

April 5, 2016



**Samantha Stosur defeats Aleksandra Kunic
6-4, 6-4
First Round**

Q. Hi, congratulations.

SAMANTHA STOSUR: Thank you.

Q. Must feel good to get through the first round. How was it out there? Wind? You had a lot of double faults. Can you just tell us a little bit about what went on during the match for you?

SAMANTHA STOSUR: Yeah. It's always good to get through any match. I guess overall, yeah, my tennis could have been a little bit better, and my serve especially. Whether it was, you know, the conditions, a bit of lack of focus at times, whatever the case, it's certainly something that I need to rectify for the next round.

But it was tricky conditions out there. It was pretty windy and a bit swirly at times, and then with the wind, it was a bit tricky as well, so matches like that they're not easy, but to get through it in the end in straight sets, I'm happy with that.

Q. I assume you're playing Fed Cup?

SAMANTHA STOSUR: Yeah.

Q. How is it to have the Australia trip wedged in between here and Europe?

SAMANTHA STOSUR: Yeah. It's not ideal, that's for sure. I certainly wouldn't be going back to Australia next week if it wasn't for Fed Cup. But look, that's the draw that it came. And yeah, now that I am going back, I'm looking forward to going home. Well, going home for like two days, and then the rest of the time will be at Fed Cup, but I can see my family there and some friends and stuff, so even though it's a quick trip, it's going to be, I'm sure, a lot of fun, so it'll be worthwhile.

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Q. I was just wondering how big a break that is for you and the Australian team, and if you could tell me about the rule in general because I know Ajla is probably stuck, she's been going through this for a while, and other players have had issues. What you think about the ITF restrictions on this sort of thing.

SAMANTHA STOSUR: Look, I think if you'd started that process before they changed the rule, I think it was the start of last year, I think it's pretty rough, which I think Ajla did.

But I guess a couple of -- if she's played for Croatia, then she won't be able to, but someone like Dasha who had never played for Russia. So it would have been pretty rough, I think, if she didn't win that appeal just, what, ten days ago or so, given that she hadn't played for Russia, the new rules. She's been living in Australia for four or five years now. So she's done everything that she had to do. And she got her passport, and I think as soon as you get your passport, you should be allowed to play.

So she was absolutely ecstatic and over the moon to be able to now play Fed Cup, and I was actually in Melbourne the day that she got her actual citizenship in December and she couldn't concentrate for anything for the rest of the day. So I think it does mean a lot to her to now be able to represent her new country and for us and the team it's great to have her a part of that, and I guess she kind of slips into the second singles spot now.

So it's not going to be easy for her to play her first Fed Cup. She's never been a part of something like that before, and it is different when you play in that event. So hopefully she can handle it very well; and yeah, hopefully we can have a good week against the Americans.

Q. Would you like to see the rule change so that a player like Ajla might be able to play? It's a pretty strict rule. She played when she was really young for Croatia and now can't play for anyone else.

SAMANTHA STOSUR: Yeah. I think there's a few rules and things that probably need to be looked at and have a bit of common sense about things and we've got so many almost governing bodies in tennis. It would be nice if everyone could kind of get along and make it one thing and we've all got the same rules for everything. There's a bunch of different rules in

Slams, the WTA and ITF, and it does get confusing. I think that's one that may need to be looked at. But look, that's where it stands right now and unfortunately that's a position that Ajla is in.

Q. Do you get good vibes when you come back to Charleston?

SAMANTHA STOSUR: Yeah. Absolutely. I love coming back here. I say it every single year. And yeah, it's nice to play on this court. It's great to have the fans supporting you, and I do feel like I've got lots of support when I play here. And I've played some of my best tennis here actually. The final I played against Zvonareva I think is the best match I've ever played. So yeah, it's always good memories, and yeah, I certainly feel really comfortable being in this city.

Q. Where do you think you are now in your career at 32 and what sort of keeps you going?

SAMANTHA STOSUR: Well, I guess I'm definitely on the end of my career. However long that is, I don't know yet. But look, I'm feeling fit and healthy and feel like I can still improve my tennis and hopefully get higher in the rankings than what I've been the last couple of years.

