

April 7, 2017

A Post-Match Interview With:

DARIA KASATKINA

**Daria Kasatkina defeats Irina-Camelia Begu
6-4, 6-1
Quarterfinal Round**

Q. Daria, you went to practice after that match? Is that what happened there?

DARIA KASATKINA: Of course I went, like every day here. So we started like drills after every match, so to keep me in the good shape, to clean the shots, and it's helping me a lot. So we keep doing this.

Q. Did that just start at this tournament or have you always done that on the hardcourts as well?

DARIA KASATKINA: Actually we just started here. Yeah.

Q. So talk about the match today. Not necessarily an easy one, although you're familiar with Begu's game. Talk through how it went for you all.

DARIA KASATKINA: Yeah, it was a tough beginning of the match. I was down 2-0, almost 3-0. She start well, and I was a little bit frozen on the court, bad moving, pushing the ball, but then I came back, thanks God. And from the moment I won my first game, everything was going well. So I'm happy that I came back in the game.

Q. Do you feel more charged up when you play a higher ranked or seeded player? Do you approach the match differently? Can you just explain what it's like for you?

DARIA KASATKINA: I had before when I just came on the tour. When you are going to play against some seeded player, some high-ranking girl, you are like, oh, my God, I'm playing against Top 10, Top 20 player and you're nervous. But now, no, not so much. I'm just going on court and it doesn't matter who is on the other side.

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Q. So this is your first semifinal here. I know that clay is your favorite surface. How do you think this whole experience here has positioned you going into red clay?

DARIA KASATKINA: It's not such a big difference, so it's really good when you go from the hard court to the red clay, it's good to play a little bit on the green clay because like in the middle. It's not the clay in the Europe and it's not the hard court anymore. You can slide, you can spin and still, it's very similar to the red clay. So it's very good that we have this tournament.

Q. Daria, you haven't played Laura on the tour, but you guys played, I think, in the ITF, Siegemund?

DARIA KASATKINA: We played in St. Petersburg last year.

Q. Oh, did you last year? But on clay how do you think your games match up as opposed to hard court?

DARIA KASATKINA: You know, here the conditions, you never know because of the wind and all this stuff. So I think she doesn't change much her game since last year. But I have to play my game, aggressive, move inside and just play for myself, not look the opponent or something like that.

Q. And you were saying yesterday that you thought your hard court season wasn't very great, but you had those two wins, obviously, over Angie. So how much does that balance it out, like knowing that that level was there or do you not take that much confidence out of those wins?

DARIA KASATKINA: You know, I would prefer I reach more rounds than beat Angelique two times, because I beat her in the second round, second round, two times in the second round. So it doesn't give me much, only a little bit of confidence because I beat Angelique Kerber, but it doesn't show in the ranking.

Q. You said that you just have to play your game, and we hear that a lot. I just have to go out there and play my game. What is your game?

DARIA KASATKINA: My game, actually, like a few months ago I wouldn't answer for this question because I was not sure, but now I can say that my game is play with the spin and slowly move inside the court, because before I was trying to play really defensive. I was a defensive player. Now I'm trying to play more aggressive, because the women's tennis is moving this way, so I have to adapt and get used to it.

Q. Do you know what you said here last year about that? I do.

DARIA KASATKINA: What?

Q. You said if you didn't make that adjustment, "they're going to kill me at the high level."

DARIA KASATKINA: Yeah. Yeah. So if I don't want them to kill me, I have to do something.

Q. You made the adjustment.

DARIA KASATKINA: Yeah. And also my coach since last year, he was telling me Daria, please, do something; start to move inside the court, because you can see, we were watching the matches, and he told me like, Daria, you can see they are like almost killing you. You are just a little bit lucky somewhere that you are winning the matches. You are really close. You have to do something like take chances. And at the beginning of this year I was few matches also very close, because I didn't take my chances. And then I realized I have to really do something.

Q. Daria, we know you like Rafa a lot, and you're the biggest Rafa fan. But he's also a player who can maybe get into trouble when he's a little bit too far behind the baseline, and he plays his best tennis when he is up on the baseline. When you watch him, do you notice that and does that help reinforce what Vlado is telling you?

DARIA KASATKINA: Yeah. But this is different story because he's man. He is physically more strong. He can run more faster, everything. And now I realize maybe for the girl it's not the best example to play. So now I'm just watching how he's fighting, not how he's playing, but still, he's

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trying to play very aggressive now, because you know, the men are getting also stronger. So I realize I have to improve.

Q. Are there other players on the WTA that you look at in terms of maybe that they changed their game from being more of a defensive style to a more offensive style that you can kind of emulate?

DARIA KASATKINA: Actually, yes. I saw a few girls they were playing like last year more defensive, defensive, and this year I saw them play, they're starting to move inside the court, playing more aggressive, improving the serve, because everything getting faster and faster. This is the truth of women's tennis.

End of Interview