

Omnium Banque Nationale

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Victoria Mboko

Press Conference

V. MBOKO/J. Bouzas Maneiro

6-4, 6-2

THE MODERATOR: Victoria, congratulations. A lot of firsts today, but you're through to the semifinal. How does it feel to be at this stage?

VICTORIA MBOKO: Yeah, so I feel really happy, first of all. To have such an achievement at a tournament like this is really a milestone for me, and I'm just so happy that I've got to have this whole experience in Montreal.

Overall I don't have many words to say, but I just feel so content and so happy.

THE MODERATOR: Questions in English.

Q. What changed or what was the difference as the second set went on?

VICTORIA MBOKO: As the second set went on... well, I feel like I kind of had a little bit of a slow, rocky start in the second set. I mean, I feel like I had to find a way to stay with her in the rallies.

I mean, Jessica, she's a really solid player, and she's hitting really hard shots and very consistent shots. So I felt like I needed to up my level, and I needed to up my movement and up my focus.

Overall I think that was just my main focus during the whole second set. I really wanted to pump myself up a lot too. Yeah, I think that made like a pretty big change in the match.

Q. Genie Bouchard was singing your praises earlier this week. What have you learned from her during watching her play?

VICTORIA MBOKO: Well, I haven't really watched Genie play a lot, but you know, I feel like she was kind of the first Canadian woman to kind of set a lot of milestones for Canadian tennis.



So I think she's just been an inspiration for a lot of young girls like me. Yeah, I mean, I feel like our game styles could be also pretty different. That's all I can really say.

Q. If you had to describe what you did in the second set especially tonight, what do you think you showed people about you tonight in the second set?

VICTORIA MBOKO: I mean, I really put in a lot of effort to really fight, and I was down like 2-0. She broke me in the first game of the second set. So I guess I could show that I was a fighter in that situation, I could say.

But no, yeah, I think that moment was just pure fight-or-flight kind of instincts. I really wanted to do the best I could to break her back, and I did everything in my power to stay in there and match her, match what she was producing.

Q. Just wondering, how difficult was it to maybe come down after that win against Coco and maybe just refocus after what was the biggest win of your young career?

VICTORIA MBOKO: Yeah. Well, of course, the play against Coco, it was a really special experience, and I was really happy to have won that day. But you know, at the end of the day, I'm still in the tournament, so it's not like I went to celebrate or anything. I was still kind of locked in like I normally am in a tournament.

You play a tournament because you want to win it. So I think I just had that kind of mentality. Yeah, that's just it.

Q. So it's been a lot this week. How tired are you, first? How are you managing this amount of work mentally and physically so far?

VICTORIA MBOKO: Well, I mean, I don't feel fresh, you know, but I also don't feel so tired. I think it helps that we had a day in between every single day to kind of regroup and collect myself.

No, every day I've just been doing what I needed to do to recover well. Most of the days has been the night match, so I do have a lot of time in the day to, like, take naps and do what I need to do to prepare for the night.



Yeah, I think I feel pretty okay right now.

Q. You faced Rybakina just 12 days ago. To us it seems like it's a century ago. How do you feel just given the strides you've made since the last time you faced her?

VICTORIA MBOKO: Yeah, I play Rybakina in the next round, and of course, I played her in Washington as well. Of course, I'm not expecting an easy match whatsoever. I played her, so I know what to expect.

No, I think I just need to maybe up my level a little bit and just to stay in there with her. You know, she has really great groundstrokes, really great serves. So I guess on that day I want to do my best to kind of stay in there with her.

Q. Does the 12-day thing sound crazy to you?

VICTORIA MBOKO: The 12-day thing, to be honest, because everything is so new to me, I really haven't had time to even think about what my stance is on that.

I mean, right now it feels good that I have days off in between and it feels nice, but you know, there's a tournament coming up really soon next week.

But right now I'm honestly just focused on this week right now. I didn't have time to even think about it.

Q. If I'm not wrong, at the end of the match against Coco you grabbed your head between your hands. This time you just did a fist pump. Did anything change in your mindset? Now it's like this, I want to go further. It's not just I just won against a top-2 player, but I want more and more, and this may be my tournament.

VICTORIA MBOKO: Yeah, to be honest, my celebrations, they just come naturally. I don't know. Nothing really comes to mind when I won the match, so I just do what exactly what I'm feeling.

I guess today I just happened to just give the fist pump, I don't know. I have the exact same excitement as I won against Coco or even the round before. Every single round I've been having the same amount of content when I've been winning the match.

Every day I always want to move on to the next round, and I always want to reach for the gold and reach for the championship. No, I mean, I'm just really happy, in general.

Q. Just to be sure, are you going to Cincinnati?

VICTORIA MBOKO: Well, right now, I mean, I'm entered in, but I'm not sure. I want to see how I'm going to do here first. It's still up in the air. Maybe, maybe not. I don't know.

Q. You are obviously just 18. What is your secret for keeping your composure in those tough moments?

VICTORIA MBOKO: I don't want to say there's really a secret. I think being calm in such stressful situations is key to kind of delivering what you want to do in those such tight moments.

I mean, the human reaction is always to kind of tense up and act out, but I think if I project calmness and relaxness, I'm going to also have the same thing in my head. Yeah, I feel like if I don't really think about it too much and I keep it all cool in my head, that's what I'm projecting on court.

That's I think what's been helping me get through those tough and tight situations.

Q. Sometime between Roland Garros after three years you had your braces out. I'm just wondering, what does it feel like to have them taken out, and how do you feel without them?

VICTORIA MBOKO: I mean, they feel great (smiling). I didn't have them off -- I had them off not too long ago. Yeah, it feels great to have a nice, white smile (smiling).

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