

BNP Paribas Open

Saturday, March 12, 2016

Christina McHale

Press Conference

C. McHALE/G. Muguruza

7-5, 6-1

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. How good does that win feel today?

CHRISTINA McHALE: Yeah, it feels really good. Obviously it's been a while since I had a win like that, so it definitely feels really good.

I think I did a good job today of just, yeah, staying playing point by point and playing really good defense, because obviously she likes to attack a lot.

Yeah.

Q. It's been a really good few weeks for you since the Australian Open. Can you talk about some of the work you did maybe in the offseason as a leadup to kind of build towards today?

CHRISTINA McHALE: Yeah. I mean, I thought I had a really good offseason. I put in a lot of work both in the gym and off the court.

Unfortunately Australia I had a tough draw there, but I really wanted to get matches. So then I went after the second week and played a 50 in Hawaii and got some matches there. That really helped.

And then, yeah, I just have played a bunch the last few weeks. I think that's given me confidence. Playing matches is what I needed, and being healthy this year. I had a shoulder injury start of last year. Just being able to play a lot I think has helped.

Q. The last time you beat a top 5 player was here at Indian Wells.

CHRISTINA McHALE: I know. They told me four years ago.

Q. Can you reflect on what's happened in between?

CHRISTINA McHALE: Yeah. I mean, I didn't think it was four years ago. For me it doesn't feel like it's been that long.

But I think, yeah, obviously, you know, you have a lot of ups and downs throughout your career, and I hope that it won't be another four years before I have another



top-5 win.

Q. What is it about this tournament? Obviously not just those wins, but you have had some good showings out here.

CHRISTINA McHALE: I love playing here. I think the crowd really gets into it. They, yeah, really get behind the American players.

I think the surface, it suits my style of play. You know, gets up pretty high on these courts, so I think it helps my style of play. Yeah, I mean, I love playing in the U.S. I love these tournaments. Yeah, I love being here.

Q. Pretty big day for New Jersey, big week. Fairleigh Dickinson made the NCAAs; Seton Hall...

CHRISTINA McHALE: Yeah, I didn't know that. Yeah, that's amazing. Go New Jersey. (Laughter.)

Q. How are you approaching this match? Did you go in saying, I have a good chance to win, or when did you start to feel, Okay, I could really get this?

CHRISTINA McHALE: I obviously knew it was going to be a tough match going in. But, yeah, I knew if I could get a lot of balls back and look for my forehand and, you know, try and play good defense, try and get a lot of balls back, I would have some sort of a shot.

Yeah, I knew I'd have to serve well, as well. I think as I was playing myself more and more into the match, I started feeling more comfortable.

Yeah, I mean, but until the last point I really just was trying to stay focused and not think about the outcome.

Q. It feels like anyone can win any match on the tour these days. Does that affect your thinking of what you can do?

CHRISTINA McHALE: I mean, I think my mentality kind of stays the same no matter what. Yeah, just trying to focus on the things out there that I can control. Yeah, just hope that I can, you know, each time bring out some of my best tennis.

Q. When you look at the draw, a lot of seeds have already fallen yesterday and today.

CHRISTINA McHALE: Yeah, I did see that. I normally don't look at the whole draw, but I did see that. I think

everyone is playing really well right now.

I think the quality of the players is improving, and I think, yeah, that's maybe why.

Q. Does that change your attitude, that when you play one of these top players you know that -- everyone feels like they have a chance?

CHRISTINA McHALE: I mean, I don't think so, because I don't have a different mentality playing a top player versus someone ranked lower. My mentality, I try to keep it the same no matter who I'm playing.

Q. Another tennis player added to your family?

CHRISTINA McHALE: Yeah.

Q. What's your thoughts on that news?

CHRISTINA McHALE: Yeah, I'm so excited for them. Obviously Ryan has been a friend of mine since the juniors, you know. Yeah, so that was exciting news. My sister is obviously thrilled. So, yeah. It's been a fun week.

Q. A random question. You tend to play in long sleeves.

CHRISTINA McHALE: Yeah.

Q. Today you won, and then you took your long sleeve off to do the on-court interview. That's kind of a weird flip. Explain all of that.

