

BNP Paribas Open

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Kristina Mladenovic

Press Conference

K. MLADENOVIC/C. Wozniacki

3-6, 7-6, 6-2

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. Do you feel like you've got a really good sense of momentum now after this? Has that been what's made the difference for you?

KRISTINA MLADENOVIC: It feels great, obviously. It's a lot of matches and, to be honest, I mean, it's like the longest kind of string of winning matches I had so far in my career, and it feels great, you know.

But in the same time, you know, every day I go out there on the court, in the gym practicing, it's for moment like that. So I'm not getting too excited. I'm just super satisfied that I am on that kind of stages right now and trying to use my chances, you know, my opportunities I have.

Yeah, I'm enjoying my time on the court, and very happy.

Q. What was the key to problem-solving that match? How did you turn it around?

KRISTINA MLADENOVIC: Yeah, I mean, it's not easy, you know. Caroline is a top player, former World No. 1. She's also in very great shape. I mean, she had a very good start of the season, as well, won lots of matches.

We played three times before today, and I always lost, especially that final in Hong Kong at the end of last year was very painful for me, like, very frustrating. I thought I was playing well that entire week and, in the final, I was just kind of exhausted and injured. And still, it was, like, a very long battle there. If I'm not wrong, it was almost three hours.

Today I was just, like, okay, today I'm feeling good. When I woke up, I'm like, nothing is hurting. I'm good. I'm not injured. I was happy about that. I was, like, I want to give a fight there and have no regrets.

I wanted to take my revenge, of course. It was not easy. Again, it was a tough battle and tough conditions. We played, yeah, two hours and a half. I didn't start well at all the match.



I thought, you know, when you lost three times against a player, it means that something is wrong and that you, like, don't really like her game.

But I was not playing good, but still I felt like I needed adjustments, actually. It's first time for me playing on that huge stadium and conditions and everything. I just stayed actually very positive and composed, because I was out there battling with myself first, I think, because I wanted kind of too much, you know. That was all about.

Then, yeah, I was just fighting mentally to find adjustment and to be close with her at the scoreboard, and eventually I got my chances. And I think I played really well the tiebreak.

Yeah, I went for my game. I went for some variation. I think I played differently at some point, you know, trying to use more the court to make her run, as well. Because she was doing that pretty well to me. And also put some slices in my game, dropshots.

And something new I put today was the serve and volley on such important points (smiling). I impress myself kind of (smiling). I was, Okay, great. What I'm gonna do now?

Because every time I would serve good on the backhand, she would go, like, very deep and return well. I was, like, Okay, let's just be creative here.

And it paid off, and it gave me a chance to fight a third set. I think the third set was the best game of today for me.

Q. Having played on the outer courts, how much time did it take today to adjust to the center court and how it played differently?

KRISTINA MLADENOVIC: I mean, not that much. It's different, for sure. You know, like, you have more space and everything is, like, bigger maybe. It bounces higher. Was also hot today.

So it's tough to compare. I think it's definitely different, I mean, when you play on the smaller courts and you come here and it's one of the biggest courts.

But it didn't take that much to adjust. I didn't felt that

bad. But when you play such a great player, like, small mistakes means a lot. Makes a huge difference. And you feel like, Oh, my God, this is so many unforced errors. This is not great.

But in the other hand, she's also pushing you to do that. Still need to find a perfect adjustment. I'd say maybe if I would play not against that good player, maybe we wouldn't have needed maybe that adjustment, and I don't know how to answer that question.

But when you play on such a stage against former No. 1, you're not allowed to do, like, games like I did in the first set, like, lots of unforced errors, like, not playing the rallies, not having the great choices.

So, yeah, I think even if I was doing lots of errors, I was still, you know, trying, trying to find a good adjustments. It worked well at the end.

Q. You made the final in Acapulco and you are in semifinal here. Do you find any differences between the tournaments, the conditions, humidity maybe?

KRISTINA MLADENOVIC: Yeah, I mean, we cannot compare this. Acapulco is an amazing -- I mean, it's not bad as a schedule to play Acapulco. It's, like, close to the sea and it's so hot, very humid, like, unbelievably humid. You don't start matches before 4:00 p.m. So if you're unlucky, like I was most of the time, I would play at 4:00 p.m. (smiling). But otherwise, like, you play almost night session.

Here it's totally different. It's the desert, and everybody knows and comments how you need to adjust coming few days before.

Because it's desert here, so the ball is flying. It can bounce very high also with the conditions when it's hot. It changes when it's night session. It's a bit lower and everything.

Much drier. I mean, heat is very dry. I'm usually sweating a lot. I mean, today I guess you can still see me sweating. I know, because I'm the one that sweats unbelievable.

