

BNP Paribas Open

Tuesday, March 14, 2017

Venus Williams

Press Conference



V. WILLIAMS/S. Peng

3-6, 6-1, 6-3

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. Great match. I just wanted to ask you --you know, Serena was the youngest to ever win here. What would it mean with your ties, obviously being from Southern California, to win a match that is so special to you and your sister?

VENUS WILLIAMS: To win this match?

Q. Sorry, tournament. Event.

VENUS WILLIAMS: I know I'm getting closer. Today was final 16. So advance to the final 8. There are 8 people left. One of us will win. So the odds are getting better.

I have to focus. It's not there yet. It's just, like, getting closer. You know, your mouth starts to water, but it doesn't mean you'll get fed. So I have to get it in and try to win.

Q. So you're not looking that far ahead. Is that what you're saying?

VENUS WILLIAMS: I mean, of course when I play a tournament, I'm coming because I want to win the title. But, you know, I'm obviously keep putting myself in a position to win. So that's the focus, yeah.

Q. The match was obviously extremely difficult. Can you just give us your view on what it was like playing that match today?

VENUS WILLIAMS: Yeah. I played her in Asia, and she played flawless. It was unbelievable.

Wasn't really sure how it was going to turn out today. There were some up-and-downs and errors. It was so frustrating. But I feel like I got my focus more in that second set and towards the end of the third, because -- I don't know. I'm just a competitor. So if things get closer, then I think my better tennis is going to come. Obviously I don't want things to get close. I want to try to run away with it.

Q. Three three-setters in this tournament.

VENUS WILLIAMS: Really? I thought yesterday was straight sets.

Q. I thought it was three. You talked about having to call on your heart. Talk about the role of heart in matches when you're out there.

VENUS WILLIAMS: I mean, sometimes heart is all you've got. You have nothing but the will, desire to win. If you can bring that on the court, paying that price is the biggest price there is to pay.

Q. You're out there obviously by yourself. No coach, no team. What is your self-talk when you want to kick it up in terms of your play and your heart?

VENUS WILLIAMS: Man, it's always changing.

Today I think I asked myself a lot of times why? Why are you missing these shots (smiling)? Why? Put it in the court. At least give yourself a chance.

So that was the big question today. Thankfully I was able to answer it.

Q. Do you get mad at yourself? Serena obviously is very demonstrative. Do you get mad at yourself internally, or are you kind of calm?

VENUS WILLIAMS: For a moment. For a moment. Of course losing the first set like that is disappointing, because it just felt like totally handing it to your opponent. You know, I didn't feel like I made her work for it. I didn't feel like she really beat me in that set.

I kind of beat myself. So it was good those next few sets to be competitive and, like, force the issue. In the third set, we both made each other work for it.

Q. Obviously, one of the great men in tennis is your father. It's a quiet press conference, but can you just take a moment to talk about your memories of going out on the court with thread-bear tennis balls and how he worked with you as a very young player? Just talk a little bit about your energy with him as a father. You're so close and there is such a connection.

VENUS WILLIAMS: Yeah, it's hard to believe the amount of time he put in, dedication, for the whole family, and then Serena and I, obviously is a huge sacrifice. Were I to have a child, I don't know, continue playing tennis, I guess (smiling).

I hope I would be able to do the same thing. It's unbelievable. But I guess that's love. He really changed the game of tennis.

Q. When you were a teenager and you'd hear him say, Hey, my daughters are going to be No. 1 and No. 2, what went through your head as his daughter?

VENUS WILLIAMS: I totally believed it. Just totally was brainwashed. It was a good thing, though. When you're brainwashed with positivity, it's the best thing ever.

Q. Do you remember taking over the driver's wheel in your VW van after you won your first tournament and collecting the newspapers? Do you remember that incident?

VENUS WILLIAMS: Oh. I do. (Smiling).

Q. How was it? Pretty hard to do the shifting and all that?

VENUS WILLIAMS: For some of us (smiling).

Q. You were obviously away from the tournament for a long time and came back and obviously had the out in the first match. Are you able to gain any type of satisfaction from these wins after being gone so long and the history you have here? Or are you still kind of holding that off to really absorb how this feels?

VENUS WILLIAMS: I'm honestly appreciating the moment in the tournament. I'm really not looking back. And that's a good thing.

Just trying to build my game. Play better and better. More confident as the season goes forward. So far, so good.

Q. Have you ever gotten out into the desert? It's such a beautiful area. A lot of players don't have the opportunity.

VENUS WILLIAMS: No, I have been so busy. They keep you so busy. There is a lot of stuff happening on the off day just to prepare. But I'm desperate to do so. Yeah.