

# Roland Garros

Thursday, 8 June 2023

Paris, France

## Karolina Muchova

### Press Conference

K. MUCHOVA/A. Sabalenka

7-6, 6-7, 7-5

THE MODERATOR: Karolina, congratulations. Into your first Grand Slam final. Can you just talk us through the emotions after you came back 5-2, match point down, to win today.

KAROLINA MUCHOVA: Thank you very much. Well, emotions, it's been a roller coaster of, yeah, 2-5 in the third, but I still kind of knew it's just one break and I was waiting for my chances. It happened. It happened. I managed to break Aryna and then hold my serve. Then, you never know what's going to happen. I just try to play point by point.

Yeah, super glad that I turn it around and then managed to win the match.

THE MODERATOR: Questions in English.

**Q. Congratulations. You have had such an awful run of injuries over the years. I just wondered, does this result reaching a Grand Slam final, does it feel overdue at all to you? Do you feel like these are the sorts of results that you would have been having all along if you could just have, you know, got a good run of fitness together like you have now?**

KAROLINA MUCHOVA: Well, I didn't really think about it like this. Who knows what can happen. I think everything has its own time. Yeah, in the past, it was not easy. That's actually what makes me to appreciate this result even more now, because I know what I have been through in the past.

Yeah, to be now in a Grand Slam final, it's for sure my dream. I'm super, super glad that I'm here and that I'm gonna play finals on Saturday.

**Q. Congratulations. You appeared to be struggling physically during the match. I wanted to ask you about that. And also how you're feeling today and if the next, whatever, 24 hours, 48 hours, is enough to recover?**

KAROLINA MUCHOVA: Yeah. Well, it's been long



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match. Very, I would say, pretty intensive. Yeah, after two hours, my body felt it. I mean, I was running left, right, trying to bring all the power to every shot. It takes energy.

Yeah, it was long match. So I had little low in the third set. I could feel it. I was going a little bit, I was slowing down.

But then, yeah, it turned again. With all the energy from the people, I was able to bring back some energy that was left there.

And yeah, honestly, I'm pretty tired now, but I have tomorrow a day off, and I'll try to do the best to recover and, yeah, hopefully I'll feel great for Saturday.

**Q. Were you cramping in your legs?**

KAROLINA MUCHOVA: I was a little bit cramping, yes (smiling).

**Q. Match point, in general when you face a match point, how do you approach that moment in a match? Did you, after getting past that today, feel as though your play improved more than hers fell or the other way around?**

KAROLINA MUCHOVA: Facing a match point, I was on a serve and I was focusing honestly on another point and try to put great serve, and that worked.

So I didn't really think of it much like to put any pressure like that's a match point, just another point, put a huge focus. Yeah, I just tried to focus on my serve. I think I served well, and it kind of helped me to win this point.

Then throughout all the match I think I could, here and there, I could really rely on my serve, and it helped me to get out of some crucial moments in the match.

And then you were asking about...

**Q. Did you feel toward the end it was about you improving your play or hers dipping?**

KAROLINA MUCHOVA: Well, I think it was through the match like the first set, end of the first set, I had a better finish to the set, and then the second, it was her. Then the start of the third, it was my low, and then I think it was hers a little bit. She gave me chance, and I took the

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chance. I was ready to take a chance to break her back.

I got on the wave, on the better wave, I would say. I could see that she was struggling a little bit and doing fast mistakes. I was just trying to keep her there.

**Q. This is obviously the high point of your career so far. I want to ask, as has been alluded to, low points, dealing with injuries, and what do you think was the lowest moment you experienced going through that? Did you ever think that maybe tennis, your body just wasn't going to let you work for tennis and you thought about giving it up altogether, perhaps?**

KAROLINA MUCHOVA: Well, there has been many moments, many lows, I would say, from one injury to another. For sure when I missed Australian Open last year, and I was in a pretty bad state healthy-wise, I was working out a lot to try to get back.

You never know. Some doctors told me, you know, maybe you'll not do sport anymore. But I always kept it kind of positive in my mind and tried to work and do all the exercises to be able to come back.

Obviously, as well last year, when my ranking dropped and I was thinking, you know, to play some small tournaments, and I did, I tried it, and there I didn't really feel so great. I wanted to feel like motivated to play to get back, but I couldn't somehow.

So I knew for this year I had few more special rankings left. I was telling myself I will see how it's gonna be after Indian Wells, because that was my last special ranking there. You know, I played great in Dubai, I did great in Indian Wells, I was feeling pretty fine healthy-wise.

It's up-and-downs in life all the time. Now I'm enjoying that I'm on the upper part now.

**Q. Last year you beat Sakkari here early on and obviously got injured. I remember like the image of you being really upset. Then this year you beat Sakkari early on and made it to the final. How satisfying is it to make this run, given what happened last year? Do you know about you've never lost to a player ranked inside the top 3? What is it about you that makes you such a good big-match player?**

KAROLINA MUCHOVA: Well, I didn't know about it (smiling). I think it's maybe my game and the fighting spirit and everything together kind of. Today it was hell of a fight, and I put everything out there. It paid off. That might be, yeah, that might be why.

