

Western & Southern Open

Tuesday, August 15, 2017

Venus Williams

Press Conference

V. WILLIAMS/A. Riske

6-2, 6-0

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. I was wondering, do you still get nervous when you go out and play matches? Is there a trick you can tell people on how not to be nervous?

VENUS WILLIAMS: Yeah, I think controlling your nerves is kind of just knowing that your technique is solid and that even under a severe amount of pressure that you have practiced your technique and you know it's going to hold up.

Easier said than done. I think everybody deals with nerves, and some people handle it better than others. I think you see that in the rankings. Yeah, a lot of it is just trial and error.

Q. You won 83% of your first-serve points in your match today, converted six of nine break points. Can you talk about the match and how you were feeling out there today? You seemed to really control the tempo and the actual play.

VENUS WILLIAMS: Yeah, you know, I hadn't played in a while, so I wasn't really sure what to expect. I know she likes a flat ball and is a retriever and is just feisty. And the courts are really slow too. Today was like about being measured and being patient and trying to just capitalize on the match.

Q. What do you feel like you need to accomplish this week, if anything, given the matches and thinking ahead to the US Open? How's your game?

VENUS WILLIAMS: Yeah, I just want to play free and feel confident. That's important.

You know, this is definitely a different tournament than the Open. I tend to, you know, play my best at all of the big events, so of course I'm hoping for a good result here and another good one at the Open.

Q. The American Tennis Association Centennial National Tournament they had in Baltimore a couple weeks ago where your dad was honored, how much do you know about the ATA or its legacy?



VENUS WILLIAMS: Yeah, I haven't done a ton of study on exact details, so if you were going to quiz you... Yeah, definitely don't.

Obviously I know like what the ATA stood for, especially in the past.

Q. This is your sixth time in Cincinnati. Other than all the match wins in between, what's the biggest difference between Venus now and the Venus when you first came here?

VENUS WILLIAMS: I don't remember the first time, so that would be a walk down memory lane.

But right now is just a good time to be playing tennis, a good time to be alive. It's a good time to live your dream, and that's what I'm doing.

Q. US Open wildcards came out earlier today, and Maria Sharapova got one, would be the first Grand Slam she's playing since she came off her ban in April. What are your thoughts on how she will be received there and her comeback to the Grand Slam stage? She's had a rough few months with injury.

VENUS WILLIAMS: Yeah, I'm sure that this is a great moment for her to have an opportunity to be back to where she has done so well. You know, I don't necessarily have any thoughts. You know, I'm pretty focused on my own life these days.

Q. Do you feel any added pressure? Obviously your sister won this in 2014, 2015. Do you feel any pressure to get a title here in Cincinnati?

VENUS WILLIAMS: Not really, but I want to (smiling). I mean, I want to win every match. There is no fun when you lose at all. So the aim is to get out there and be better every single time.

Q. Would you say you hate losing more than you love winning or vice versa?

VENUS WILLIAMS: Hmm. I don't know. Probably both equal (smiling).

Q. In your time coming to Cincinnati, you have made comments in the past on how much you enjoyed the fans and the volunteers. Can you expand on a little bit of your experiences here and

how you feel comfort level-wise in Cincinnati?

VENUS WILLIAMS: Yeah, I mean, here is an opportunity for me to play at home. You know, there used to be a ton of tournaments in the States and now there isn't. So now, like, every time that I play in the States, it's like I don't take it for granted. Let's put it that way.

I know the fans are here for me. I see familiar faces, fans that I have seen every year. You know, I'm like, How's your daughter? So it's like, I don't know, coming back home in a lot of ways.

Q. It's been a few years now since you came out with your book. Any plans for any future books?

VENUS WILLIAMS: Yeah. Books are hard work, though. It's hard. There's not a lot of time in my schedule. But I do have a really good idea for a book. Yeah. That's all.

Q. Do you like coffee? And how do you take it?

VENUS WILLIAMS: I don't drink coffee.

Q. How about just your diet in general? How do you work in sweets and treats?

VENUS WILLIAMS: If I could, I would eat sweets and treats exclusively. (Laughter.) But fortunately that doesn't work for me. Mostly I just eat a lot of green things. I eat to live; I don't live to eat.

Q. Are you excited to be a new aunt? Have you thought ahead to maybe baby shopping?

VENUS WILLIAMS: I have a lot of things in my cart that I'm about to order (smiling). I talked to my mom yesterday. I'm like, Mom, what do you really, really need? So she really gave me the low-down.

So I'm going to get this stuff, and as things progress I'll see what I need after. So this is the first time I have been an aunt as an adult, so it's a completely different experience than before when I was a child.

Q. It was pretty hot out there. How are you doing physically and dealing with the Sjogren's? How has that affected your training regimen and so forth?

VENUS WILLIAMS: Yeah, it was hot. The heat rule was in during the match. I was hoping that maybe it was affecting her maybe more than me (smiling). I couldn't tell. She kept running.

As professional athletes, if we decide to walk on the court, it doesn't matter what you're dealing with, you need to get out there and hold your head high and compete. And if you're not prepared, do your best to prepare again. So that's what I do.