

US OPEN

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Madison Keys

Press Conference

M. KEYS/J. Pegula

6-1, 6-3

THE MODERATOR: Straights sets. Just a hair over an hour. Very crisp performance. Dominating first set. What were you telling yourself in the changeover before the second set?

MADISON KEYS: It was definitely just thinking to try to keep it up, and expected her level to get a little bit better. Not to get flustered if things got a little bit tighter, and if she was able to break or anything like that, and just really try and stay in the moment.

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

Q. It's pretty clear from the start that you were hitting so well, I thought, but how quickly do you realize that you were kind of in that zone or just hitting as well as you probably think you can?

MADISON KEYS: Honestly I feel like today it was just really focused on trying to keep rallies short, just because Jess is so good. The longer the rally gets, the better Jess seems to get.

It was really just trying to focus on trying to hit the best ball that I could in the first one or two balls of the rallies and luckily things just kind of went my way today.

Q. Could you take us back, I guess, five or six years to those tournaments here after you had such great success here, and coming here and sort of being the person everyone was talking about and what that experience was like for you and how this one is a little different, given where you are in your career now.

MADISON KEYS: I mean, I think having success here those years ago, I obviously was coming in, you know, Jess wasn't playing at the time, Coco wasn't playing at the time, so was usually one of the ones that people were talking about.



I think having a lot of success here was really great for me. The past couple of years have, you know, come in and not been able to kind of have the run that I wanted to be able to have.

This year I just have been trying honestly not to have any expectations and just go out and play tennis and just focus on that.

Luckily, you know, I'm into the quarterfinals here.

Q. Was it harder to come in, knowing that everyone was talking about you, pictures on billboards, things like that?

MADISON KEYS: I mean, yes and no. I think it's just kind of part of how the game is. You know, I think there was times when after my final I was able to follow it up with a semifinal run, so I was able to kind of deal with those expectations well.

Q. Wonder whether you watched the Wimbledon final, and regardless, how much you know about Vondrousova's game and her journey to where she is today?

MADISON KEYS: To be completely honest, I didn't watch a ton of the Wimbledon final, but she's a great player. I mean, 2019 she made the Roland Garros final, as well. I think her career has only not been as good as it could be just because of injuries and things like that. Her level is 100% there and she's a really great player.

Seeing that she's been able to now win a Grand Slam and be in the quarterfinals here, I think she has a unique style because I think she balances being a little bit trickier and things like that but also has some pretty good power and finesse.

Q. What do you consider the biggest challenge for you against that game that you just described?

MADISON KEYS: I mean, honestly it's just that, I mean, when people are playing well, you have to try to figure out what their weaknesses are. Luckily that's what you have a coach for, to give you a game plan. Hopefully I can follow the game plan as well as I did today.



Q. You have talked about letting go of expectations. You mentioned it in Australia last year as well. How do you go about goal setting when you're trying to not also think about results of matches? Are you just focused on, Okay, here's what I'm going to work on in practice and how I'm going about playing? How does that work for you?

MADISON KEYS: I feel like when I'm doing really well, my goals are much more based around, like, trying to get to the net more or working on adding slices into sets or going more for my second serve, things like that, where I have full control over those sorts of things instead of trying to have performance-based only.

So my goals are a lot more trying to focus on what I'm trying to add to my game.

Q. Given that you have kind of been letting go, what's the significance for you of making back-to-back quarterfinal runs now for the first time in a few years?

MADISON KEYS: It's really great. I've been working really hard. The beginning half of this year was pretty tough, health-wise and just personal-wise and all of it. So being able to just be able to have back-to-back quarterfinals after a lot of really hard work, it's really great.

Q. Is it different on court when you're playing against a left-hander? Do you ever prepare for those matches and will you this time by practicing with a lefty?

MADISON KEYS: I definitely think there is a difference when you're playing a lefty. Obviously it's mostly the serve. Just the spin that comes in is completely different than what you're used to seeing.

In most cases, whenever possible, I try to get a lefty almost exclusively just to start seeing some of those spins on the serve.

Q. You have been talking about letting go of expectations. Has that been the key of sort of your mental health game and staying positive over the years? Just talk about that. How have you stayed positive, what have been the keys of your approach to mental health?

MADISON KEYS: It's definitely, mental health is definitely a lot better when I'm playing with lower expectations and not putting as much pressure on myself and just kind of having a better approach to the game, having it, you know, really just trying to be a lot more fun and focusing on that.

I mean, after all these years playing, it's kind of the point

now where I don't have to be out here anymore. I get to be out here. As long as I'm having fun and choose to be out here, then I'm going to continue playing, but kind of taking away that extra kind of feeling of, like, I have to do this and if things go wrong, then what am I going to do, has been much better for my mental health.

Q. As you go deeper in a tournament, how are you able to just block out the expectations part of it? Obviously next match is quarterfinals. The deeper you go, the higher the stakes. What do you do to try and block out the extra stuff?

MADISON KEYS: I think you just take every match as another match. Obviously that gets a little bit tougher as you get closer to the end of the tournament, but I think just being honest with yourself that it's fine if you start feeling some nerves and pressure and things like that, but at the end of the day it's just another tennis match.

Q. You have projected a lot of belief throughout this tournament, but after today when you had the performance you did against a player of Jess's caliber, what do you think you have maybe proven to yourself with the run that you're on right now?

MADISON KEYS: I definitely think, you know, today I played a really good match against a really great tennis player. Being able to do that after I think having pretty solid level so far this entire tournament, I just, you know, I think I have plenty of good tennis left in me.

Q. By this stage of the season, is it harder to be fresh mentally or physically?

MADISON KEYS: Both. Both (smiling).

Q. What do you do to try to have that this far into a long, difficult year?

MADISON KEYS: I think you just have to, you know, try to keep thinking about the things that you have been doing well and what's gotten you in a good position so far this year. Just kind of try to keep focusing on doing that and really just taking it match by match, because I think if you start trying to look at the big picture of what's coming, what's left, all of that, it just makes you feel a little bit overwhelmed.

Q. You spoke to your friendship with Jess. You guys have both made a lot of deep runs at slams. Do you guys, when you're talking off-court, does tennis come up most of the time or do you try...

MADISON KEYS: No. We don't talk much about tennis.



