

Western & Southern Open

Friday, August 18, 2017

Sloane Stephens

Press Conference



S. STEPHENS/J. Goerges

6-1, 7-6

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. Is it just me or is that slice serve up the T on the ad side and also deuce side really working?

Seems like you're getting a lot of free points and a lot of setup balls to put the winner away.

SLOANE STEPHENS: Yeah, definitely. Playing lefties, I was serving a lot to their backhands. I got a lot of practice on that one.

Then I played a righty today for the first time, and it was interesting. But it worked out well. Once you start hitting it good, not much more you can ask for.

Q. What was the process like for you today playing those back-to-back matches and the challenges of it?

SLOANE STEPHENS: Yeah, it was tough. This morning I woke up, and I was, like, super tired. Like, I normally have been sleeping in, so it was kind of tough to get up. Then I got here. Wasn't bad. I ate. Was, like, totally ready to play. Started off tough, but I was able to figure out a way somehow.

Then after that match, then I came inside, took a shower, changed my clothes, had some more food. Then I took a nap. And then I woke up, it was 5:00, and I had to go and warm up.

So the day is just like a blur. I'm ready to get dinner and get in the bed, because I'm so tired. I'm going to sleep in tomorrow and come right back here to play not before 4:00.

Q. This is your second straight semifinal in two weeks, I guess. I think in D.C. you said something like you're going to win a match eventually, but has this surprised you at all that it's come this quick?

SLOANE STEPHENS: No, not really, because I wasn't really expecting anything. Like, in D.C., it was, like, eventually I will beat someone and then two people in a row, so on and so forth.

I was kind of, like, all right. Just going with it. Obviously when you're playing good players, at this point in my comeback, there is no pressure on me. It's

just, like, I'm going and having fun. I think most of it is I'm so excited to be on the court and be able to play again that I kind of have, like, a little extra umph, I guess. Yeah, I just go out and play and have fun and beat people now (smiling). That's pretty much the story of my life. Late nights.

Q. Simple?

SLOANE STEPHENS: Yeah.

Q. Is this changing your expectations for the US Open?

SLOANE STEPHENS: Not at all. Not at all. Because now, I mean, once it gets later in the year, girls gets tired, but everyone always gets up for a slam. Obviously going into the US Open, I'm not seeded, I'm using my protected, so it's kind of just, like -- just like these tournaments, just go and have fun. If I beat somebody, great. If not, I still have a lot of tournaments left to use.

Q. How is that different from the past?

SLOANE STEPHENS: I don't know. In the past I probably would have played, like, 15 tournaments by now some girls have played? So now I'm on four (smiling). So I'm a little bit fresher and just, you know, you have a different perspective when you can't play. Like, obviously the game was taken away from me by this surgery and all that stuff.

Yeah, no, I'm just happy to be out there, excited to be competing again and playing some good tennis.

Q. Do you think it's helping? Just the idea I'm going to go out there and have fun, not really care if I lose or not?

SLOANE STEPHENS: I mean, clearly (smiling). I mean, it's worked so far.

Q. Favorite Cracker Barrel meal.

SLOANE STEPHENS: Oh, yeah, I love Cracker Barrel. Country-fried steak, carrots, string beans, macaroni and cheese, biscuits with grape jelly, and a sweet tea. I love it so much.

Q. How does that compare to your Nobu habit?

SLOANE STEPHENS: Oh, my God. See, like, there are so many restaurants. I could take you from Nobu to Cracker Barrel to, like, Ruth Chris to Chipotle, and I

know the best thing to get at all of these different places.

Q. What do you get at Chipotle?

SLOANE STEPHENS: Well, it just depends what you're in the mood for, but, like, if you really want to step out of the box, you could, like, get a cheese and chicken quesadilla, like, with, like, sour cream and guac. Like, that's so good. Don't ever downplay Chipotle's quesadillas, like, the bowls or whatever. Anybody could get that. But like a good quesadilla, it's hard to come by.

Q. You have played on two very different courts today but obviously had the support of the crowd both times. Are those sort of moments that you miss especially while you're away, and do you feel like that sort of motivated you this week, the crowd support?

SLOANE STEPHENS: Yeah, they were great. In Toronto they were great, too, surprisingly, because obviously I'm not Canadian. No, they came out every match.

Even in D.C. for all the doubles matches, literally, you couldn't get a seat at the doubles matches. It was standing room only, people hanging off the balcony. I'd say the last three tournaments I played, the fan support and people coming out, the support has been by far the best I have ever had when I was playing before. Yeah, it's actually kind of nice.

Q. Why do you think that is?

SLOANE STEPHENS: I don't know. I guess maybe they just really missed me (smiling). I'm not sure. But, yeah, no, it's been probably the best I have ever seen it in my career, I'd say.

Q. If you win this thing, what are you going to do to celebrate?

SLOANE STEPHENS: I'm definitely not thinking that far ahead. I'd probably just go back to Cracker Barrel. That's that.

Q. As you get deeper in a tournament, do you still practice the same every day? Do you practice more or less, or are there certain shots you start to work on more before you go out on court? Is this about hitting the ball, and, Okay, I feel good, let's roll?

SLOANE STEPHENS: No, everything stays exactly the same, because if you get to the tournament and you haven't done the work, then you're already in trouble, right? You get here, keep the same routine, do whatever it is you've been doing, and just play your game, play your matches, and do what your coach tells you.

Q. Just briefly, it looks like Halep will win this match. For you on that matchup?

SLOANE STEPHENS: Yeah, it will be another good match. Like, obviously -- I actually played well in D.C. the first set. Second set not so much.

But, no, I think it will be a good match. Obviously I'll have a lot more matches under my belt. Hopefully I can turn it around and make the result a little different.