll ever actually use that in my life, but it's nice to have.

Q. The other day in Rome Djokovic got a bit annoyed at Cameron Norrie for fist pumping too much and doing it in his face. From your perspective, what's it like when you're playing against a really enthusiastic opponent who's just cheering every point? Does it ever get annoying or how do you feel about that?

SLOANE STEPHENS: Yeah, I think there's ways you can do it. If you are that type of person who screams after every point and is always pumping yourself up, I think it doesn't have to be directed towards your opponent. You can just do it on your side, to your coaches, whatever.

I think obviously it's a little bit of gamesmanship when you're doing it outwardly to the person you're playing. That's a little bit different. I have no problem when the person is doing it to themselves, to their team, their side of the court, as long as it's not directed at me. I don't know, do what you do.

Q. Just following up on what you have just told us about balancing your personal interests and your sporting commitments, do you think it's strange that often, particularly in the media, athletes are just judged on their sporting achievements alone and not always seen in a wider context?

SLOANE STEPHENS: Yeah, of course. You're here to talk about tennis, right? Your job is to ask about tennis and the match and try to get anything that's interesting. I don't think that maybe a lot of the things that people are passionate outside of tennis may not be as interesting to you and your job. So it's not really anything to write about.

But I think there are a lot of great stories and things that people don't speak about enough. I mean, that's just the world we live in, right? Not every single story is going to be covered and not every interesting thing in someone's life will be covered.

But it is what it is. You guys are here to watch me play tennis at the French Open.

Q. Around tournaments in general we see fewer places with line judges. They're here. I'm curious, ATP by 2025 says all of its events will be with electronic line calling. Here you do have the actual people out there. I'm curious, which do you prefer? Have you gotten used to the idea of not having line judges? Do you think on clay it is better to have them? Do you like having somebody who can direct your anger to if there is a call you don't like? What are your feelings on that?

SLOANE STEPHENS: I'm a little bit indifferent now. Obviously half of our season or whatever, like some of

them have just all automated and some of them do have line judges. I think it's a little bit tough in the in-between stage.

It's harder on the line judges now because if there is one line judge and you have a problem with them or something happens in the match, we're playing a sport for money. We're playing for ranking points. There's a lot on the line for one person to have made a mistake or something.

I find it happening more when there's only one umpire, considering that there's a lot less to be involved in. Like, they're not looking this way, like everything is already called. So if you lose focus for just a second, like, that could be a game for someone or a break point or whatever it is.

So I think it's strange how it is now, but I think once they decide whatever the tournaments are doing, if they are all going electronic, okay, great, then everyone will readjust and figure out how they proceed. But I think it's in a tweener phase, which is really weird, and there's a lot of errors like happening at the moment.

Q. Do you have a preference, like if you could keep it so there always are line judges or it's always electronic, do you have a preference between those two?

SLOANE STEPHENS: Not really. I think the only thing that I would say is like if we go to all automatic or automated, that there will be a lot of jobs lost, which is unfortunate. But that's the only thing, my only preference is like I would like for those people obviously -- like, there's line judges who I played junior tennis with that are still line umpires at the US Open and I see them. I think that's the only unfortunate part about it. But either way, I mean, I don't have a preference.

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