

April 8, 2017

A Post-Match Interview With:

MIRJANA LUCIC-BARONI

**Jelena Ostapenko defeats Mirjana Lucic-Baroni
6-3, 5-7, 6-4
Semifinal Round**

Q. What makes her such a tough opponent?
MIRJANA LUCIC-BARONI: She's a great player, obviously hits the ball hard; pretty aggressive. Overall a very good player.

It was a really tough match. I was so close to getting it back. I mean I did get it back and almost, just a little bad luck at the end. But overall, pretty good match.

Q. Mirjana, how would you rate how you were able to execute what you wanted to do today? It seemed like at times you were a little bit maybe flat footed or leaning back.

MIRJANA LUCIC-BARONI: Yeah. I definitely didn't start off well for sure. I had a few words with my coach and then got a little mad at him and then kind of just tried to pump myself up. And I felt a little tired.

It is what it is. I kind of went into the match a little sluggish. I didn't feel like I was going after my shots. I felt always a step slow. Then adrenaline started kicking in. I started fighting and having more fun out there and forget about how tired I was.

And yeah, unfortunately -- it was really close at the end. I had a couple of chances. I could have come back, second serve return. But you know, that's how it goes.

Q. What was it you were able to do well in the late part of the second set that helped you level the match?

MIRJANA LUCIC-BARONI: I mean I started attacking the ball a bit more. In the beginning I was always a bit slow, and I wasn't really -- I didn't feel like my ball had a lot of weight on it. Even though I was trying, I just felt a little sluggish, and I think I was too worried about how I

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was feeling rather than playing a match, and just kind of -- it was a little bit tough to get going. And I think at the end I just fought. That's all I could do. But I mean I can't really be too hard on myself. I played a lot of matches in the last month, and just took it slow today.

Q. Did you injure your right knee?

MIRJANA LUCIC-BARONI: I don't know. We're going to have a look now. I felt something. I felt pain during that game, 4-2 game, and it started bothering me, and unfortunately -- I had to call a physio because I was worried. That was a bad time for myself because I just got two games back from 4-1 to 4-3. But I was worried that it's not something serious. So unfortunately -- maybe I shouldn't have called the physio. I was kind of on my way back. But health is more important than one match.

Q. As you look ahead, I mean looking at the just scheduling wise for the upcoming clay season, what are you looking at to do? I mean obviously you're getting a lot of match play. Your seeding is up, cracking the Top 20, all these sorts of things. But are you going to play a lot? Are you going to stick to the big tournaments?

MIRJANA LUCIC-BARONI: I'm going to definitely stick to big tournaments. I'm going to try to play a little smarter schedule because now that I am playing a lot of matches every tournament, which is obviously great -- that's what I want -- I'm going to play a little less for sure.

Q. And you are going to make your Top 20 debut for the first time in your career. Thoughts about that milestone to do it now. People forget that you didn't crack it the first time around I guess.

MIRJANA LUCIC-BARONI: Yeah, yeah. No, it's an amazing accomplishment for sure, especially at this stage of my career and life, and I'm very proud of my hard work and everything that I've achieved and just want to keep my head down,

keep working hard and hopefully just keep improving.

Q. All this hard work you've put in, just looking back again on this journey you've had, what would you want to tell the teenage version of you?

MIRJANA LUCIC-BARONI: Everybody keeps asking me that question.

Q. Well, we're interested. We want to know.

MIRJANA LUCIC-BARONI: I mean I would just most likely tell her to hang in there and one thing I keep repeating, whoever asks me this question is don't listen to anyone. Keep believing in yourself and keep going and don't listen to absolutely anybody outside your team. And that's pretty much it.

Q. In a similar vein, do you think it's easier or harder to be a teen player on the tour right now than it was when you were a teen player?

MIRJANA LUCIC-BARONI: Interesting question. Who knows? I would probably say now maybe it's a little easier, because you don't start at such an early age. There's no 15-year-olds that are in top 50, top 40 and 16-year-olds. That was a little crazy back then. I think it's much better now that younger players have to work a little harder sort of to get to this stage because there is -- it is beautiful but there is a lot of pressures and a lot of difficult things.

When you're 15, you're just a little kid. You don't even know what's happening around you. But I think it's hard both now and then for young girls, young people to come out and play and compete at these big stages, for sure. It takes time to adjust to that for everybody.

Q. You said that you would tell your younger self to stick to it. Do you have any regrets for having done what you did?

MIRJANA LUCIC-BARONI: No, I really don't have any regrets. I really do not. You know, things that have happened have happened. I'm really blessed that I'm mature enough and smart enough and have family around me that I was able to get through everything that happened in my life, everything that stood in my way. And on top of that to be -- to remain a healthy young adult and to

have a successful life, meaning off the court, you know, to have a good marriage, happy family and happy and healthy relationships. That's the most important thing of all. And on top of all that to succeed like I'm doing right now, I am really a very lucky girl.

End of Interview

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