

Miami Open presented by Itaú

Sunday, March 24, 2019

Simona Halep

Press Conference



S. HALEP/P. Hercog

5-7, 7-6, 6-2

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. Almost three hours out there. Are you more relieved or tired?

SIMONA HALEP: Tired, honestly. It was not easy at all. I think the level was very, very high. She played unbelievable. If she keeps playing like this, she can be top 20 easy.

I think it was a great match for both of us. I'm really happy I could win it in the end. It was a lot of effort today.

Q. What specifically about her game was testing you a lot? Were there adjustments you made in the third?

SIMONA HALEP: Actually I think in the end she got tired a little bit, then I was stepping a little bit forward to be more aggressive.

First two sets were tough because she was serving very, very strong. Also both shots, forehand, backhand, slice actually, it was really tough to get some points. She didn't miss. So it was really difficult. It was a very, very high standard.

Q. You played her once a decade ago.

SIMONA HALEP: I lost, I know. My brother took care to tell me (laughter).

Q. You don't remember it?

SIMONA HALEP: No.

Q. Did you have any expectations coming in?

SIMONA HALEP: I knew it was maybe going to be the toughest match here because she's very strong. I know her spin is not easy to return. Yeah, I expected a tough one.

Q. What is it like out on that court, the feeling? Seems a little different.

SIMONA HALEP: Yeah, it's different than the court I played the previous match. But it was a nice atmosphere. I felt really good. I felt the ball. It's good that we didn't have much sun. It was a good timing.

Q. What is your general impression of the new facility?

SIMONA HALEP: Everything is very big. But we are used to it in U.S. because it's always big stadium, big centers. I feel it's a big improvement and is much better for us, for the players.

Q. How has your new coach been with you so far? How is the connection going?

SIMONA HALEP: Yeah, we worked together many years ago, 2014 and 2016 actually during the collaboration with Darren. We worked together. He helped me home, some tournaments.

He's a good guy, great person. We have connection. I think it's the best decision that I have taken this period.

Q. How did the leg injury affect your game?

SIMONA HALEP: Didn't affect me much. I still feel it. I still feel a pain in my knee. But I hope I can recover until tomorrow. Hopefully is not very dangerous.

Q. After the last point of the match, your celebration is extremely happy. Did you feel extra pressure during the match?

SIMONA HALEP: No pressure. Just the difficulty of the match. It was really tough. I was not scared that I'm going to lose. I was not sure that I'm going to win. It was 50/50. Everything I did is just to stay focused. I think was the key of the match.

Q. Yesterday you posted a picture with your father and brother. Do they have the same birthday?

SIMONA HALEP: Yes. Same day, same month. It's beautiful, yeah. Very nice present for my father, no?

Q. I think it was Ana Ivanovic who said when she worked with a Serbian coach, it helped her. Do you sense that when you are able to work with a Romanian coach, they get you in a way?

SIMONA HALEP: Well, I will never compare any coach with Darren. I think with Darren I had the best results in my life. I feel like even if he was speaking English, I understood everything. I have done everything he said. I don't see that a problem.

Is also good that is a Romanian coach because I can maybe express myself better. But still Darren was good enough to understand me. So there is no

difference or comparison [sic].

Q. You play Venus next.

SIMONA HALEP: Again.

Q. You won the last three matches against her. What do you sense is the key to coming out on top?

SIMONA HALEP: Well, it's always tough against Venus. I'm not going to say that it's going to be easier because I won the last matches against her. It's a big challenge for me, always I face Williams sisters.

I will be motivated. I will be ready to play. Hopefully I will be 100% tomorrow. Why not, I will believe that I have the chance. Still I will stay focused.

Q. Being in a new place, have you made new routines here?

SIMONA HALEP: I'm pretty relaxed. I don't have routines like this, the tournaments. I just take the day as it is. I face the things without stress. I'm relaxed and I was okay.

Actually I think it's a good thing that it's something new.