

# US OPEN

Sunday, September 3, 2023

New York, New York, USA

## Sorana Cirstea

### Press Conference

S. CIRSTEAB. Bencic

6-3, 6-3

**THE MODERATOR:** Straight sets. Hour and 24 minutes. Your thoughts on your level of play today as you advance into the second week of the US Open.

**SORANA CIRSTEAB:** Yeah, I'm very happy of course with the win. I'm very happy with the way I started the match today. I think I started really strong, and I sent quite a good message right from the beginning.

I have played quite solid beginning to end. I think a few chances escaped my hand in the second, but I was able to refocus straightaway.

I'm very, very happy with the way I handled mentally the match today and also with the way I have played throughout the whole match.

**THE MODERATOR:** Questions.

**Q. Your first Grand Slam quarterfinal since 2019. For all the hard work you put in and how you started that match 5-Love only for Belinda to start to play well, just your thoughts on how you were able to do this today.**

**SORANA CIRSTEAB:** Yes, as I mentioned, I think I have been playing quite well for a while. I felt a lot of times I came out a bit short, like the results would not match the work I have put in.

It's definitely nice to get here in the quarterfinal, because again, as I mentioned, I feel I have been doing the right things for a while.

Today I treat it like any other match. I have been starting the whole tournament quite well, and I think that was the key today to go up 5-Love quite quickly. And then of course she's a great player so she started to swing more, started to be more aggressive.

Then also I think the early break in the second set, you



know, was very important to go a set and a break up. Then of course she had to catch up to me.

Again, as I mentioned, I think that the solid start at the beginning was key today.

**Q. With how friendly she's been with you and how happy she was despite her disappointment, in talking to us, what's been the best messages that you have received so far getting to the quarterfinals of a slam again? How did Thomas feel you played that match tactically?**

**SORANA CIRSTEAB:** Yes, first of all, Belinda is a sweetheart. We get along so good. We have been having lockers next to each other the whole week and been congratulating each other after every match up to here.

She's a great girl and has amazing fair play and she's amazing for the game.

The only people I have talked to so far was my coach, my boyfriend, and my family. I try to keep it short always. Just the few people that are close to me in the good times and bad times. Then I'll get later on to the rest.

But for me, the most important is I'm here and to do all the professional things. I think taking care of the messages, I can do that later (smiling).

**Q. In terms of you were saying doing all the work, doing all the right things, maybe not getting those results on court in recent weeks, for you, what's the key to then getting the result to then having things turn and break your way the way they have here in New York?**

**SORANA CIRSTEAB:** Yeah, I don't think there is any magic thing or any key. I wish I had that one, you know, and I can turn it on and off (smiling).

Again, sooner or later if you put in the hard work, it comes. The last couple of weeks I was a little bit frustrated because I have played from Washington all those tournaments, had a tight one in Montreal, lost a very tight one in Cincy. I kept telling Thomas, you know what I mean, I don't understand why it's not coming together, I'm doing all the right things, I'm playing well. Mentally I have



improved so much, and I'm so much better on the court.

He said, Just keep going, just keep going. It will come. Also, if it doesn't come, at least you can rest your head at night on the pillow and say you have done everything I could. It's a sport you play against other girls, and they can come out better than you that day or that week or in general.

So it's not a key or a magic. It's just keep believing and keep putting in the work. I think also mentally I have improved. I'm much calmer on the court.

**Q. I was thinking about your next opponent, Karolina Muchova, also won today. You beat her in Montreal this year. Lost to her in 2020 I think. What are your thoughts on playing her?**

**SORANA CIRSTEIA:** I beat her this year in Miami, lost in Montreal with her. We've had very tough matches, very tight battles every time we played against each other. Only this year we played three times so I think we know each other quite well. I know her; she knows me.

Again, she's a very talented player. She's been playing great throughout the whole year. I'm really expecting a tough one. But again, I'm very happy and grateful to be here. I'm gonna take this next opportunity to give my all, and I think it's going to be a very fun match.

**Q. What does it mean for you to make the quarterfinals here? You're very calm right now, and you seem to be taking it all in stride and played a pretty clinical match today. Does this feel like a big result to you, or are you just zoned in on the next thing? Where are you at?**

**SORANA CIRSTEIA:** No, I'm happy. It's just that I don't show too much. I don't show too much when I'm very happy or very sad. I try to be very neutral (smiling).

But of course I'm very happy, because it's nice, you know, to get this reward. Unfortunately in tennis, not all the work you've put in it's always rewarded. You can just, there are so many girls, and also in my case, you work so hard and the results do not come.

So it's nice to work hard and also get the reward. Definitely I'm very happy, and I've shared a big smile with Thomas, my coach, in the gym after, I called my family, called my boyfriend.

Of course it's a wonderful match for me, but we are still here, so head in the game, and now back to the routines. Tomorrow practice day and Tuesday back to work.

**Q. Just on that point, as you say, a lot of the players in the locker room say very similar things about working really hard and not getting the results, and that frustration can build and become very, very frustrating. For you, as a player who is getting this result later in your career, now back in a quarterfinal, do you feel your journey to here is different in any way, or is this kind of a...**

**SORANA CIRSTEIA:** Yes, I understood perfect. Again, life is not fair in sports and out of sports. So many people work hard and not everyone gets rewarded. Unfortunately this is life.

But again, I'm very happy to be here, and I know, like you said, everyone is working for this, you know. So it's special to be here today, and I'm gonna take everything in and enjoy it and then think about the match on Tuesday from tomorrow on.

But definitely today I'm going to enjoy it, and again, it feels nice to get rewarded, but also, if I wouldn't have this result, you know, I have been very glad with the last couple of years of my career. I think I gave everything.

This is where Thomas helped me a lot. You know, like he said, okay, I know it's a cliché, It's not about the destination, it's about the journey. So try to enjoy the daily process.

Since he came in I started to enjoy practicing. I always looked forward to the matches. I was very competitive kind of person. I am like that. I always enjoyed the matches much more than the practices. But now I'm enjoying also the practices. I'm enjoying the traveling more. I'm enjoying the little things, because everything, it's part of the tennis year and tennis career.

I think this will be the difference now, that I'm not so much focused on the results and, like, on the destination. It's more on the day-to-day work.

Okay, let's try to enjoy today. Doesn't matter what's happening tomorrow. Focus on today and just go through your daily work with the best attitude and the best effort you can.

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