

Miami Open presented by Itaú

Friday, March 22, 2019

Naomi Osaka

Press Conference



N. OSAKA/Y. Wickmayer

6-0, 6-7, 6-1

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. Strong finish to the match. How happy were you with that? Did you do anything in between the second and third set to reset?

NAOMI OSAKA: Yeah, I mean, of course I'm really happy that I was able to win the match. It was really hard for me, I think, emotionally in the second set because I just started thinking about winning, not exactly the things I could do in order to win.

So, yeah, I had a bit of a dip. She was also playing really well. I think between the second and third set I tried to breathe and regroup.

Q. Anything that caused that mindset or is it the perils of being a tennis player that won the first set 6-Love?

NAOMI OSAKA: I think it's normal. It's the first match I've played here. I wasn't able to defend in Indian Wells, so of course I really want to do well here. I think it was all of that combination.

Q. Opponents talk about your serve being tough because the toss is tough to read. When you're serving well, what are some of the keys or things you do well when you're in a groove on serve?

NAOMI OSAKA: Yeah, I mean, I think just for me tossing it in a really nice place. Same as you just said. I think in order for me to serve well, I just have to have a good toss, yeah, have a lot of energy in my legs to be able to jump up for that.

Q. You talked about how you shut down your feelings in the third set. We see you doing that at the Australian Open. How does that trigger for you? Is it easy to shut your feelings down?

NAOMI OSAKA: Yeah, I mean, for me, I wouldn't say it's easy, but I find myself doing it often when I'm really in emotionally stressful situations. I find it easier to focus when I do that.

Yeah, I just think it's sort of an energy saver because of constantly being riled up for every point, I can just keep moving on to the next one.

Q. You have a new coach. How is the new coach bringing you a new technique or tactic?

NAOMI OSAKA: We've been talking a lot. She's really big on being positive, which I feel sorry for him during this match because I was, like, throwing my racquet and stuff. That's completely against what he was saying. I felt really frustrated. At least I didn't crack it, though, so there's that (laughter).

Yeah, she's really big on being positive, just trusting myself and my body, all the work that I've put in physically, yeah.

Q. What did you make of the conditions? Pretty big shadow. Were there any differences between practice and match play on that court?

NAOMI OSAKA: Yeah, has anyone been saying anything about it?

Q. A few players have mentioned the shadow.

NAOMI OSAKA: I think it's a little bit tricky to get used to it. I think for me it got better as time went on. My eyes aren't as they used to be. It was a little bit hard to see the ball sometimes.

I found comfort in knowing she also was in the same conditions. It's not something that I should really be complaining about.

Q. Did you say any of Mari's match yesterday and shared anything with her that you're okay sharing with us?

NAOMI OSAKA: I watched on TV because I wanted to go. Apparently there wasn't, like, seating. I don't know how to explain. My mom said I shouldn't go. I listen to my mom.

Yeah, I think this runs in the family, but we tend to get down on ourselves a lot after we lose. I texted her, but I didn't want to bother her because I think that we're emotionally fragile.

Yeah, I saw her today. She seemed upbeat, so that's nice.

(Naomi's answers to questions in Japanese.)

NAOMI OSAKA: Yeah, of course. For me, I consider Miami a home. I definitely always want to do well here

whenever I play. I haven't really done well here compared to the other tournaments. It's definitely been a really big goal of mine. Whenever I play my matches, I always have that in my mind, so...

For me, yeah, when I close out my emotions, I don't really say c'mon and stuff any more. I just feel like, I don't know, I'm a shell. I just keep thinking about the next point. I don't really celebrate too much if I win a point. I don't really react if I lose a point. I just try to keep it moving, so...

I think I do say c'mon if I feel like it's really tough. But for the most part not really because I think that I get really hyper quickly if I start bouncing around and stuff, so I try not to do that.

I mean, for me, I don't really think about what I've done before. I think about what I'm trying to do now. So when I play my matches now, I don't think that I've won two Grand Slams and I'm No. 1. I just think that I want to win the match that I'm playing well and I want to do well in the tournament. Definitely I want to win the tournaments that I play, so that's the main goal on my mind.

Yeah, I mean, I've seen him around because he used to be with Venus. But, of course, I never talked to him because I don't talk to people. But I've heard a lot of people saying good things about him. I think it's good that he's only worked with that one person for a long time. For me, I want the team around me to be for a very long time. I don't want to keep changing people every year. I don't really feel good doing that. Yeah, I think there was nothing but positive things said about him. When I met him, he was really great, so...

Yeah, I mean, I feel very old. It's so weird to me because I remember when I was 17 and I was like the youngest one playing the tournament. Now there's kids, literally they're kids, doing well and winning tournaments. For me, I think it's very inspiring, too, because I don't know, there's like no fear. I think that's amazing. It sort of shows, like, the generation, the next generation. They're not in my generation. I'm too old for them. Yeah, it makes me happy to see that.

Q. What do you remember about the Su-Wei match?

NAOMI OSAKA: That match, whew. She's unpredictable. She can hit winners from anywhere it seems like. She has a slice, dropshot. Feels like she has everything. For me it's tough to play her because I don't know what's going to happen. It's that unpredictability that I think makes her play really well and beat all the top people.

Yeah, it should be really tough tomorrow.