

# BNP Paribas Open

Friday, March 17, 2017

## Kristina Mladenovic

Press Conference

E. VESNINA/K. Mladenovic

6-3, 6-4

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

**Q. Had to come to an end, unfortunately. Can you talk a little bit about how Vesnina was playing? And your fight back?**

KRISTINA MLADENOVIC: Well, I think, my first feeling right now is I think she played a great match, really. I felt like she was playing very fast, very aggressive.

Actually, I didn't feel that bad out there on the court. I came up with my game plan and I thought, like, she's a very aggressive player, so I thought to play my game with some variation. I started with a lot of slices.

She responded really well, actually. You know, she didn't miss a lot. She was serving good.

It was just going too fast for me. I'm not sure yet now if it was me that was a little bit slower maybe tonight on the court or if she put, like, really big intensity out there.

But I don't feel like, you know, I could do much better. I tried obviously till the last point to come back, both sets. I think I showed that, of course.

But, yeah, like she served good. My percentage of the serve was not that bad either, I think. Yeah, she just took all her chances. I felt like I had to do kind of crazy points to win (smiling).

Maybe the solution was to come forward, try to play even more aggressive than her to take time from her, but that was a tough thing to do, because she was playing quite fast.

So it was, like, do I need to overpower her? I tried my way forward at the net. I think I did great. But still was, like, some crazy points.

So wasn't easy at all, but, yeah, not much I can say, really.

**Q. When you were getting to the net, it did seem like that's when the game kind of shifted in your favor, but it seemed to happen more frequently**



**toward the end of the sets than the beginning. Was it just you couldn't get the approach in to get in with the way she was playing? Or was it a tactical change that you kind of put in midway through the sets?**

KRISTINA MLADENOVIC: I really think she was just too good for me today, I felt. But I was trying, like, at least if I have to go out on the court losing that match to have absolutely no regrets.

So I kind of tried everything. I started with variation to try to be patient, but she was, like, making winners and playing too fast for me. So then, at some point, I changed that. I tried to do some serve and volley, to maybe hit harder.

But I was also, like, missing. I was like, okay, the last option is to try to take the ball even earlier and try to come at the net.

Yeah, I earned some points like that. But that was kind of, like, crazy, I felt, because she's playing very aggressive, very flat. Her bounce stay quite low. You know, these kind of conditions are different than during day session where we all, I think, play more, like, spin, and it bounces a bit higher.

Night conditions are, like, quite, let's say, lower, maybe faster, like, it's maybe just a little different game.

She didn't really allow me to, you know, to put my game on tonight.

**Q. Can you see her going on to take the final? Would you be surprised?**

KRISTINA MLADENOVIC: I mean, the way she's been playing these two weeks, she beat such great players all the way.

You never know. You know, tennis is -- like, every day is different. Every day it's another opponent, another stage, another pressure, another conditions.

All girls are great players. I guess, you know, it's a head-to-head match sometimes. You have a player that likes your game and have solution all the time when you play against her. And maybe she will face another one and doesn't like the game, and then doesn't really matter where her confidence is at.

She definitely played, I think, a very great match tonight, very solid. She was taking the ball early, playing very aggressive, not a lot of mistake.

Yeah, I mean, it's quite open. But there are two great players also on the other side.

**Q. You're going to be at a career high, 18, I think, on Monday. Separate from that achievement, I'm wondering how much attention do you pay at this point in the season to the race to Singapore? Because you are currently at No. 6 in the race. It's obviously very early in the season, but is that a goal that you set for yourself?**

KRISTINA MLADENOVIC: Yeah, it's like you said, it's too early, like, it's very early in the season. But, of course, in the back of my mind it's kind of not a dream but a goal. It's my aim, you know.

Every tournament I try to win matches, to try to win them, but it's a tough competition out there. The season is very long, and lots of big tournaments coming. We see how it goes. For example, here, it's very important to play well on the big tournaments.

But, of course, I feel good. I feel confident. It gives me, actually, confidence to move forward to take all the positives from the beginning of my season, of this tournament, which is the biggest one so far where I play well.

Yeah, I'm going to kind of rest, refresh with my team, keep working. There is another big one coming soon in Miami, and go on.

So, of course, now that I'm in a great position, I would like to keep doing well.

**Q. You have been obviously been playing well to start the season. Does a result like this, making semifinals here, does it feel like a big boost in your confidence, or is this what you expect from yourself, Okay, I'm just continuing to do what I have been doing? Do you consider this a breakthrough or do you consider this, you know, what you expect?**

KRISTINA MLADENOVIC: A little bit of both, really. I have been working a lot, very hard. I felt like, you know, there were periods so far in my career, like moments where I thought, oh, maybe that's the breakthrough, you know, like, reaching quarters at the US Open or having all those big wins in the past against top players.

It was, like, always, you know, here and there, but this beginning of the season definitely felt like a

breakthrough. Just, let's be honest, like the last three, four tournaments, I won St. Petersburg and went to Dubai where I had a great run, as well, then Acapulco finals and here. If I'm playing like that every single week, it's going to be pretty good, right? .