CHRISTINA McHALE: Yeah, I wear it to protect myself from the sun. Yeah, you know, we are in the sun so much and skin cancer and all that. But for the interview I didn't want to be wearing my long sleeve (laughter). I prefer if I don't have to wear it, but I protect self from the sun.

Q. That's mainly it? More of that?

CHRISTINA McHALE: Yeah.

Q. Have you had issues with sun in the past?

CHRISTINA McHALE: No, but just the amount of time we spend, I don't want to take a chance. Yeah.

Q. This is a weird tournament like that. You can play during the day where it's 90, or you play at the hard times, 4:00 or 5:00. Once that sun goes down it can change 20 degrees. You have to be prepared for everything.

CHRISTINA McHALE: Yeah, especially with stringing the racquets. In the day it's faster. You got to string them tighter, and if you play at night maybe a little looser. Yeah, there are definitely factors to consider.

Q. Going back those four years, is there a theme or big takeaway from those four years? Was it just injuries? Bad run of form? You know, just kind of

mentality, intensity dropped? How do you explain kind of the dip in ranking and then now you seem to be on your way back?

CHRISTINA McHALE: Yeah, I mean, I think -- I definitely feel like there were a lot of matches where I was really close to maybe having some big wins and they kind of, yeah, just didn't get that win.

But I feel like I have been working extremely hard, you know, all these years. Yeah, I think it's a combination of being healthy and just getting a lot of matches in and kind of getting into a groove.

But I think, yeah, it wasn't like I felt like I was playing poorly these past couple years. I think I just had a few tight matches that didn't go my way that maybe could have changed some things.

Q. You're sort of approaching the middle years of your career. Hypothetically, if you could just magically go back and give yourself advice as a really young player, what would be the one or two things you might say to yourself?

CHRISTINA McHALE: Huh. I wasn't expecting such profound questions.

I mean, yeah, maybe I could have done a better job of just staying in the moment more, you know, just playing each point, point by point. I think sometimes in matches I'd get ahead of myself or start thinking of, you know, should have had that game. I could have been up.

So I think maybe I'm doing a better job now of kind of just playing each point. Yeah.

Q. Easy to get ahead of yourself?

CHRISTINA McHALE: Yeah. I think every tennis player would say that. Yeah, we try and stay in the moment, but sometimes, yeah, it's hard to.

Q. The level you're playing at now, is this the level you feel you should be able to play consistently?

CHRISTINA McHALE: Yeah, definitely that's the goal. Every match I want to be able to produce my highest level, and that's what I'm, yeah, working really hard on, on the practice court and the gym and everything, to, yeah, hopefully, you know, build on this.

There is a lot more tournaments throughout the year, so, yeah, I'm excited for everything that's coming next.

Q. Are the Olympics at all in the back of your mind? I know the race for the No. 4 spot will probably go down to the wire, and with results like this your ranking is getting up there.

CHRISTINA McHALE: Yeah, that's going to be so

tough. Yeah, I try not to think about that because my experience in London was so amazing that obviously I would do anything to be back, to be able to -- but it's going to be tough.

So many Americans are playing so well that, yeah, it's going to be tough. But obviously I'm going to do my best to try and get there.

Q. Have you set any ranking goals for yourself this year?

CHRISTINA McHALE: Yeah, I normally don't like to do that. I kind of, yeah, just play each match. Yeah, I don't like to do that.

Q. Kind of off the wall here, but do you have any memories, either funny or just interesting, about interaction with one of the ball kids or something that happened with one of the line judges or the chair umpire or anything like that?

CHRISTINA McHALE: No, not really. I mean, I tend to always somehow trip over the ball kids sometimes. Like my coach one time pointed that out. Like how many times are you going to almost trip over the ball kids?

No. Other than that, no.

Q. Why do you trip over them?

CHRISTINA McHALE: I don't know. They go to bring me my towel; I'm moving. That would be the only thing. My coach pointed it out, and I'm like, You're right. I do almost trip over them a lot.

Q. You're focused.

CHRISTINA McHALE: I guess I'm focused. I don't pay attention. It's my fault, not theirs.