

BNP Paribas Open

Wednesday, March 15, 2017

Karolina Pliskova

Press Conference



K. PLISKOVA/G. Muguruza

7-6, 7-6

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. A nice win. Maybe a little lucky in the end. What did you think of the level of the match?

KAROLINA PLISKOVA: Definitely. Definitely the best match for me in this tournament. Also, like, it was good player, so the level ultimately goes a little bit more up, little better player.

So definitely from the baseline I think was fine. But, yeah, the way how I was finishing those sets, I'm not happy with that, because I was serving into both. In the second one I was serving twice.

Even 40-15 up, I don't think it can happen with my serve. Like, anything is possible in tennis, but I just have to serve few times. I had a good rally once on my forehand.

So, yeah, a little bit unlucky, but, yeah, just not happy with the way how it finished, but happy how I, in the end, still stayed there.

And the tiebreaks, especially in the second one was not easy, because I had in my head, I had some match points and I had 5-2. So, yeah, so happy that I stayed there and closed it in the second tiebreak, as well.

And obviously my serve not really good today, as the whole tournament (smiling). So, yeah.

Q. I know it was a close score tonight, but the head to head is now 6-1 between you and Garby. It seems like a curious one you dominate so much in the head to head. What's it about her game that you match up so well that that's the head to head?

KAROLINA PLISKOVA: I just feel always quite good against her. Doesn't matter in which shape I am. I didn't have that good matches in the tournament, but with her, always, like I said, the level is a little bit higher.

Yeah, I mean, it's maybe with the game she also plays aggressive but not aggressive that much, so I still have some time going to the balls.

And I'm pushing her through the forehand and then always opening the court and to play the down the line my forehand, which is always the key where I can win.

And obviously I have to play a little bit more aggressive than she. It was not always in the match today, but especially when I was on my second serve she was pushing me a lot today. So she was stepping up to the court, especially from the backhand side.

I knew this gonna happen, but there are some parts in the match where she's, like, giving some free points, so I'm always waiting for that.

Even in the second set, I got few games there. But in the end, in the tiebreak, also, she missed few easy forehands, I think, too.

She can also play great tennis, but also some mistakes can come easily. So I'm always waiting for those chances.

Q. What do you think was the issue in the second set? Two chances to serve it out. You know, struggled with that. Do you look back and can identify why?

KAROLINA PLISKOVA: I mean, when I closed the first set, I felt much better in the second. I had 40-Love and some break chances in the first game. I didn't make it. I was two breaks up, 5-2, and serving. I was really feeling I'm going to close it.

But I played not really good game. I think she a little bit just gave everything what she had in that game, so she played four winners that game. So I just didn't serve really good and really smart I didn't serve. So everything was to her backhand and she was just going into it full power.

And then, yeah, obviously close game on her serve, which was already getting a little bit tough, and then 40-15 on my serve.

So, yeah, I would say it was a little bit unlucky. I just needed one point somewhere to do it. Just couldn't make it. I had some good rallies on my hand and on my racquet, but, yeah, didn't serve well in important moments. So everything was through the rally, which is always tough for me, and then always she -- I think

she was from the baseline today playing really solid.

Q. You were saying yesterday about how you're one of the few women on tour who can kind of rely on your serves and you can hold. That's an advantage that you have over a lot of women. It's true, there is not many women who base their game around their serve. I was wondering when you were developing as a young player, was there someone who said, it's very important, Karolina, that you have a great serve because not many women do? And how did you develop it?

KAROLINA PLISKOVA: Everybody has something, you know, so with me it's the serve. I always had kind of like good serve, not that good as it now last few years.

It's my biggest weapon. I just feel it when I need some, like, points, or break points down, I can serve well in those moments, which is always big plus. It's always important that I can have that free point, you know. Not many girls can do that. Even the girls can have good serve, but they just not -- doesn't serve well in the important moments.

And I'm able to do that, so I'm really happy for that. We are just trying to take care of the serve and still practicing. Yeah, even though some tournaments it's just not great, but a lot of matches I won because of my serve (smiling). Even tournaments, not only matches.

Q. But is that something that's just happened, that's luck, or is that something when you were six or seven years old you... Because I know Venus and Serena, Richard said it was so important that they developed such a big serve. And it's such a weapon for them and it started when they were very young. Was it similar for you?

KAROLINA PLISKOVA: Not really. I don't remember in the young age that we would really talk about serving. But we were both pretty tall already when we are smaller. And even Kristina, she's lefty. So even if she would not be that tall, I think every lefty serve is tough.

But with age, when we are getting taller and bigger and older, then we knew the serve is quite important, so we are just taking care of it and practicing and still improving it.

Q. How natural of a stroke is it for you?

KAROLINA PLISKOVA: It's absolutely natural.