I'm not getting too excited. I know how long the season is, how momentum sometimes can change, but that's definitely what I expect from myself. Like, I put expectation quite high, because that's what makes you keep working hard and try to improve every single day.

It feels great. Now, of course, it gives me confidence to continue like that, because it's such a nice feeling to always stay at the end of the tournaments. I want to repeat that as much as possible.

**Q. You're obviously not the only player on tour who has a parent as a coach. Wozniacki --**

KRISTINA MLADENOVIC: She is not my coach, my mom.

**Q. I was going to ask you. Because when she shows up in the changeover, it says mother and coach.**

KRISTINA MLADENOVIC: Yeah, because she's coming on the court, she has to be a coach, guess.

**Q. My question is given she's on your team in this professional capacity and coming onto the court and giving you advice, what kind of effect does that have on mother/daughter off-court relations? Is there a boundary between that professional relationship and the personal relationship, or does it blend in?**

KRISTINA MLADENOVIC: My mom is not my coach. She's my mom. And, like, my good friend, I'm very lucky to have her.

Of course, like, she's a great help because she was a professional from a volleyball player and she understands sport. She saw me playing tennis since I'm very little, so she knows me the best. Our relationship is kind of -- you know, like, I don't have a coach. I'm kind of coaching myself.

But she understands the game. And before going out there on the matches, I kind of prepare the match with her, and I'm, like, I like to look, watch, like, some videos or to prepare, like, my game plan. And things are pretty clear. I ask her -- from outside, of course, she's watching the match, so to look after those little details.

And when I'm calling her, she's, like, obviously telling me what she sees from outside. It's very important to have still an opinion from outside, because sometimes you're on the court and sometimes you see things

differently.

So she's a good help, for sure.

**Q. Just going back, you said that you're not getting too excited about things. Why not? Because a lot of players, like, on the younger spectrum, big breakout run, they get excited, this is the time. Is this a maturity time? Have you seen it happen with other players?**

KRISTINA MLADENOVIC: Yeah, exactly. Why would you get excited? Like, nothing is, like, for granted. You know, it's -- like I said, like, I'm so aware of an athlete's career, season, that it's so much up-and-downs.

Like I said previously, like, the most important for me is just to continue to work that way, you know, to stay focused in the right direction -- because that's sport. Somehow, you know, you cannot just lose your focus, your routine. You think, yeah, this is done, I'm playing well right now. That's true, but nothing is achieved, you know.

I feel like it's just the beginning of a breakthrough. My goals are, like, pretty high. Yeah, maybe when I will win those big tournaments, I will be, like, Okay, this is it. But still when they are at the top, the top players, their attitude is, Okay, I want to stay there.

And I have to keep working, to keep improving so I can stay up there. That's the, like, endless, like, mentality of top players.

So, yeah, great. I had such a great result these last few weeks, but I want to stay concentrate and keep moving forward.

**Q. You have had a lot of success with doubles, as well. You now need to strike that balance between singles play and doubles play. But your doubles helped you with throwing in serve and volleys at the big times. How are you going to strike that balance? Given that it helped you out, do you really need to?**

KRISTINA MLADENOVIC: What do you mean? If I will keep playing doubles?

**Q. Yeah, will you keep -- how are you going to fix that balance?**

KRISTINA MLADENOVIC: We agreed with Svetlana to play in Miami, and then we're going to discuss. Of course, I would like to continue to play the big tournaments. My idea doesn't change.

You know, I always start -- doubles helps my singles game. It's a big -- you know, maybe on this tournament you have such great examples. I mean, Kaja Pliskova,

she also plays very good doubles.

Vesnina, such a great example. Me and Svetlana, I cannot disappoint her. I don't know what the score now, but we kind of promise ourselves to do our best to both reach the finals. That would have been such an amazing story to join her.

Look, you have four great players that are also playing doubles. Yeah, it's just about finding great balance. So far I'm not having any problem of too many matches or whatever. So, yeah, I will keep on playing, and I'll see if Svetlana feels great about the idea of playing the rest of the year.

**Q. You have obviously had success in mixed doubles and had a good partnership with Daniel Nestor. How far in advance do you make a plan for the slams for mixed doubles, and do you know anything about your plans this year for the rest of the slam season?**

KRISTINA MLADENOVIC: Yeah, actually, mixed doubles, I kind of retired from mixed doubles (smiling).

I'm not sure. The last one I played was I think with Herbert at the French Open, and that was because of the Olympics.

I didn't play for quite a long time, and that's another thing. It's another thing. Mixed is a little bit too much when you're focused on singles is my priority and doubles on a slam.

It's kind of still great, because, you know, like singles, where women's is playing best of three sets, and every second day. So kind of let some space to have a great doubles match as a good practice and go on, but mixed was maybe too much to be on the three draws.

So I'm not sure if I'm, like, with Daniel was an amazing journey. I was younger. To win slams, it makes it unbelievable experience and achievement. It's also nice to have accomplished that.

I don't know. It's, like, not impossible that I'm going to sign with someone and play and have fun. I discuss that with some new generation, likely friends, let's say. But for sure, it's not gonna be like a goal, like a regular thing.

If I sign with some friends and we would like to just, you know, make memories and have fun and play, but priority is singles.