

BNP Paribas Open

Thursday, March 17, 2016

Victoria Azarenka

Press Conference

V. AZARENKA/M. Rybarikova

6-0, 6-0

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. Second double bagel of the year? How do they feel for you?

VICTORIA AZARENKA: How do they feel for me?

Q. Yeah.

VICTORIA AZARENKA: I don't know. I actually don't really pay that much attention to it. I'm just very happy that today throughout all in the match I didn't lose my focus and was able to just stay in the match. It was a little bit difficult to give focus.

I obviously knew she was not feeling 100% in the second set, but they still were -- shots were coming back, so sometimes it makes it challenging to keep that, you know, playing point by point.

Q. Do you find it easy to make somebody run around when you know that they (indiscernible). Do you feel guilty?

VICTORIA AZARENKA: I mean, that's what you have to do. It doesn't feel great knowing that your opponent struggled, because I have been on the opposite side of the net like this. But, you know, you're out there to win so you can't really feel bad about it.

But sometimes it is easier; sometimes it's not. Because you know -- and it just sometimes puts a little bit more pressure. But today I was just trying to focus on executing my shots rather than thinking what I have to do to make her move.

Q. You have only lost one match this year. Do you have the confidence level? Do you feel like you have the confidence level of a person who has only lost one match this year? How are you feeling about it, about your season so far?

VICTORIA AZARENKA: I feel that the most important thing for me right now is feeling that I'm improving from match to match and feeling healthy that knowing that when I go out there I give myself the best opportunity to win, which wasn't the case last two years.

But even though -- if you look at my matches last year I



didn't feel like any matches that I lost I was outplayed. In all the matches I had chances and all the matches I could have won those matches, I think.

So I don't know. I think confidence for me this year comes from being very well prepared and feeling healthy.

Q. At 6-Love or 4-Love, or 6-Love or 5-Love, is it dangerous to think, Oh, double bagel would be good over here?

VICTORIA AZARENKA: I don't think that. I think for me it was important to just keep playing what I have been practicing. That's what I want to do on the court is apply things I have been working on on the practice court and bring it to the matches. Because I feel that that was going to push me to get better results.

Q. Can you tell us about your experience at the Super Bowl and how you feel about Peyton Manning retiring?

VICTORIA AZARENKA: I'm sad, like everybody else, but I think he had such an amazing career that, you know, it's a great way to end, you know, that journey for him.

And Super Bowl was an incredible experience. The energy was there incredible. I was really learning a lot, even though -- it was kind of a weird experience that I was observing and seeing how is it different playing a different sport on same high level of expectation and same high level of pressure and how it is.

It's completely different from tennis. It's a lot of noise and a lot of distractions, but it's also a team sport. So for me was more of a learning experience, and obviously I had fun when the Broncos won the game.

Q. How do you see the next match going against Pliskova?

VICTORIA AZARENKA: I'm very excited for this match. We played a very good match last time we met.

It's a good challenge. She's a great player with so much talent and potential, and you could see, you know, in one year how much she improved already. Big serve, big hitter. So it's going to be a lot of, I would say, short rallies.

But we'll see. (Smiling.)

Q. What do you remember of that Brisbane match? It seemed like it was a tough loss. Like both of your guys' career for last year kind of went in different directions after that. Seemed to give her a lot of confidence.

VICTORIA AZARENKA: Yeah.

Q. But what do you remember of that match?

VICTORIA AZARENKA: She played really well. I think I didn't play bad, especially, you know, after a long break coming back. It was a long match, I remember. I remember I had a lot of opportunities.

Hopefully tomorrow when I create those opportunities I can convert them.

Q. Are you looking forward to getting back to top 10? Immediate goal?

VICTORIA AZARENKA: Ranking is not a goal for me. My goal is to win Grand Slams in big tournaments. That's going to come afterwards.

Q. You're talking about Peyton Manning, but you do the Cam Newton thing after your matches.

VICTORIA AZARENKA: Yeah, I'm a fan of many people. It's not -- I mean, Peyton Manning doesn't do anything after he wins. He just wins and collects trophies. (Laughter).

As much as he's great player, he's -- I mean, he doesn't do anything that much entertaining.

Q. Were you torn at the Super Bowl?

VICTORIA AZARENKA: I was a little bit because I think Cam is an amazing talent, and I think he will figure out for himself how to be a great champion.

Q. You're saying a ranking is not a great focus for you. Is it a case of also been there, done that. In the majors if you do well in them that the ranking just takes care of itself?

VICTORIA AZARENKA: Yeah, exactly. I think thinking about rankings is difficult until you get results. You have to win matches. You have to win tournaments for it to go up or down, whatever it is.

So I think to be able to put priorities on what's more important for me is the key.

Q. When you're talking about slams, obviously the rankings count for your seeding. When does that start entering your mind about trying to get better seeding and placements in the draw?

VICTORIA AZARENKA: I don't ever look at the draw. In terms of seeding, I don't know if, you know, having a

tougher opponents in the first round now -- especially now looking at what happens in a Grand Slam, it doesn't really matter sometimes.

I mean, obviously you don't want to play somebody, you know, in the first round. But for me it really doesn't matter what stage. If you want to win a tournament, you have beat any opponent at any time.