

Roland Garros

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Paris, France

Sloane Stephens

Press Conference

S. STEPHENS/V. Gracheva

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THE MODERATOR: Sloane, you are playing an opponent who you've had success against and who you have lost to this year, but you came away with a very emphatic victory today. What were the keys to your success?

SLOANE STEPHENS: Yeah, really happy to get the win, obviously. I think the surface helped a lot today. We played both on hard court in very muggy conditions obviously during the hard court swing at the beginning of the year.

So, yeah, today was very, very different. The court was very different. It was a bit windy. Just overall a lot of different things happening.

Yeah, really happy to get the win and happy I was able to play solid.

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. You've had several great results here. Do you think of this as one of your favorite places to play just anywhere just because of that success you've had over the years, a lot of week twos, the run to the final?

SLOANE STEPHENS: Yeah, definitely one of my favorite tournaments. Like you said, I've had some really great results here. Since I was a junior, I've played well here.

So I'm very comfortable playing here, happy to be here. I enjoy it a lot. It's just one of those weeks that you just have a really good week every year, which is nice. Yeah, I mean, I hope I can keep going and continue and for the rest of my career be like this. That would be nice.

Q. You've had a good amount of matches this spring and coming into this tournament. Is this maybe as match-tough as you have felt coming into a major tournament in a while?

SLOANE STEPHENS: Yeah, definitely. I played and



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winning that 125 in Saint-Malo was good because I got a lot of consistent matches under my belt and was able to really kind of get going and pick up speed.

Obviously I wanted to play well on the clay this season. That was just really my main goal. So after Madrid being able to go there and get some matches was really key, really good. Going into Rome, obviously, still playing well, but tough draw and obviously the travel logistics, it's difficult.

Then kind of had a hard reset after that. My mom came. My stepdad was there. Just was, like, a tourist and was able to enjoy my time. Then, obviously, go to Rabat and get back going again. I had a good little stretch there.

Obviously it's been a very long five weeks already that we've been over here. So just managing the best I can, but happy with what I've been able to accomplish.

Q. We've seen a few kind of big names lose today. García, one of them. I just wonder, are you the type of player that watches the rest of the draw and how it kind of is shaping up as you go along? Is that something that you do?

SLOANE STEPHENS: No, I never look at the draw. I'm not even sure what side of the draw I'm on, but I do know who I play next. I know that obviously there's always interesting matches at slams. There's always something on TV that's worth watching.

Today playing the girl I played, she practices with Blinkova, and obviously she wanted her to win, so everyone was very engaged in the match. Obviously it was a very good match.

Just it's tough that obviously García lost being a favorite here at French Open, but there's always very good matches and tough matches happening, so you kind of always are aware of what's going on. Yeah, I don't go too in depth with the draws.

Q. One of the results today that maybe you didn't hear about was Peyton Stearns winning against --

SLOANE STEPHENS: Oh, I saw that. I told her congratulations, of course. I think obviously being, like, a newbie on tour, being able to get those wins is really key.

Obviously when you first start playing, like she's probably



played at two slams maybe, three slams. Yeah, this is the second one, yeah. Being able to get that experience very early is really great.

Obviously I think she likes playing on clay, so for her it's a great experience. I know her mom is here. I think she has some family members.

Keeping it fun at the beginning and making sure that you're enjoying it is key. Like, I was happy for her that she was able to pull it off today.

Q. You played her in Rabat. It was kind of a crazy match. Just wondering, can you give a little bit of an assessment of what it was like to play her, what her game is like.

SLOANE STEPHENS: Yeah, obviously different. It's the first time I'd played her. I've never played against her before, obviously her being in college and the whole thing and her working her way up the rankings now.

No, she's a great player. She's a great person. Super friendly. Super nice. Tries super hard. Gives it her all. I think when you're first coming on the tour, you have that energy, and you bring it every single time, so it's nice to see that and be around it obviously.

Yeah, like all the young American girls that are coming up now, I support them fully. I was there, and I think that it's tough. It's hard, but I think if you're enjoying the experience, it makes it a lot better.

Q. Tomorrow Monfils and Rune have been scheduled in the night session on Chatrier. That's four out of four have been men's matches in the night sessions so far. We had all the talk about it last year as well. I think it was nine out of ten women's matches. I just wonder your thoughts on that. Are you the kind of player that kind of cares when you play, or would you be happy to play a night session on Chatrier?

SLOANE STEPHENS: (Laughing.) I would just prefer not to answer.

Q. Oh, come on.

SLOANE STEPHENS: I'm on the player council, and we've had a lot of conversations about this, and we've had a lot of conversations about equality. Obviously your statement says it there, four out of four men's matches. That's not what we talk about. That's not what we're about.

So there's really not much to say about it.

Q. And you would be happy to play a night session? Because there's been some talk about that players

don't want to even be scheduled into that slot because of the timing, the conditions are different and everything.

SLOANE STEPHENS: Yeah, I would say it's probably just a different tournament completely playing at night. Every single time I've played here, my last -- I don't even know how many French Opens I've played -- there hasn't been a night match. I think it kind of completely changes the dynamic of the tournament in itself.

But nobody asked me for advice on what they should do, so it's their tournament. They do as they please.

Q. Just this last one. Have the player council kind of made their feelings maybe known during the tournament? I know obviously you guys have focused on what you're doing on court, but as you see the scheduling come out every day, are these conversations happening with the tournament director?

SLOANE STEPHENS: Yeah, I think those conversations are always happening. During the tournament we all are playing the tournament, so our main goal and focus isn't preaching to them on what they should be doing. It's more of everyone is just trying to focus on what they're doing.

Obviously after every tournament and every few weeks we all have a big postmortem. We had a lot of meetings before the French Open started.

Yeah, we can only give our input and say how we feel. I think during the tournament it's hard to kind of fix that. But, I mean, yeah, what you said speaks for itself. I don't think there needs to be a lot of back and forth on it. It is what it is, and if the tournament is not going to change it, then there's nothing we can do.

Q. Sloane, I feel like Americans are stereotypically -- there's this idea that there's a big culture shock from America to France. Given that you have been to some really far-flung places in the world and also been to Paris many times, what is your sense of your comfort of the city? Do you have your established routines, and does this feel like just an established tournament for you, almost like a second home, especially given how comfortable you are on the surface?

SLOANE STEPHENS: I don't know. I've never heard that before. Is that a thing?

Q. That Americans are often uncomfortable in Paris because sometimes they find the people are rude, the food is different, all those kinds of culture-shocky sorts of stereotypes, but that might be...

SLOANE STEPHENS: Oh, I've never experienced that. I love it here. It's great. I had Chinese last night, and the night before I had Indian. I'm going to Korean barbecue. It's great here. It's wonderful.

I'm not sure who said that, but no, I've never really experienced that. I've always been here for a long time and been into week two a lot so I have enjoyed my time here.

I think spending more time like this trip being extended with the two weeks in Rome and Madrid have made it a bit tougher, like, getting to the end of this trip, but not having anything to do with it being in Paris. I think Europe in general as a whole has been tough and complicated, and there's been a lot of logistical things that players have had to work through, but in terms of Paris itself or France itself, I was really happy to get here.

Q. Just a little follow-up connected to that. Do you speak any French? Have you learned any over the years?

SLOANE STEPHENS: Nope, but I'm on my 290th day on Duolingo speaking Spanish (laughing), but not French. So, yeah, something to be proud of, but no French.

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