

# National Bank Open

Sunday, August 11, 2024

Toronto, Ontario, Canada

**Leylah Fernandez**

**Bianca Fernandez**

Press Conference



**right now might be the best team in the world, what stood out playing against them tonight?**

LEYLAH FERNANDEZ: They played good and, unfortunately, I played bad, I wasn't able to help out my sister as much. So, yeah, just got to improve, I just got to get better, and that's pretty much it.

BIANCA FERNANDEZ: I just think we both played bad in different moments, it wasn't just you, Leylah. You know, biggest takeaway is that they crowded the net, we had to get out of the middle, and we were a little bit too passive in the beginning.

Second set, yeah, we put a bit more pressure, they felt the pressure a bit more, and I just think since they had a bit more confidence from that first set they were able to pull it off, so just start stronger next time.

DABROWSKI-ROUTLIFFE/L. Fernandez-B. Fernandez

6-2, 6-4

THE MODERATOR: Questions for Leylah and Bianca.

**Q. Wondering how it felt to play on the big court under the lights tonight.**

BIANCA FERNANDEZ: You know, I practiced on that court earlier this week, so it wasn't that much of a surprise. I think it was fun to have a crowd watching this time. It was a little different playing at night for me, I haven't played at night ever, so, but it was fun.

**Q. For both of you, what would be maybe your biggest takeaways from this week together in doubles and what you managed to accomplish reaching the semis?**

LEYLAH FERNANDEZ: You know, I think the biggest takeaway for us here, let's just say personal-wise, is playing with my sister, like that would be like my biggest takeaway, just the enjoyment of sharing the court with her.

Tennis-wise, it was great to see how well we played together, and that we get to see also what we can improve on for the future. Hopefully we get more opportunities to play together, and we can grow from this tournament with a good result.

BIANCA FERNANDEZ: Yeah, the biggest takeaway is the fact that we don't play doubles often, we don't play doubles together often, and the fact that we were able to get to semifinals by just grit and playing together and having fun together, and just wanting to win one extra point than the other team just proves that we have a bright future, quote, unquote, cringe.

LEYLAH FERNANDEZ: Hopefully (laughing).

**Q. What stood out playing against, you played with Gaby, of course, with great success, Gaby and Erin**

**Q. To be able to play as sisters, that is a big thing, and coming to semifinals is a really huge thing. I was wondering, do you have any favorite memories from this tournament apart from just playing together, but still any favorite memories from this week?**

LEYLAH FERNANDEZ: I think my favorite memory is, actually I have a few, the first one is our first-round match at the end when we won our first round, that was fun. I was glad that, not only was I able to win it my sister, but we were able to celebrate it a little bit with our dad.

Then my second favorite memory would actually be yesterday. I think yesterday we didn't play a beautiful tennis match, but we pulled it off somehow, we were able to kind of lift each other up in certain moments. At the end of that match we did like kind of a high five, and the funny thing is we didn't plan that, we didn't even like talk about it, my sister just looked in my eye, and I looked at her, and we were like, Okay, we know what we want to do, so that was a funny moment that we talked about afterwards.

Lastly, my personal favorite, the top, top notch is when she was, as she likes to say, like gave me a reality check during one of the matches, so that was my personal favorite, because I haven't had a partner who was able, who has done that.



Sometimes I do need it. Sometimes when I ask them, like, what is happening, what do you think I should do, she was strong enough and brave enough to tell me what to do and how she viewed the match, and that kind of snapped me out of my little funk there.

BIANCA FERNANDEZ: You know, other than, like you said, playing with my sister, and like she said, celebrating with our dad and her, I just find that during this tournament it was training with her, a personal favorite of mine, and getting to see family that we haven't seen in years, getting to at least say hello, hug them after the matches. I haven't seen my grandfather in so many years, so it was very heart warming to see him. It's shown how many years has passed, so I felt bad at the same time.

Then, just for me it's personally learning, having to, I stepped away from school this summer, and I just, I'm absorbing everything, even though some messages aren't directed to me, I'm just learning, learning from my sister, learning from my dad, from the hitter, from Abdul the fitness coach, everything, just absorbing.

**Q. Looking beyond this week what are your goals as a doubles team, and how does this experience shape your outlook for the future?**

LEYLAH FERNANDEZ: You know, we do hope that we get to play 2028 Olympics in L.A. together, so that would be our top, like No. 1 goal. Hopefully, we would have more opportunities to play together, to play tournaments together, and then when we do have time to train together it's more practice doubles, see some patterns of play that we can refine, and see what we can do better. Our No. 1 goal is the 2028 Olympics.

BIANCA FERNANDEZ: Yeah, 2028, UCLA stomping grounds for me (laughing), my school, why wouldn't I want to play at the Olympics there. We have four years to improve, so why not.

**Q. Curious, I believe you're still using the Puma Stewie shoes right now, just curious what the decision was to go with them, because I think they are a basketball shoe, and because I know Coco has a similar high cut that she wears, wondering what the feel was like compared to a tennis shoe.**

LEYLAH FERNANDEZ: The past couple of years I've been trying to find a tennis shoe for myself, and it's been hard. There's always something that I don't like and I don't feel comfortable with. Sometimes on court it just feels like I'm a little bit slower than I should be.

Then when I tried the Stewie and I kind of loved how light it

was, and also the style of it, it's different, it kind of pops out in style, so, you know, Stewie's are kind of cool to see, and I kind of enjoy playing with them, and we'll see in the future what brand of shoes I'll be wearing. There's exciting projects coming up.

**Q. Everybody always says that going on a big run like this can help momentum moving forward, but from your perspective how does that actually translate, and sort of what do you think from this tournament can help you in the future in both singles and doubles?**

LEYLAH FERNANDEZ: I don't know (laughing). I honestly have no idea what to tell you because I can't see the future. Sometimes a nice doubles run does help on the singles, other times it just helps only in doubles, sometimes a singles run helps in doubles, so you never really know what a player feels. For me the only thing I do know is that I'm going to keep my head down, work hard, and keep improving every day, and hopefully the results will come. I can't control wins or losses, but what I can control is my attitude and my dedication and my hard work, so that's all I can tell you.

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