

Omnium Banque Nationale

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Leylah Fernandez

Press Conference



L. FERNANDEZ/B. Haddad Maia

7-5, 5-7, 6-3

THE MODERATOR: Leylah, congratulations on your great win today. Can you just talk us through that moment when you lost the second set after having match point and how you turned it around in the third to get the victory today?

LEYLAH FERNANDEZ: Yeah, well, first of all, thank you. I think this whole match has been a lot of up and down, but I knew it was going to come because Bia, she's a fighter, and she's a great player. She's a top-20 player.

She has done tremendous this year, so I knew it was going to be a fight. I had a couple of opportunities in the first set to make it 5-2. She fought back. In the second set I was up 3-1. She fought back.

So I wasn't surprised when she won the second set, and I just thought of, okay, let's reset, refocus, take it one point at a time and enjoy the moment, enjoy the fight.

You know, the crowd is here to cheer for you. I'm just trying to smile through it and smile through the battle. I'm glad that today the balls went in on important moments and that I got the win.

THE MODERATOR: English questions, please.

Q. I'm just wondering how a win like that, what does it do for your confidence? It seemed like she was chasing you the entire match, a player that's ranked higher than you. I wonder what that does for you mentally?

LEYLAH FERNANDEZ: It definitely gives me confidence. I think mainly because I've worked hard all year-round.

You know, I was able to get to a point today where I was feeling more in control and that I was dictating the points, and that's what we want.

I was able to execute the game plan, execute what I've been training. Some points it went in. Other points it went

out, but at least I was able to say that I was able to dictate, and I was glad that I got to execute my game plan.

Q. What does it take for it all to come together the way that it did today? I mean, nobody questions your work ethic, and I know that you've been working really hard to get this, but why did it happen today? What was the key?

LEYLAH FERNANDEZ: I think one is patience and then trust, faith. You know, I think a lot of positivity.

It's hard because throughout the year there's a lot of ups and downs, wins, losses, and sometimes you're doing the right things, but the results aren't coming, and you just have to keep trusting the process, have faith in your game and in the journey.

I'm glad that today it all came piecing together, and I think this win means a lot to me, and I think it's going to help me for future matches, tournaments.

Q. So you did a pretty good job of converting your break points today, but one of the ones you didn't convert was the match point in the second set.

LEYLAH FERNANDEZ: Unfortunate, huh (laughing)?

Q. I was going to say, how long does it take you to kind of get over that mental hurdle and refocus so you can keep going?

LEYLAH FERNANDEZ: That's actually hard because when I lost that match point, I was beating myself up, and then I lost the second set.

I thought, okay, it's going to be hard. Let's just fight. Let's forget about it, first of all.

I looked at my box, and they just told me to reset, and I'm glad that I listened to them, and I'm glad that they did have the confidence in me to keep going and keep fighting.

Then at the end of the day I was just trying to enjoy the moment playing on stadium court. It was practically a night match, so I got to experience the fans cheering me on. I was just so happy that I got to play in Montreal, so I think

...quand tout est dit, nous avons terminé.



that definitely helped me to get back on track.

Q. Your ranking is where it is, and I'm just kind of wondering if there's ever been the doubts of whether or not you could kind of have these types of moments again against top opposition and what it means for you to be able to get it here?

LEYLAH FERNANDEZ: Yeah, I think throughout a player's career at least for me I do have a lot of doubt because of the results not coming and rankings dropping, but I'm lucky to have a great support team who is positive and who are saying don't look at the rankings, just focus on the work, focus on the present moment.

Then I think today's win means a lot to me because then I get to say even though my ranking is not there, my level of play is getting better, and that's the most important thing.

I don't need to think about the ranking. I just need to think of my development and my game, if it's improving or not. I'm glad that today playing against a top-20 player I can see that my game has definitely gotten better.

I just have to keep going on this track, this road, and hopefully get ready for future tournaments.

Q. You've never played Danielle Collins. Do you know anything about her? Do you know what sort of game you're expecting tomorrow?

LEYLAH FERNANDEZ: I know she's going to be one tough cookie (laughing). She's a great player.

I've watched her play for a long time now, and she's gone to a couple of Grand Slam Finals. I've seen her fight through so many injuries and so many matches, too, where it looked like she's out, but she comes back and wins them.

So it's going to be a complicated match. I'm just going to talk with my coach and see what we're going to do, what's the game plan, and hopefully I can execute it.

Q. How good did you feel about your backhand today?

LEYLAH FERNANDEZ: My backhand today, it felt great. I think my overall game, it felt good, and I'm glad that today I was able to trust it at 100%. I got some winners on important moments.

