

Western & Southern Open

Saturday, August 19, 2017

Simona Halep

Press Conference



S. HALEP/S. Stephens

6-2, 6-1

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. You must have been very, very happy with that performance out there today.

SIMONA HALEP: I am, yes. I played my best, I think, match on hard court so far. I felt great on court. Now I feel better, actually.

Q. You didn't have to call Darren out. Were you just completely in the zone?

SIMONA HALEP: Yeah.

Q. You didn't need him?

SIMONA HALEP: I was thinking at set to call him, but I said, I'm focused, so I don't need any idea to change thing, to just go there. It was good. It was better, actually.

Q. What do you think made it so well today, your performance on court?

SIMONA HALEP: I think the match from yesterday gave me a lot of confidence, and since yesterday I started to feel the game, to feel that I can hit the ball.

So today was much better. I moved very well today. I just feel good. That's why maybe I can play. I have no pressure.

Q. Was there a certain point in yesterday's match where it started to feel good for you and you just ran with it?

SIMONA HALEP: Just from the first point I felt that I can play good tennis, and I felt it straightaway.

Q. Yesterday after the Konta match, you said you played a little bit tactically different, that you weren't pushing in the defensive positions as much, trying to hit through the ball even on defense. Looked like you were doing similar today?

SIMONA HALEP: Yeah, I did the same thing. Like I said yesterday was the same plan, to hit the balls, because if I get in defense a lot, I have no chance against these players.

So I just tried to hit, and some points I just wanted to go with her power. So I have been, and I think I won some points. It's important that I can see I can play this game, and I want just to keep it and to keep improving in this way.

Q. What can you do to keep it? Mentally what can you do?

SIMONA HALEP: Working every day, not thinking about pressure, the result. Just go in there and trying to play, I think, is the only one thing that I have to do.

Q. You're only five points...

SIMONA HALEP: Yeah.

Q. How does that feel?

SIMONA HALEP: Before the match I talked to my brother by SMS, that, Is it true that I am five points away if I win the match? He said, Yes. I said, It's unbelievable. Five points, can you believe it?

But, yeah.

Q. I think Roger is five points away, as well.

SIMONA HALEP: Really?

Q. From No. 2, yeah.

SIMONA HALEP: At least I'm not the only one, so it's okay.

Q. Yesterday you stayed after to watch Rafa. Are you a Rafa fan or just wanted to talk to Darren about your match?

SIMONA HALEP: I wanted to talk to Darren about my match, and it was nice weather. So I really enjoyed it, the match.

It was nice atmosphere there. I always like to see Rafa playing, because he's fighting even if he's losing. He's there 100% every ball. So I love that.

Q. Do you think your game is kind of like Rafa a little bit?

SIMONA HALEP: I try to do that, but I'm talking too much between the points. I have just to take off that, and that's why I'm watching the best players.

Q. Do you ever feel like Kyrgios? I mean, Kyrgios talks more than you do.

SIMONA HALEP: Well, we are different.

Q. I know you're different.

SIMONA HALEP: He hits the serve with 300 kilometers an hour. Yeah, I can't see something similar with Kyrgios.

But he played huge match last night. He's great. When he feels good and he wants to play, he's great.

Q. You mentioned it's a pretty comparable game plan for yesterday and you replicated that today. With respect to your form and you know your opponent for tomorrow, is it more about you with what you want to do or are you going to tweak some things with who you're playing?

SIMONA HALEP: Well, it's not always about me. Every time it also depends how the opponent is playing. But if I stay with my plan, I think I have a better chance. That's why I don't change anything for tomorrow. Just going the same like these days.

I know that she has a lot of confidence coming with title from Wimbledon, so she's favorite, in my opinion. She's hitting the ball strong, but I had already two matches, so I know how it's gonna come, the ball. But still, I want just to do the same and not thinking about the result. I just want to go there and enjoy moment.

Q. You have had a couple of matches already this year where No. 1 was a possibility.

SIMONA HALEP: Is the third time. It is with luck or is just an experience again. So we will see (smiling).

Q. But do you feel like you learned anything from those previous two times?

SIMONA HALEP: I'm more relaxed now. So I'm not thinking about that.

I know that if I keep this level, is gonna come. If not tomorrow, maybe next weeks. But I'm much better now. Hopefully I can play better.

Q. It's only five points.

SIMONA HALEP: I know. I saw on Twitter, actually, someone tweeted that I have to go to play 60K, a tournament, just to take 8 points and then to withdraw. This was funny (smiling).

Q. But because it's only five points, does that actually maybe take a little bit of the pressure off? Because the rankings are so tight. If it's not this week, it's next week. If it's not next week, it's Asia?

SIMONA HALEP: Yeah, I can keep hoping for that, but I don't want to do that, actually. I want to win it. So if it's gonna be just to win a match and to get there, it's going to be more special and nicer for me.

Everyone can get to No. 1 now. The ranking is close. So depends of anyone. But I am so close. I really want that. So we will see.

Q. A lot of people, when they have got No. 1, haven't necessarily performed really well afterwards. You have said in the past, I really want it. Do you still see that, that once you get it, you're going to nourish it?

SIMONA HALEP: I don't know (smiling). First, I want to get there, and then I will tell you.

Q. It's only five points.

SIMONA HALEP: Yeah, but still, five points (smiling).

Yeah, I can say now that if you get there, I think you don't have to feel the pressure more than normal, but maybe something is changing. I have no idea. I don't know. I just want to think that I still have to work to get there, and then I will think about that.

Q. You haven't played Muguruza in a while. What are your thoughts on that matchup, particularly how your styles match up?

SIMONA HALEP: I played few times against her, and I know she's very aggressive. She stays close to the baseline, and she hits everything.

I have just to respond fast and, like, strong with my legs, move well, and just to push her back.

I'll try everything tomorrow. I have just to go there and to play another final, which is great.

Q. When did you first ever think about being No. 1? Was it ever a goal a long time ago, recently, a little girl?

SIMONA HALEP: I could not wish No. 1 in the world when I started playing professional, because I was too far. So when I got to Top 10, I said that I can be there. But still, when Serena was playing, I didn't think too much about that. My first goal was a Grand Slam title, and it's still the first goal.

But now being very close, it's maybe the most important thing in this period, the last three months, let's say.

I don't know. I think it's something special to get No. 1 in the world. Only 23 players got that, if I remember well.

So it's going to be special. Yeah, just that. Don't have to talk anymore (smiling). It's fine. I am far to get it.