I forgot the first question again.

**Q. (Off mic.)**

KAROLINA MUCHOVA: Yeah, this year I better taped my ankles here from the first round. That for sure.

Well, I think I don't even want to talk about last year here. It was pretty sad for me. I felt as well that I was getting there. I beat Sakkari. I played great against Amanda and then this happened. So it was another pushback.

But at the end, these things make you stronger and I was struggling a lot last year. I'm here now, so I appreciate it more.

**Q. You said on the court when Mats asked you about experiencing that third set, you said, Just look around. I'm curious, what were you feeling inside of you? Were you feeling any nerves? Were you feeling like the match was sort of slowing down and you were calm? Where was your head and where was your heart at that point when you're mounting that comeback?**

KAROLINA MUCHOVA: I don't even know. I was really just trying to -- I knew it's the semifinals. I play for the final. I was ready to leave it all out there. I did.

At that moment, 2-5, I didn't really know if I'll make it or not. I was just thinking to try and then that she broke my serve and I can break her serve as well. I was trying to, yeah, trying to play every point and put her under pressure, try to get back into the game and mix it up with slices and don't give her easy balls, because she was serving really well.

Yeah, I think that and emotionally, yeah, here and there I had to let it out and scream a little bit. I was trying to keep myself calm during the whole match and to be in control of that.

But then, yeah, it was crazy out there. I could, you know, hear the people and really it was helping me a lot the people around and the energy.

Yeah, I don't know if I have ever played on such a big stage with so many people and, you know, clapping and the trumpets and everything there. It was very nice. For sure, that helped me a lot too.

**Q. There has always been so much praise about your game, the variety of it. I just wonder if at some point while you were developing it, were you always sure you were going to stick to it? Was there any moment where you thought maybe I need to play like everybody else?**

KAROLINA MUCHOVA: No, I never had that moment. I think I have it like that in everything in life, I don't really want to be like anyone else.

Yeah, it's the type of game I enjoy, and I believe in. We



are trying to improve it with the team. Now we can see as well that it works, so that's nice. Nice to know. Nice to acknowledge this. I'll keep it this way (smiling).

**Q. I have seen you perform a cover of the Alanis Morissette song, "If God Was One of Us." Was there a point in the match where you were saying a prayer to yourself or just looking for some inspiration from a higher power so you could come back in the way that you did?**

KAROLINA MUCHOVA: I didn't understand this question.

**Q. You've sung Alanis Morissette, "If God Was One of Us."**

KAROLINA MUCHOVA: Yeah, yeah, I've heard that.

**Q. Did you say a prayer during the match?**

KAROLINA MUCHOVA: Oh, the prayer. No, I did not. Yeah, I was just focusing there on the game. I would repeat myself just, you know, to keep being on the court and play the points the way I was successful. Yeah.

**Q. What do you need to do in the final to become the next Czech to win the women's singles here?**

KAROLINA MUCHOVA: I will for sure need to fight. I'll need to play my best.

Yeah, just to bring the best out of me and play a perfect match to be able to win a Grand Slam.

**Q. I'm sure you have been asked this many times, but just talk about one of the most incredible traditions in our sport, which is the success of Czech women, and why is it such a great tradition and has it helped you?**

KAROLINA MUCHOVA: Yeah, I've been asked this every time I'm in the press conference. I think I'm always trying to come up with a different answer to make it a little, yeah, different. (Laughter.)

I think there is plenty of Czech players playing, good Czech players, and the younger generations, they, you know, look up to, I'll include myself, look up to us, and we practice with them. I think they can see it's possible to be, you know, top tennis player. We have as well great coaches.

Yeah, in Czech, the players is usually as well about the families, the mom and dad, they take good care of a kid, and then I think that's probably the key points to that, why we have so many great Czech as well coming up players.

**Q. Did you look up to a Czech player when you were young?**

KAROLINA MUCHOVA: Not really, not that I would look up to. I would say, yeah, I can see that we play these extra league club matches end of the year, and I played there against Karolina Pliskova or Petra. I didn't even have ranking at that time.

I think I could compete, and it was not like they would beat me, you know, 6-Love, 6-Love. I felt a chance, and I could see, okay, I can as well play good, and that for sure gives you confidence to then bring it on the tour.

**Q. I would like to ask, because you played five times with World No. 1, 2, or 3, and you won every time. So how you do this? If you will play in final against Iga, you will be the favorite?**

KAROLINA MUCHOVA: I don't think I will be the favorite. Yeah, it's nice. I didn't really even know about this statistic, if I say like that.

It just show me that I can play against them. I can compete, and obviously the matches are super close. Even today, match ball down, you really never know if I win or lose, but it's great to know that I have the chance to win and I win against the top players, and that for sure boost my confidence.

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