Q. The match came in at 2 hours and 55 minutes, just under 3 hours. How do you both mentally and physically kind of stay in the zone and not get too high or too low throughout the entirety of the 3 hours?

LEYLAH FERNANDEZ: I think the adrenaline plays a big part of it, and also, I know the work that I've been putting in training in fitness in training sessions. I try to use that as motivation that I can keep going.

When we hit the two-hour mark, I saw the time, and I'm thinking I can play one more hour. I can do one more. I was happy that physically I was strong enough to stay at a high level.

Then mentally I think the crowd definitely helped me a lot today to calm down my negativity, but then it's also, like I said, training sessions.

We've worked hard. I've been through some tough training sessions, and I think those moments, it has helped me to refocus today and not think about long matches, but more of the point that's coming next.

THE MODERATOR: Questions in French, please.

Q. On the court you said it was your favorite victory. It's sometimes things you say just after the match with the emotions, but one hour later do you still think that?

LEYLAH FERNANDEZ: Yes, it's my favorite match. More specifically because it was a very tough match. Last year I played her second round in Toronto, and I lost that match, and today I was able to get even with her. It feels good.

And also I was able to play in a stadium that was completely full, and it's a privilege. It's fantastic to be able to win at home in front of all that crowd, and it gives me even more confidence for the next match and the next tournaments.

It is a very special moment for me because I haven't won two matches in a row for a long time, and being able to do that at home is a great help.

Q. You talked about it in English, but I would like you to tell me something about Danielle Collins. Maybe you would have preferred to play Sakkari to get revenge from last week.

LEYLAH FERNANDEZ: Danielle is a very good player. She has a complicated game. She is improving in her ranking, but I've been seeing her play for a long time, and I see how she fights and how she comes back after injuries.

Even if she is losing in a match, she is able to come back. I don't know how she does that.

I know the match will be difficult. I hope it's going to be a good match to watch, but I'm going to talk with my coach to



see what game plan I have to follow.

Q. Maybe Eugenie Bouchard can help you with the game plan?

LEYLAH FERNANDEZ: Well, I have a very good team, and I trust my team. I will see what they tell me, and I'll try to execute the game plan they tell me.

Q. After the second set how was your mindset to start that third set, especially after having a match point? How did you manage to restart again the fight?

LEYLAH FERNANDEZ: Well, we had a break between the second set and the third set, and I was able to calm down during that time.

Unfortunately, I couldn't go to the bathroom, but I was able to stay on the court and listen to good music, and I was thinking I should take one point at a time.

I want to remain positive, and I was happy that I was able to have fun on the court at that particular moment and to smile in spite of the difficult moment.

Often it's easy in those moments to throw your racket or to give up, but I'm happy because today I was able to smile in that moment and look at my opponent and make her feel I was there to fight. It was a difficult match for both of us.

Q. I would like to know in this difficult year for you and I know you don't look at the ranking, but what does this victory represent for you? Is that a way of relaunching your season?

LEYLAH FERNANDEZ: Yes, I hope it's going to revitalize my season. Winning against a top-20 is very special. It's been more than a year since I have won against a good player like her.

I believe that all the work I've been doing in the past years finally is showing in a match. I was able to execute my match plan, my game, and I had fun on the court.

Q. I had a question that is not about the match. Coco Gauff today said that she was asked for autographs by kids thinking she was you. I see you didn't know about that. Has it happened to you also to be mistaken for another player?

LEYLAH FERNANDEZ: Oh, yes. Sometimes fans think I am Coco Gauff. It's funny because then you see all the joy in the eyes of those kids thinking you are some player, and I have to tell them, no, I am not that player, and you can see the joy going away from their eyes.

Otherwise, it's funny. Both of us are young. Well, I'm happy that for once -- well, I don't know how to answer that, but it's a strange situation. We all went through it.

I am happy to know that more kids want my autograph instead of Coco Gauff's autograph. It's a good sign.

Q. You were talking in English about resetting after losing that match point. It seems that you do that looking at the wall behind you. What happens in your mind at that moment?

LEYLAH FERNANDEZ: Many things go through my mind, many words, encouraging words, or sometimes negative words. So when I look at the wall, I try to think only to one single word, a keyword.

Sometimes it's a word from a song or a funny word like "fish," just to help me think about something else before I go back to the baseline and think about my game plan.

So I try to think about only one thing, and when I turn back and look at my opponent, I know I'm ready to fight.

As I said, it depends on the situation. Sometimes it's "fish." Other times it's "kill it," and it could be "one point at a time" or "just look at the ball," in the three languages.

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