

April 6, 2017

A Post-Match Interview With:

SHELBY ROGERS
Shelby Rogers defeats Naomi Osaka
6-4, 6-2
Third Round

Q. Another fantastic performance out there. How would you rate how you played and what were you most pleased with today?

SHELBY ROGERS: I think I played pretty well. I knew it was going to be windy, so I was trying to keep first serve percentage high, hit big targets. She's a really tricky player. I had to do a lot of defending and digging out some really tough balls. She has a lot of power, and sometimes just too good. She had some great winners, and I knew it was going to be a touch match. I thought I returned pretty well. I was trying to be aggressive, even in the wind, just to kind of hit through it a little bit, use the angles with the wind, that sort of thing. And I thought I executed pretty well.

Q. Growing up here, are you used to playing in wind like this in Charleston or is this a little different?

SHELBY ROGERS: I'm pretty used to it, and the cold as well. I had a bunch of 7:30 a.m., 32-degree windy practices that I owe it to my coach, because this moment right here is all worth it. At the time wasn't great, but yeah, I've experienced that before, but I haven't played in wind like that in a long time. It's not my favorite; I don't think it's anyone's favorite. It's not very fun. But you're both dealing with it, so you just gotta stay positive and do the best you can.

Q. So the first two matches, just the win over Madison and then tonight, what do you think you're doing this week, on this surface that maybe you weren't able to do on the hard courts before to play this level consistently over two matches?

SHELBY ROGERS: I mean I've had a pretty good year so far. I've had some good matches, and to be honest, the beginning of the

year I wasn't playing great. I was just kind of digging out some tough wins. Even my first round here just didn't feel like I was playing great, but somehow found a way to win, and I think that kind of set me up to play some good tennis my last couple of matches. There's always these ups and downs with tennis.

Don't ask me where it goes, but sometimes it goes away, and now I feel like I'm seeing the ball well. I'm moving pretty well, really happy to be back on clay, and I'm having a lot of fun, and sharing this experience with my hometown has been incredible.

Q. You know, young kids will be like this is for Wimbledon; this is for the US Open. When you were a kid, did you ever think this was for the Family Circle Cup and dream about winning?

SHELBY ROGERS: Absolutely, yeah. I remember even just getting to practice on stadium was the coolest thing ever. I'd visualize myself being in the tournament, and I think moments like that are really cool, and I hope I'm inspiring other kids here to really dream big and want to do that themselves.

It's really special to me to see all the kids smiling and excited about playing tennis and excited about watching tennis and being here and learning. That's a huge part of why I play.

Q. Have you ever hit better than you did tonight ground strokes?

SHELBY ROGERS: Hit better?

Q. Have you ever hit better?

SHELBY ROGERS: I think so. It was a little tough to hit the ball clean tonight with the wind. But I tried to do the best I could. Thought I served pretty well and returned pretty well. So if you start the point okay, you're on the right track.

Q. Is this your good-luck jacket?

SHELBY ROGERS: Even though you might think so, this is not the same exact one I've been wearing every day. I do wash my clothing. (Laughs).

Q. Just to be in the quarterfinals on Daniel Island for the first time, I mean I see you throw the racquet, but can you put into words what this means?

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SHELBY ROGERS: No. No. I cannot. It's still kind of hard to believe. I don't think it's sunk in quite yet. I'm still trying to defrost a little bit, too. But it's so special. I mean I've been trying for years, coming here, trying my hardest, like too hard, I think. You know, it's always been a little bit tough for me to play here, and so it's all been worth it. I've learned a lot; the experience has been great, and I've matured a little bit and now I get to enjoy it, and I'm so help happy I get to come back and play another match. I know I said that already, but it's true. I just want to keep going.

Q. As far as having your family here and everybody around you and friends and all that, does that take a toll on you a little bit because everybody is around here and everybody wants to --

SHELBY ROGERS: My family is exhausting. (Laughs). No. It's been great. The support is so nice. I get to sleep in my own bed. My family is here. I get home-cooked meals, I mean things that we don't get all year long. We're in a different hotel, a different city every single week. So I'm a little bit spoiled. It's almost too nice. I gotta really focus and stay motivated, yeah.

But I mean I just love my family and friends so much, and they're texting me every day, if you have tickets, please leave me some. I'm like, oh, my gosh, of course; come out and watch me. I want you to be there with me. And I just love it. They stayed tonight through the cold and the late nights. I mean it's humbling.

Q. Shelby, I'm sorry if you've been asked this before, but going back to when you were a ball kid here, do you remember who you were a ball kid for and what you took away from those experiences?

SHELBY ROGERS: I do. There are a bunch of funny stories actually, but I just remember I mean the Jennifer Capriati story. You've probably heard that. I handed her the flowers when she won, and she kissed me on the cheek, and it was just like this Cinderella story, and I didn't wash my face -- no, I'm kidding.

But I mean I remember just being so star struck and in awe of these players. Like they're hitting the ball so hard, like I want to do this; this is I want to do. I want to be there one day, and it was so inspiring to me. And going through that, like now I never -- I try not to disrespect the ball kids,

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because I know how they're feeling. I'm like throwing a sweaty towel at them and it's the greatest thing ever. I thought it was so cool.

And I remember I was a ball girl for Jelena Dokic. And I ended up playing her in the quarterfinals of like a challenger, and I was like, I'm going to beat her and I'm going to tell her that I was a ball girl for her. I didn't beat her, but it sounded good in my mind, but just cool scenarios like that. Hopefully these kids will grow up and get a chance to play themselves and play some of the players they were on the court with. It's super cool.

Q. And I know obviously you're comfortable on the clay, but going back to last year at the French Open, in that incredible run, what did you take out of that that you were able to apply and still apply to this day, just having that sort of success at a major?

SHELBY ROGERS: Yeah. I think I got a lot of confidence from it. Competing with the best players in the world, I gained a little belief in myself; I'm here, I have what it takes right now. My game is good enough right now. And so that's always encouraging, and it makes you want to work harder at the same time, so hopefully -- this clay season started off well so far and that I can keep it going.

Q. Was the key to the entire match at 5-4 in the first set and you served out wide in the corner, get the ad. It was 5-4 and you were up.

SHELBY ROGERS: Yeah, that was a great point. That was a real crucial game to close out the first set to get to 5-5. She gets hot, hits a couple of good winners. I mean could be really tricky, so I was happy to close it out. Once again, served pretty well, even in the conditions, and yeah, I think it could have gotten a little interesting had I not won that game.

Q. What do you think you learned from your meeting with Lucic-Baroni earlier this year?

SHELBY ROGERS: She's a really good player. She was on fire when I played her. She hit probably a million return winners, and she's had a great year so far. She's so confident right now. She's enjoying it. She's the most amazing person off the court. Like I respect her so much. I

remember first coming on tour and kind of meeting her, and I remember her being so welcoming and just honest and just a great personality, and we always have good battles when we play, and it's going to be tough, but hopefully I have some momentum now and can keep playing well. And we both like clay a lot, so I think it'll be a good battle and a good show.



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Q. Another big hitter obviously, Lucic. Playing a big hitter on a clay court as a big hitter, what are the keys in that sort of power-for-power matchup?

SHELBY ROGERS: Be the one in control of the point. I mean we're both going to want to do that. So try to be the aggressive one, be the one moving forward, be the one controlling the center of the court. I mean I think we're both going to have a similar game plan, but I think it'll be fun constructing points. And clay's always fun because you have a few longer points and some different shots. So hopefully we'll both bring our A game, and yeah, it'll be a battle.

End of Interview

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