But you know, I really want to try and make the most of each event that I'm able to play, and I want to do well in the bigger tournaments of course, but really just start to enjoy my tennis. I'm very proud of what I've been able to achieve in my career so far. So kind of anything from this point on is, you know, not a bonus, because you work hard for it, but I don't feel like I need to prove anything. So if I can kind of have that mentality when you're out on the court, you know, at the most pressure moment, then that might actually help me.

Q. This was the first time that you played with Kunic, and she had some magnificent results a couple of years at the US Open. She had you a couple of times both sets on breaks. What did you exploit in her game that, what are the flaws or the good things about her game?

SAMANTHA STOSUR: Look, for someone who's quite, I guess, slight in a lot of ways. She's not a very big girl. She moves very well. She's very fast. There was a couple of times

I hit a short ball or a drop shot and I didn't think she was going to get to it, and she did. Look, she does that stuff very well. She moves the ball around the court well. She's not too, I guess, patterned. She doesn't go cross court every single time off any shot. You gotta, I guess, be smart when you play her not to give her the things that she likes.

But I guess matching up against me, I like to hit the ball quite high over the net with lots of spin. It gets up. So especially on the like kick serve when she's returning that, she struggles with that, high to the backhand as anybody kind of her size would. But she's got a pretty good serve for someone that height. But I think she's a good player. She's obviously proven that she can play against some very quality opponents, with that run at the US Open. And I think she's about 120 at the moment, but certainly wouldn't be surprised if she gets herself back inside the Top 100 for sure.

Q. I was reading about some of the pressures and expectations you feel playing in the Australian Open at home. I think Shelby Rogers faces some of that here on a much smaller scale. Do you have any advice for a person in her position, playing at home, dealing with those kind of pressures and expectations?

SAMANTHA STOSUR: I've gotta win the first round. Then I might be able to give advice. But look, it's not easy. To be honest, probably -- there is pressure. It's just different pressure because there's pressure every single week that we play no matter where we are, depending on your situation and who you're playing, what round it is. You can believe anything if you want to and you can also dismiss anything if you want to as well, which is sometimes harder to do.

But no, it's hard playing at the US Open. I think the biggest thing for me is that I'm desperate to do well and I want to play my best tennis right there, right then, which unfortunately for a few years now I haven't really been able to do.

But also then I kind of get going a little bit longer throughout the year and if the Aussie Open was in March at this time of year and we'd already played a bunch of tournaments, maybe it would be different because I do like to have a bit of match play under my belt, which unfortunately I'm not able to always get straight up.

But no, I think it's always a challenge, but if you want to try and get through that, you gotta

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think about what works. And I think last year certainly I handled it a lot better, and this year I played a girl who played pretty well in the day and didn't give me too much, so I think you gotta look at it for each -- almost each individual circumstance. And I think losing early doesn't always mean that you couldn't handle the moment. Maybe you played somebody who played too well as well. So I think you can't get down on yourself because I think every match can be different.

Q. Patty Schnyder is making her WTA comeback at this tournament here. You played her four times, I think in the final. I was just wondering what you remember about her and how you would rate her comeback chances.

SAMANTHA STOSUR: Well, I just saw her hitting out there. She looks exactly the same as what she did when she was playing. It's funny, actually, maybe five or six days ago when we first got here, I was checking the rankings, and for whatever reason kept going down and down and down, and I saw her name, and I thought, okay, is that the Patty Schnyder, and we saw her in the clubhouse a couple of days later. And my coach and somebody else was talking to her; and I was like, see, I knew she was playing again, and Dave couldn't believe it. He's like, no, she's not. She's coaching or something, so to have her back out playing it could be really exciting.

She was a tricky opponent. You know, the lefty with the spin. I mean she still slides pretty great on these courts, and she was never easy to play. You never wanted to come up against Patty.

Yeah, I don't know how long she's been back playing challengers or anything for. But yeah, if she wants to give it a go, then I wish her the best.

Q. But you couldn't believe she had resurfaced?

SAMANTHA STOSUR: No. Not at all. I saw her with her little girl and everything. Honestly, I was completely surprised. One, when I saw her in the rankings, then when I saw her here.

End of Interview

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