

# National Bank Open

Saturday, August 10, 2024

Toronto, Ontario, Canada

**Leylah Fernandez**

**Bianca Fernandez**

Press Conference

L. FERNANDEZ-B. FERNANDEZ/Mladenovic-Zhang

7-5, 5-7, 12-10

THE MODERATOR: Congrats on the win, if you could both tell us your emotions at match point.

LEYLAH FERNANDEZ: A lot of stress (laughing). I think we were both pretty stressed in the last point, but we fought through from the first point all the way to the last, and I'm just happy that I was able to play doubles with my sister, and we're in the semifinals together.

THE MODERATOR: Bianca?

BIANCA FERNANDEZ: Yeah, stressed, but grateful. Like she said, we played, we fought, and the last few points it wasn't exactly the most exciting points, but grateful that we won (laughing).

THE MODERATOR: Open it up to questions.

**Q. Does this run with your sister dull any of the anger, or, you were pretty angry the other night after the singles, has this helped lessen the blow or soften the blow, I guess?**

LEYLAH FERNANDEZ: Yes and no. I always try to put aside my feelings and my disappointment after a singles loss, because doubles, it's a new tournament, it's a whole different ball game, so I just try to bring my best attitude forward there.

I'm just lucky to be playing with my sister who knows me so well, and who has been helping me throughout the match how to deal with that frustration.

**Q. It was obviously pretty windy out there today, did you all talk about that before the match and have a game plan for the wind going in, or did you make any adjustments during the match to kind of counter the wind or take advantage of it or try to make fewer**



errors?

LEYLAH FERNANDEZ: Pre-match we did not talk at all. I think we, at least my side, I was like, If I don't think about the wind it's not going to affect me. When we came on court, the one thing I told Bianca is like, Okay, there's wind, move our feet, and just put the ball in, like just put one extra ball in.

BIANCA FERNANDEZ: Yeah, it's kind of the same thing. I thought about, when we were younger, my dad had mentioned how Venus Williams at the time played with Svitolina, and there was a lot of wind, and they asked her how she served in such windy conditions, and she just answered, What wind? So it's like, don't acknowledge it, it won't happen.

**Q. Leylah, curious to hear the difference playing doubles with your sister versus some of the other partners that you've had a lot of success with, like Gabby Dabrowski or Taylor Townsend.**

LEYLAH FERNANDEZ: I think because I'm playing with my sister, she knows me inside and out, so a lot of the times, she's very honest and very straightforward, so there are times where she knows what to tell me to snap me out of like that little funk that I'm going through, or just tells me one or two key words to give me confidence for the next point. Because she knows me that well, she knows what to tell me, and that brings down my nerves, I don't really need to overthink too much, so that's good.

**Q. Leylah, what's it like to share this with your sister, and the same question for you after, if you can answer.**

LEYLAH FERNANDEZ: It's a special moment. We've talked about this for a very long time. Two years ago we got a wildcard here in Toronto, so that was our first time playing together at a big tournament. We won a round and lost the next round, we were very disappointed with that, but I think, since I haven't seen her in so long, sharing the court with her, being in the same vicinity as her where we can just talk, talk smack about anything and everything, basically poking fun at each other, like, it's fun, it's something that I have missed throughout the year, something that I cherish, it's moments that I know will be part of my core memories.



BIANCA FERNANDEZ: It's the same thing. We don't see each other all the time, so it's special. Last time we played together, like she said, we lost, but we were both super stressed out, we didn't play for the fun of it as much as we're doing this tournament. We're having fun on court, we're talking to each other off court, we're honest with each other when we need it, and when we need to pump each other up we know what to say because we've been together since diapers, so, you know, so it's really the same feeling.

**Q. Curious how your time at UCLA has kind of helped develop you as a player and prepare you for the high-pressure points, especially in doubles.**

BIANCA FERNANDEZ: I think what's helping at UCLA was having the support of my teammates and the support of the coaches. I've always been very independent, and having to open myself up to encouragement from other people that isn't my sister or isn't my dad was tough, but it came in handy because now I know how to encourage and be honest with Leylah, who sometimes needs it, and just accept her help as well on court.

Doubles, I wasn't exactly an expert in doubles until I played at UCLA, and they taught me how to view the court in a different manner, I think that's helping us in moments that we need it.

**Q. You talked about, Leylah, your sister knows you so well and is able to maybe get you out of a funk during a match. Can you share, you all have won back-to-back matches in third set 10-point tiebreakers, can you share an example maybe from one of those two matches where you did need something from your sister and she gave you what you needed?**

LEYLAH FERNANDEZ: I won't quote her, because she was pretty mean at that time, I think it was in today's match, but it was the match before where I asked her, So, what do you see? And then she just let out two, three sentences that were kind of mean, but it was needed, I needed to hear that to say, Okay, yeah, I'm not playing well, she's very angry, let me step up now (laughing). I don't think she remembers. I don't think she remembers.

BIANCA FERNANDEZ: Honestly, I don't remember much that I say, I just know that, like I asked her how she felt, she was honest, and then I was like, Great, throw it out the window right now, (laughing), we got to play. It was along those lines.

**Q. I wanted to know what you guys think as your individual strengths, and when you come together on**

**the court how does that complement your game?**

LEYLAH FERNANDEZ: I think what helps is that our coach, he taught us how to be an all-around player, so it was like, I don't need to really worry about my sister's side of the court, I just need to worry about my side, and I have full confidence in her. So, like, I don't think that my strength is greater than hers, or her strength is greater than mine. Like, we learned how to play volleys from the back, we learned how to play angles down the lines, and, you know, thanks to our coach, as I said, we're just pretty comfortable anywhere on court, and we're just there kind of to support the other side of the court.

BIANCA FERNANDEZ: Yeah, tennis-wise, we were both taught to play exactly the same way, even though she's a lefty and I'm a righty, it doesn't change. I think we both have two different personalities, but balances each other out. Naturally, she's always been a very positive, full-of-hope kid, so when I need the positivity, she was there today, like I needed that and she was there.

Just like how she needed a bit of a reality check on certain moment, I was there, because I've always been, No, these are the facts, and I've always been straightforward, so I think that's how we balance each other out on court.

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