

Western & Southern Open

Friday, August 18, 2017

Johanna Konta

Press Conference

S. HALEP/J. Konta

6-4, 7-6

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. The first set, I mean, break points against her and everything. Second set kind of a war. Talk us through it.

JOHANNA KONTA: Well, I think I played -- I think I did a lot of good things today. Unfortunately I think it was mixed together with not-so-good things. I think against someone like Simona, it's also quite a fine line of getting it just right.

She's the kind of player that if you don't take advantage of the balls enough, if you don't impose yourself enough, she's in her comfort zone and she'll build her points. That's what she's good at, building her points and moving you around.

But then, on the other end, which I think happened to me a little bit today, I overplayed a bit. I was playing the right way; just a bit too much of it. I just couldn't find the right balance.

But again, that's why she is as good as she is. She does force you. She does ask that question of you every time we've played.

Yeah, I think that's probably what I didn't do as well today as maybe our previous matches, but that's also part of it. I still maintain -- I feel I still played the right way; just not well enough at it.

Q. The second-serve ace that you hit to save the second or third match point, were you trying to go that fine on it and that big on it? Talk through the rationale of going for a quite risky placement.

JOHANNA KONTA: I actually didn't go any riskier on the placement as some of my other serves. I have been trying to have enough variety in my first and second serves and making sure I wasn't always hitting the same serves. I was staying true to what I was always trying to do. Not just this match but in my matches so far. Just trying to make sure I keep that variety.

I felt that she was probably reading that second serve, and I guess it is the safe option to go with the usual,



but I don't think you ever really come through against the best players in the world if you just play usual (smiling).

Q. You got two very different buildups to your US Opens. Last year, quite frenetic. It was Stanford, Olympics, all that kind of kerfuffle. This year was not very much on hard courts here. You often talk about getting the time on the surface. So how do you feel that you have done going into New York?

JOHANNA KONTA: I think I have actually -- I think it hasn't been too bad. Obviously unfortunately I only got that one match in Toronto, but it was still a good match. It was still plenty of court time there.

Again, here, I played three great matches, so I'm not too discouraged. This is a question I asked my team this morning. I was actually curious of how many matches I played to date this year compared to last year. I actually played, I think, four more matches or three more matches to date now than I did last year. So I actually have played more matches. Only a few, that's true. So I think I have got the match play. I think I played, like, 52 matches so far this year. So that's quite a lot.

Q. Where did you pick up these extra matches from?

JOHANNA KONTA: This year I obviously had two Fed Cups, as well. So I played four singles matches in the first one and then I played two in the second one. That's an extra six matches there.

Q. It helps to win Miami matches?

JOHANNA KONTA: Yeah, exactly, plenty of matches in Miami and Wimbledon, too. That's a lot of matches. So I'm definitely not short of match play this year.

But I feel, again, I know it's only four matches, but still, some players didn't get four matches. I've got to look at the positives in that way. And I do feel I got better with each match. And again, I still feel there are a lot of good things for me to take from today and a lot of things I can get better at, which is always good.

Q. With the four matches and the transition from everything with Wimbledon to now and then going into the US Open, how much confidence do you take out of the fact that you have been able to,

pretty quickly, even with the Makarova match in Toronto, hit a pretty high level immediately? It never really seemed you were playing yourself into form. Seemed like you were hitting a good level right off the bat. Does it feel that way?

JOHANNA KONTA: Well, thank you. That's very nice to acknowledge. So thank you (smiling).

I think what's helping me, I guess, come through that -- although don't get me wrong. I think I'm only human, as well. Like every player, I think my first match back for me in Toronto, you are getting the cobwebs out a bit in terms of those feelings you get on court.

But in terms of level, I am working very hard physically to make sure from the get-go I'm able to switch on, and also, I keep working on things mentally.

So I'm very aware of my routines. I'm very aware on how I want to be thinking and behaving and, I guess, yeah, competing from the get-go.

I think, because I feel like I'm getting a stronger sense of self in that sense, I'm able to approach each match regardless of how many matches I played with that. That does bring with it, I think, a certain level, which obviously I keep trying to push up and up physically, if that makes sense.

Q. When you look back at how you were sort of in the earlier days where perhaps nerves got the better of you compared to here, obviously the process you go through must be a split second to keep that panic down or that focus on the moment. What sense of achievement do you have when you look back where you were to now?

JOHANNA KONTA: Interestingly, I do hear this often, or I have heard it a few times how I was perceived to not close out matches well in the past, and interestingly, I didn't live it like that. I don't ever remember getting too nervous. The only thing I can really put it down to is, again, experience.

I think I just, not feelings-wise but maybe decisions-wise, I started dealing with certain situations a bit better, and I think my success rate and conversion rate went a bit higher. Not today, but we'll keep working (smiling).

Q. When you say "decisions," you mean on court, off court, a bit of both?

JOHANNA KONTA: A bit of both, but I'm more specifically talking about right now on court and in match situations more than anything. I hope that makes sense.

It's interesting, though. I have heard that a couple of

times, and I'm trying to put myself in my, like, if I can remember what it was like, and I never felt like -- I actually felt quite confident kind of stepping up to serve for a match or -- I never had that feeling about myself that, Oh, I can't, or, No, I get nervous closing it out.

It's interesting, I guess if you compare it, guess, then to now, obviously I have matured. So hopefully it gets a bit tighter and...

Q. It's always interesting how myths get built.

JOHANNA KONTA: Yeah, exactly.

Q. As I sit here listening to you answering the questions, you seem so analytical and thoughtful. Are you the kind of player who likes to replay the matches in your mind after you have finished playing them?

JOHANNA KONTA: I definitely -- I like dissecting, and I like basically taking the good things and the things I can do better at after each match. So I like basically closing the chapter on it and moving on. I like organizing and moving on (smiling), basically.

I actually use my press conferences a bit. It helps me digest the match, as well, and helps me kind of try to take a bit of a helicopter view of it and try to be constructive, because, I mean, that's the only way I'm going to get better if I try to, yeah, take the things from each match and make them better.

Q. In the match tonight, if you had a chance to do a couple of do-overs, are there any particular points that stand out in your mind?

JOHANNA KONTA: Well, the thing is I created a lot of opportunities for myself this evening. So that's why -- I'm not sure if you were here at the beginning. I think you just walked in after. But for me I felt like I played the right way. I just unfortunately got into a position where I overplayed a lot of the time.

And again, like I said, that is also credit to Simona. She does make you walk that fine line. Because if you don't push, don't impose yourself onto her, then she's in her comfort zone and she controls the point the way she wants to. She moves the ball around unbelievably well.

I think for me it was still the right way to play. I just unfortunately didn't find the right balance of being offensive enough and still staying solid enough. I overplayed quite a few times. So I think it's not necessarily one specific point. I think it's just a general thing I can do better next time.