Q. Just...

KAROLINA PLISKOVA: Yeah. I don't even use any power. That's why maybe I just -- it's just a swing, you know. That's why maybe I cannot go over -- I think 186 is my fastest serve, which is not that much, you know. So there are girls which can hit 200 or more than 190.

It's probably because I'm just, like, not using any power in the serve. It's just like all my strokes, it's more like everything natural, just swinging easy. Backhand sometimes not swinging easy but...

Q. Because obviously with the serve, you know, a lot of players will develop shoulder pain or have to ice their shoulder. I never really see you with an ice pack or anything. It's really just -- it's a natural swing.

KAROLINA PLISKOVA: Yeah, yeah, yeah. If there are some long match or tough match and I'm serving a lot of -- you know, going through a lot of second serve, then it's obviously for the shoulder it's tough.

But I don't usually -- I don't have any shoulder problems and any hand problems. So it's more like -- probably it's because I'm not using any power. It's just naturally going. Yeah, it's not hurting anything so far (smiling).

Q. This surface is a little bit slower, as we know. But it also gives you time against a hitter like Muguruza. Maybe you have a little bit more time to get behind the ball. Is it too slow for you, or is that a good thing for you sometimes?

KAROLINA PLISKOVA: Well, I'm not sure about the conditions here this year. I feel it's totally different compared to last year, maybe because it's more hot this year.

But I don't feel like it's that slow, you know. So together with the heat and with the balls, I think it's, like, the courts are pretty fast. It's not like, say, Melbourne the courts were amazingly fast.

But here it's just, like, stopping a little bit. But with the balls together, you just have to always like push, because otherwise you're gonna do mistakes and everything. It's flying so much. You still have to be pushing and going against the ball. Otherwise you're gonna miss.

I have the feeling that the first one who is pushing here and playing more aggressive is winning the points. Because if you're back and just waiting for a mistake, you're just going to do the mistake.

And definitely it was the key today against her, because I know she can really hit good when she has also time, so I just didn't want to give her any time today.

Q. Sveta next. Different opponent. Not an easy matchup.

KAROLINA PLISKOVA: Yeah, we had two matches two times, three-setters, and two times was really tough.

Definitely I'll take positives from the matches what I've played. Because even the second one I lost, I was up, serving into the match, and I was 30-Love and something like this. I was also in tough conditions for me in Singapore. Was quite slow.

Expecting similar one here, but, yeah, I have to play well. So it's more same for me, like, this tournament. Everyone is a little bit better on backhand. I just keep the same game plan and have to be aggressive and not going to her forehand. And don't let her play, otherwise she's going to let me run. That's what she probably wants me to do.

So, yeah.

Q. What do you make of Sveta's resurgence lately? I think she said after one of her matches on center court she had fallen in love with the game again. She won her first Grand Slam many years ago. What do you make of her endurance and her ability to come back into the top 10 after such a long time?

KAROLINA PLISKOVA: I mean, definitely I can see she's really enjoying the tennis, even if she's not playing always well, but she's really tough now to beat for every girl.

She's trying her best. I don't remember her 15 years ago. I was not on the tour, so I cannot say how she was before.

But right now she looks really happy. You can even see it with the results. So she improved, I would say, last year and a half so much.

So for everyone, it's just tough to play. Yeah, she's a nice girl. I always enjoy even to watching her, because she's always playing so easily and don't making any drama on the court, which I like just to watch these players.

Q. How does it feel to make yet another semifinal? At this point, does it feel like a relief because you're continuing your form, continuing to play well? Does this feel, yeah, this is what I expect of myself? What's it feel like?

KAROLINA PLISKOVA: Yeah, I'm top-seeded here, so you always expect some results. Sometimes unfortunately it's not coming. There is always some pressure.

And I knew I had a draw, like, I'm not looking for the draw, but I knew first few rounds there is always some players I can beat, and if I'm playing good tennis I'm going to beat them.

This tournament, like I said already, it's still better and better. I was not really happy with my game. So it's even better for me, and I'm even more happy for it that I'm winning matches when I'm not playing well.

That's one thing what I wanted to improve. And even when I don't have my days and I'm not feeling my serve, I can still somehow the matches I can win. It's not nice tennis, and I'm not really happy with it, but still it's a win. So it's important for me to win matches like this.

Q. When you win on a double fault, most people like to celebrate. It's awkward because somebody has just double-faulted.

KAROLINA PLISKOVA: It's strange.

Q. Do you ever stop yourself from celebrating?

KAROLINA PLISKOVA: Yeah, I would not probably celebrate, like, anywhere if there would not be like some rally with 50 shots. I'm just not -- I cannot celebrate somehow.

But, yeah, always with double fault or also when it's some challenge and you still, like, waiting, it's strange. And then, just, I don't have any, like, emotions.

Obviously I was happy, but I wanted to close it in a different way than win on a double fault (smiling).