

Miami Open presented by Itaú

Friday, March 22, 2019

Serena Williams

Press Conference



S. WILLIAMS/R. Peterson

6-3, 1-6, 6-1

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. Maybe after feeling a bit under the weather last week, how are you feeling about today?

SERENA WILLIAMS: I'm not really thinking about my match too much today. I wasn't really happy with my performance. Had to take a lot of time off the last week, so I don't know. Just going.

Q. How tough is that to have a bug, dealing with that?

SERENA WILLIAMS: Yeah, it's definitely not easy at all. But I'm through it. That's that. I just got to get my game back to where I know it can be, yeah.

Q. You've had a busy time off the court. How, if any, has that impacted your scheduling for tennis, preparing for the matches?

SERENA WILLIAMS: Outside of my family and God, tennis definitely comes first. Everything kind of is scheduled around that. I always have my training schedule, my practices and training. I have calls and meetings, all that stuff, after.

It's been good to find that healthy balance. I also have a great team that I work with on the venture side as well as my brand for the clothing. It's been really helpful.

Q. Coco Gauff won her first tour match yesterday. She's less than half your age. She looks to you as an inspiration, hero. Even her moves on court are like yours. What does that feel like?

SERENA WILLIAMS: It's super cool. I love her. I love her game. She's just fun. She seems super cool.

But it's great. That's what we play for ultimately, is to not only be remembered but to inspire other people to want to play not as good as you but better. For me, it's all about don't be me, be better than me. That's what I always try to say.

Q. What did you tell yourself after the end of the second set that you were able to roll through the third set?

SERENA WILLIAMS: I could not lose this match. I

knew that I could play a lot, lot, lot better. I just had to be better. At this point it was irresponsible to be playing the way I was playing in the second set, so...

That determination was, I cannot lose this match just really kicked in. What do I need to do to win this match?

Q. How difficult was it playing with the shadows and lights?

SERENA WILLIAMS: It was interesting because first of all it was dark out there, which was really odd. I wasn't sure if there should be lights. The shadow was so intense it was actually dark.

Then there was light, but only on my side. That was weird because I literally couldn't see. Every time she hit, Okay, do I lob? But whatever.

Like I said, I'm not really thinking about this match. I need to just move on and really focus on playing better or not being in the tournament much longer.

Q. What will be your measure of success for yourself in terms of where you are now, I'm where I could have hoped to be?

SERENA WILLIAMS: That's a tricky question because I feel like with my career I've had a tremendous amount of success. I think coming back from my situation, playing four, five tournaments, jumping into the top 10, is extremely successful.

It's just a step at a time. I have to force myself to take a step back and say, You're doing great, don't be so hard on yourself. Just because my level of success is so much higher than what's natural, I have to take these moments and say, You're doing great, encourage myself in a positive way so I can get that success that I want to have since coming back from the baby.

Q. New court, new opponent, moving on from this match, what was it like out there in your thoughts?

SERENA WILLIAMS: It was fine. It was a different court, but it was a beautiful court. It's nice. It's so different than anything I've ever played on in my entire career. I'm super excited that I was able to make it and play on it. Hopefully I'll continue to play.

Yeah, it's just super different.



Q. Last week's match against Vika, a lot of us feel is probably the best women's match of the year so far. What do you take away from that as you continue to step up and improve the way you're playing? Could you see that match as being a major steppingstone for the rest of the year?

SERENA WILLIAMS: Yeah, I definitely see it as a major steppingstone knowing that I can play extremely tough matches and play at that level from literally the first point to the last. I feel like it was just an incredibly high level.

What was a little frustrating today is I know I can play so much better, but I just wasn't able to produce it today. But that's the beauty of fighting, getting through the matches where you're not playing your best, then coming out the next time and just doing better.

Yeah, I know I can get better. I think that match against Vika was just incredibly high talent, just highly fought, and we both wanted to win it really bad.