

Miami Open presented by Itaú

Friday, March 22, 2019

Sloane Stephens

Press Conference



S. STEPHENS/O. Jabeur

6-2, 6-3

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. Ons can be a tricky opponent. How did you navigate that today?

SLOANE STEPHENS: It's tough when somebody doesn't give you a lot of rhythm. She can hit some great shots. You have to be ready for that and accept that during the match because that's just what she does.

It was tough, but happy to be through.

Q. What did you make of the conditions?

SLOANE STEPHENS: It was good. The court played well. We played at a weird time because the sun was going down so half the court was shaded. The weather was good, the atmosphere was great, the courts played fine. I was happy with that.

Q. Overall did it just feel good to get the first match under your belt? What are you looking to improve?

SLOANE STEPHENS: Yeah, definitely. Obviously when you play someone like that, it's really tricky. You can't expect too much from yourself, just to play consistent.

I think I stayed focused, made as many balls as I could, ran down as many balls as I could, made her play a little bit extra.

When you play someone like that, your expectations cannot be too high. I was happy with the way I played.

Q. What are your thoughts getting the first one out of the way?

SLOANE STEPHENS: Every first round is hard, especially when you've won the title here, like you're defending a title. It's never easy.

Like I said, I thought I played well today against someone who is really tricky to play. But in general, no first round is ever easy.

Q. Tatjana Maria is next for you. Your thoughts on that one?

SLOANE STEPHENS: She's also another tough player.

She slices a lot, has a lot of variety. It's kind of two similar players back-to-back. Not too bad.

Yeah, I'll just look to do the same thing. She does give you a little bit more rhythm, though. She hits a nice ball. I'll talk to my people, see what they say, and hopefully come up with a good game plan, just go out there and try to execute.

Q. Do you feel more used to the grounds the more time has been passing?

SLOANE STEPHENS: No. I still don't know where I'm going or where things are. But I'm just day-to-day. There's a lot of people with the blue shirts on. If I'm lost, Hey, where am I? Where do I go?

Q. What do you think about the new atmosphere?

SLOANE STEPHENS: It's great. I mean, obviously growing up in South Florida, I spent a lot of time on Key Biscayne there. The USTA used to be there, so I was there a lot. It will definitely be missed as kind of like a staple for our tour.

I think here now it's a great facility. It looks great. I mean, obviously it's a little different. Change is never easy. The transition is a little tough for everyone. It's the same conditions for everyone.

Yeah, I mean, it's a great tournament, you just have to go with it, play like everybody else.

Q. Have you had a chance to experience it yourself, the grounds?

SLOANE STEPHENS: No. Today was the first day that I saw the grandstand court. I was on a golf cart and I had no idea where we were going. I was like, Are we leaving the facility? The court was so far away.

Still, like I said, finding things and places. I'm not very adventurous. I always get lost. I'm not a good person to ask. From the locker room to the car is tricky, so...