But here, it's super dry. I don't have to change. Usually I'm going, when I play for two, three hours, I for sure go to the bathroom to change out at least once or twice in the match. Here, like two hours and a half, and my dress was not completely wet.

So that's -- yeah, it's totally different.

Q. Can you just comment on the fact that I believe

next week officially you'll move into the top 20 for the first time.

KRISTINA MLADENOVIC: It feels great, really great. I'm very happy about it. I don't know what else to say. I'm just very happy. I see that it's paying off, that the results are coming.

I want to keep going, you know. I want to keep working on things that have been working well against top players, and I'm more focusing on, you know, giving myself opportunities to play that kind of big matches and big stages.

Eventually, you know, the ranking is just the consequence of all the work you put on, like, on a daily basis. Eventually you're playing those great matches better and better and give yourself a chance to win them, and then the ranking obviously follows.

Q. Your doubles success, how do you feel like that has led you to a lot more recent success in singles play?

KRISTINA MLADENOVIC: Yeah, first of all, helps me, for sure, a lot in my game, all the improvements I did, I'm convinced it's thanks to the doubles.

I mean, for example, today I did a serve and volley at the most critical moment in the game. I mean, if I'm not wrong, it was in the tiebreaker. Like, what was that? 4-3 or -- I can't remember exactly.

I mean, you wouldn't do that, I mean -- yeah.

So that's the first thing. I think also I kind of change the momentum of the match when I was stepping in the court, coming to the net, closing some important volleys. So that's an addition to my game.

And then I would say mentally, even if I have never played on such a -- like, it's my first time playing quarterfinals at such an important tournament, but in the past, I have been winning, like, big titles in doubles.

Mentally, I feel like I lived that before. I believed in myself and I belonged there, and I already kind of served out, like, important matches in doubles to win Grand Slam title is still something big and a nice achievement in the career.

So when I'm out there, I believe, like, I want to win those matches. Like, I'm not afraid about it, because it's not, like, something totally new.

So, yeah, definitely helps.

Q. You have had quality wins here at this tournament and a great run at Acapulco. Can you

talk about how your confidence is rising and at what point, if you haven't already, do you believe you can win this tournament?

KRISTINA MLADENOVIC: Like I was saying, I'm really, like, since always focused, like, on a daily basis to have no regret in the work I'm putting on, either fitness-wise or recovery or tennis, and give myself a chance to, like, be fit, healthy, and play my best tennis, like, every matches I have. Of course, looking forward to try to win those.

Of course, the confidence is here right now, because I have been winning matches. But it's the same spirit. I'm not going to change anything.

Today I was struggling. My game was not really nice at the beginning for some time. But it's that kind of motto, kind of spirit, you have to keep trying, looking for solutions.

And I'm -- yeah, I'm not gonna change that. Doesn't mean, like, if I'm playing great right now that's going to be the same the entire season. I wish.

But as a tennis player, we all have up-and-downs in a season, in a career. You just have to focus to keep the same mentality every day.

Q. What would it mean for you to lift the trophy after the final and to win here?

KRISTINA MLADENOVIC: I mean, it will be amazing, of course, but I'm very far from that. I'm in a semifinal, and, like, it's a match at a time. Even if we think or feel that it's getting closer, those matches are the most difficult.

Like, it's the toughest opponent, and I'm not looking like that. Like I was saying, it's really a match at a time, and there's a lot of work to do. But, of course, like, I'm a competitor. Every match I'm playing I want to win, and especially after beating those quality players so far this week, yeah, that's my aim. That's my goal.

But I have to focus on the reality and it's the next match.

Q. What's it like having Mary around this week? Has she been offering any advice? I know you are your own coach, but does she kind of help you at all?

KRISTINA MLADENOVIC: Ah, no. No, she's not. She's here as a stalker, kind of (smiling). She's like -- last night I received a message at 11:00 p.m. She was so sweet. She was, like, Tomorrow you're playing on center court. Where do you want me to sit?

Like she was, like -- like, a player, I would understand

you don't want me too close from your team. Because so far, like, I think the previous round I notice her because she was, of course, supporting me and she was not that far from my team.

But the first few matches she was hiding somewhere. But she's there to, you know, to look after us, because Fed Cup is coming soon. And we also throughout the tournament we discuss some, like, topics, Fed Cup topics, with Pauline that was here.

And so, yeah, that message last night. I was, like, yeah, I would love to have you in my box with my team. I mean, she's such a nice person and a great champion, and I loved her game.

No, she was, like, actually very, you know, she didn't want to disturb me during the tournament, because she loved that when she was a player herself. But we discuss, like, once I think after my match against Simona, she watched it, and she was very happy with the way I played, so she just congratulated me.

I mean, it's nice to have her. It was nice seeing her in the box. But, yeah, she's there to see if we are doing great.