

April 5, 2017

A Post-Match Interview With:

LAURA SIEGEMUND

**Laura Siegemund defeats Venus Williams
6-4, 6-7, 7-5
Second Round**

Q. Laura, you came here last year for the first time, and I remember your saying that you felt this tournament had a little something extra. And you looked for the right word, and you said it was spice, this tournament had a little spice to it. So it seemed like you returned the favor today. Could you talk a little bit about what was going through your mind at the end of that second set?

LAURA SIEGEMUND: In the end of the second set. Yeah, I -- I mean I think I worked my way well through the match. The first set was good. In the second I tried to keep up the pressure and tried to dominate the game as well as I could, because once you let her, you know, decide what's happening on the court, then you have a problem.

So I always tried to, you know, give her something that she has to work hard for every shot she's making, and I worked my way to that match point, and it was a close match, you know, it can go either way. But then I had that match point, and it's always hard if you then don't take the set or the match in that case.

I think I played a little bit too defensive there, wasn't so happy with how that turned out, of course, but then I tried to just refocus in the third. I mean it starts from zero in the third set, right, so I just tried to forget about first and second set and just focus on the strategy I wanted to play in the third.

Q. When you grind for a career and you go week in, week out and try to pull out wins, how much does it help your mentality, your confidence when you knock off Venus Williams?

LAURA SIEGEMUND: I think a lot because she's just such a great player, you know,

and has accomplished so much in the sport. And if you can say you beat Venus, I think that's not everyone can do that, so I'm really proud of that.

But it's always a day-to-day thing. This level is really, you know, close. Everyone can beat anyone kind of on any day. So I just tried to make the best of my day today and play my game, and yeah, I'm really proud of this victory.

Q. Laura, you came into the tournament with just one win this season, and two wins later you knock off Venus. Talk about maybe your mindset coming out of the hard court season and then coming into this tournament. Did you think something like this was maybe on the horizon for you?

LAURA SIEGEMUND: Yeah. You know, I was thinking about what happened, and I have -- I played my last match on clay, which is really my favorite surface, last July. And since then I'm playing -- I mean I like to play on hard courts now, but I just prefer to play on clay.

And I had good matches. I said it earlier today. I had good matches. I just didn't win them, you know. And that's why it's very important for me. I personally said, okay, now is the start of my season really because this has always been a tournament I played well, and I feel very good on clay right away.

So yeah, I just wanted to go out confident and didn't think about the matches I lost in the last weeks. It's just a new match every day, and it's definitely a different way of playing on the clay than on the hard court. So I just try to be confident with what I can do on clay, and it worked out really well.

Q. How much did it help you to go through what you had to go through against Tsurenko?

LAURA SIEGEMUND: Sorry. Can you ask that again?

Q. Yes. I wondered how much it helped you what you had to go through with Tsurenko? It was a long, long grind. She was dropping you, she was injured.

LAURA SIEGEMUND: Yeah. And this is the kind of clay court matches. They can just go on a very long time. They have several like ups and downs, maybe even more than a hard court match can have. And you kind of have to get used to that that you also get your chances. Even if you

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lose a set or so, you can always fight your way back into the match, which both Venus and I also showed today. You can always come back on clay.

For the confidence certainly helped me against Tsurenko, and then yeah, of course, you have a win under your belt. You know what's working this week for you and what not so much. So of course that helped me for today as well.

Q. Talking about the ups and downs on a clay court and having the mental kind of fortitude and strength to get through that, obviously that's a big aspect of your game. You play a lot of three-set matches and long ones. Can you talk about why you think it is that those battles seem to be able to bring out some of your best tennis, especially when it comes to clay?

LAURA SIEGEMUND: Yeah. I think it's one of my strengths to really keep on refocussing on strategy and never really give yourself up. I did have this kind of mental on hard court as well, being strong in the head and being able to bounce back after things have maybe not been going so well, if you had a down in a match. I think that's always a strength no matter which surface.

But here maybe you get a couple more chances to really execute. And yeah, and then of course, you know, I'm a good defensive player. Like I can grind the balls out from the corner. So that helps me. And I think it's a combination, yeah.

Q. And speaking of that, I mean the last maybe 20, 30 minutes of that match, it almost looked like you couldn't put a ball wrong. Just defensively, offensively, I mean you were digging a lot of balls out of there, some of those volleys. Did that feel that way to you? Did you have that confidence?

LAURA SIEGEMUND: No. I think that actually in the third set I was maybe the least happy with my performance because I thought I played -- I didn't play as aggressive as before. I had some -- sometimes played a little bit short. I want more depth in my balls.

But you know, you have to fight through it. I mean trying to solve the problem was really what I was doing the whole third set. And I'm glad that, you know, the defensive things worked out and I did a really good job in that department.

I wish I could have been dominating a little more because I had energy. I was -- I wanted to be aggressive. Just didn't work out exactly the way I wanted in the end. It did better in the end of the third set. Yeah.

Q. You have a degree in sports psychology, I think.

LAURA SIEGEMUND: In normal psychology. Not sports psychology. Just general psychology.

Q. Is there something, main thing you got from that that helps you in times like this?

LAURA SIEGEMUND: No, not really. I mean it helps you to understand things better maybe. But you know, what you use in a match like that, the pressure you feel, the doubts you have, all that kind of stuff, that's really very tennis specific also. I think that comes from experience more than from, you know, reading books. That's really knowing yourself and also knowing yourself, how you did in good matches and how you did in matches that didn't go so well.

But honestly, every single time, as you also said with the strategy, I mean it was not like -- I didn't feel like I could do whatever I wanted and it works out. It was a lot of work. Mentally as well. It was just a lot of work to get through a match like.

She would say the same if she would be the winner of this match. For both of us you have to just keep bouncing back from little disappointments here and there when things are not working out so well, and of course, the joy is even greater if you win this kind of match.

Q. How would you rate this performance in terms of the tennis that you know you're capable of playing? Because Venus thought that you played out of this world.

LAURA SIEGEMUND: Oh, yeah?

Q. Yeah. She thought you were incredible today. So I'm just kind of curious for you --

LAURA SIEGEMUND: It's always interesting to hear the other player's opinion or even an outside opinion, if it's the coach, or well, spectators, they always say it was a great match. You know, if you make the last point, you're the

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better one. It's not as easy as that, you know. But it's always nice to get an outside perspective.

I didn't think I played outside of this world. I know in my aggressive game I can do better than this. But I did a really good job today in defending, and I was covering the court really well. And I got a lot of sneaky points where she thought she had won the point already and I got it back. So that was very good today.

But other things were solid, and some things I feel like, okay, I need to get this fixed to keep being in the competition. See what I'm saying? I mean, yeah.

But overall I'm very happy with my performance, of course. I mean how can you not be if you beat a player like this? And I definitely want to keep the things up that were working well and want to keep playing them like this, like today.

End of Interview



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