

# Western & Southern Open

Thursday, August 17, 2017

## Johanna Konta

Press Conference



J. KONTA/D. Cibulkova

6-3, 6-4

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

**Q. You were expecting a battle and you got one.**

JOHANNA KONTA: Yes.

**Q. Talk us through the match.**

JOHANNA KONTA: Well, I think it was a battle, like you said. She's notorious being an incredible fighter. I knew going into the match that it was not going to be over until we shook hands.

I was very aware that I needed to stay calm and really just try to compete, separate each point and compete well in each one.

The conditions are quite tough out there. It was very humid. Both of us, I think, sweated our body weight twice over.

But yeah, no, I'm very happy to have come through, and I'm looking forward to getting to play another match here.

**Q. It's Halep next. Certainly in terms of court coverage, just as quick, speedy, maybe a bit more aggressive. Your thoughts on that?**

JOHANNA KONTA: Well, I played her a few times this year already, and every single time it's been a battle. I've won; she's won. So I know going into the match that it's going to be a battle.

But I definitely need to play the match on its own, not past matches that we have played, and definitely just look to compete the best that I can on the day and just really try to fight my way through.

**Q. What is it about how your game matches up with Simona's that creates these epically long three-set tussles? What do you think it is about your game that bothers her and her game that bothers you and the difficulties?**

JOHANNA KONTA: Well, we say that. Who knows? Maybe tomorrow is going to be a quick one. You never know (smiling).

But, I mean, I think both of us compete very well. So I

think both of us are looking to really not give each other a foothold in the match.

I think, I mean, she's an incredible mover, and she makes an incredible amount of balls. You definitely do feel like you're playing a little bit like against a wall when you play Simona. I guess I always just look to try to bring my game to the table, just try to dictate as much as I can, and really take control of the points as much as possible, but also having a massive level of acceptance that she's going to make me hit a lot of balls and it's not always going to go my way.

I think accepting that - not just against her but against the best players in the world - is very important, because not everything is on your racquet.

**Q. I'm doing a story on sponsor patches, players' kits.**

JOHANNA KONTA: Okay.

**Q. I have been trying to track yours. They are all over the place in photo evidence. You had one at Eastbourne but not at Wimbledon. I'm wondering how you sort of make your deals for those and what you have plans for at the US Open, if you already know?**

JOHANNA KONTA: Well, that's completely my agent's forté. You probably need to interview her.

But again, it's all dependent specifically on deals themselves. But again...

**Q. Something you try to stay out of?**

JOHANNA KONTA: Yes. It's not my area of expertise.

**Q. The match in Miami was probably a real turning point for Halep. Obviously you came from a set down. You beat her when she had control of that set. From that point on, she kind of wavered for a little bit and then picked herself back up again. Obviously with No. 1 on the line, she could be quite jittery. How do you play against that kind of psychology?**

JOHANNA KONTA: Well, I think, again, most importantly for me - not just against her but against every player - going into any match is to play the match at hand, not play circumstances, not play past matches, not play past experiences or even dream up

of future ones. It's really important to play the opponent on the day and play the match situation on the day.

I think that's what I'm always looking to do, because that's really, at the end of the day, all I have control over.

Again, the last match we played obviously was an incredible battle for both of us, and I think both of us probably came away from that match a lot richer for it in terms of the experience that we both had.

I felt I was very fortunate to have come through that obviously at the winning end, but it's not always the case. I'm very aware of that going into any match that it's 50/50.

**Q. You seem very comfortable in this role as a Top-10 player now. Does it feel like only two years ago that you were in the Vancouver Challenger?**

JOHANNA KONTA: That's a very good tournament, by the way (smiling).

I mean, I guess because I have never associated myself specifically with any specific ranking, I have always just tried to be the best player I can be. And because I keep that in mind, for me, it's a much clearer process of dealing with my things week in, week out. I'm here to become better. And where that "better" will take me, that's where it will take me.

**Q. When you're saying you don't associate yourself with a ranking, you don't feel the need for any validation, like, I'm a Top-10 player, I should do this or this, or, I'm not a top 100 player and I'm not good at these things?**

JOHANNA KONTA: No, because I think rankings come and go. Points from tournaments come on, drop off. It's a constant movement. That's how our sport is.

So I really try to spend my energy and my time on controlling the things that I can control. That's how I train. That's how I apply myself to my sport and making sure that one day in the future, when I do retire from this sport, that I retire with a sense of, You know what? I gave it all. I left no stone unturned, and I have really maximized all my abilities.