

April 4, 2018

**N. OSAKA defeats L. Siegemund
6-3, 7-6
2nd Round**

**An Interview With:
NAOMI OSAKA**

Q. Naomi, a tough second set and kind of a grinder. I know it's never easy playing against her. So can you just talk through that second set, how you were able to stay composed and what do you think the secret was to getting it done in straight sets?

NAOMI OSAKA: I feel like you're making fun of me.

Q. I'm not.

NAOMI OSAKA: I actually don't think I was composed at all in the second set. I feel like my emotions were going everywhere at once. And honestly, I think I only won the second set because it went to a tiebreak. I feel like there were some moments while I was serving, and I think she had set point maybe, I feel it could have gone either way. So I feel a little bit lucky in that sense.

Q. Is she tough to play, frustrating to play, because you mentioned your emotions a little bit in that second set.

NAOMI OSAKA: Well, of course, I feel like she is. I think a part of her game is to find out or to irritate the other person a little bit. But she's not like a person I've played that does that the most. I would say more I was just a little bit stressed out, and I feel like these past since Indian Wells, everything has gone by so fast, and I feel like I'm just mentally a little bit tired, so I think that's something that I need to learn how to fix.

Q. Naomi, you mentioned that you had some frustrations in the second set. Was some of that having to do with her play as well in terms of maybe taking a little bit more time between points on your serve? I noticed a part of the match in the second set where you looked a little bit frustrated with that when she



Volvo Car Open



was
checking a
couple

e of balls and then the following point on your serve you took a little bit more time on your end as well. Were those frustrations solely to do with your own play or was it a combination of both?

NAOMI OSAKA: Well, if I was frustrated, I was just really upset at myself, because I always set out with an image of how I want to play and what I'm going to do to play like that. But this match, it didn't really go that way. And as for like the taking time thing I only took time after she took time because I was really salty. So I was just trying -- that was kind of child issue on my part. But yeah, I mean it worked out in the end. So hopefully I won't have to do that again.

Q. What does she do that's annoying to you or what does she specifically do to set you on edge?

NAOMI OSAKA: Well, the thing is I don't think she's annoying, because I've played people that are to me more annoying. Like -- like -- oh, I'm not going to name those people. (Laughs). But I don't think -- I think that's just how she plays. Like I don't go into the match thinking, oh, she's so annoying doing this and that or anything.

Q. What does she do specifically?

NAOMI OSAKA: Like there's -- I can't really say there's anything she does that annoys me. I know that's how she plays, so I can't -- like I can't -- like I feel like it would be a trap to start the match and just start thinking she's annoying or anything like that.

Q. You talk about the Indian Wells, you know, and how it's kind of been a blur since then. Has that taken out of you emotionally because kind of the attention that's been drawn to you since that tournament and winning it?

NAOMI OSAKA: No. I don't really feel attention or anything. For me the most mentally exhausting is just like I feel like I've been playing these tournaments back to back, and for sure I've played more matches this year than last year at this point. And like I want to take a break, but I also want to keep playing these tournaments and

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doing well. So just balancing that has been the hardest for me.

Q. Since Indian Wells, do you feel like you've put more pressure on yourself?

NAOMI OSAKA: I would say half and half, because I'm a person that always puts pressure on myself. I always expect a lot. But at the same time I feel like that run at that tournament I just was focused more on match by match, point by point. So I try not to think too much about what's going on on the outside and just like try to internalize and think what I can do better.

Q. You had a lot of crowd support on the Althea Gibson Club Court today. I want to know if there has been a specific time in your career where you've noticed that there has been a shift in the public embrace of you in matches in terms of you're playing a match and, oh, wow, the crowd all of a sudden is on my side and you're noticing it build from week to week. Is it since Indian Wells, before Indian Wells?

NAOMI OSAKA: Well, I mean I'm really grateful that the crowd was cheering for me here, but I would have to say the most like I felt like I was a crowd favorite would be my third round match in US Open last year. I lost that match but they were really cheering for me, and I felt a little bit sorry that I couldn't win, but I was really grateful for the support.

Q. Just in terms of on court, during points, she hits a lot of drop shots. She hits a lot of different shots. What was the most challenging thing about playing her tactically and having to run a lot, as the building blows down. (Laughs).

NAOMI OSAKA: I would say just being prepared for anything that could happen. Like if she's hitting a forehand, she might hit it cross court. She might hit it down the line. She might hit a drop shot. I don't know. Her backhand, too, she really hits a good backhand down the line, so just being prepared for anything that could happen.

Q. Has anyone during a match yelled something at you over and over and over again that has set you on edge or made you feel that you're being like heckled or anything like that[]?

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NAOMI OSAKA: (Laughs).

Q. Is that funny?

NAOMI OSAKA: No. I mean it's happened, but it's also -- like in whatever bad way it's happened, it's also happened in a good way. Like in Indian Wells there was this guy that came to my matches since the fourth round, and he kept yelling something, and then eventually the whole crowd started yelling it, and then when I went -- like after I won my matches, the ball kids would yell it, so I think it was really funny and I felt the support.

Q. What did they yell?

NAOMI OSAKA: He was yelling something like -- I forgot the first part. He was like, Naomi, something, something. And he was like, "Naomi, champion!" I don't know if you guys remember that. Probably not. But yeah, then there were people just laughing and stuff and yelling it when he yelled it, and it was really funny.

Q. Is that second set a set of tennis that you think you would have won a year ago or do you not really look at it that way?

NAOMI OSAKA: Probably not, because I don't think I would have felt the confidence that I feel right now. So last year I probably would have made some mistakes in important times, which I didn't do this time.

Q. Green clay court is a little bit faster than red clay in Europe. Do you feel more confidence here to play?

NAOMI OSAKA: Like green clay versus red clay?

Q. Yeah.

NAOMI OSAKA: I'm not really sure about that, because I've -- I haven't really played that many red clay tournaments, and I honestly don't really remember how it feels like. But I mean last year I won two rounds here and this year I won two rounds again, and I'm hoping to keep going up, but I'm not really focused too much on whether I'm better on red clay or green clay because this is the only tournament on green clay. So I would hope that I'm about either on red clay.

Q. You've got Julia Goerges next. Not an easy opponent for a third round but what do

you think of that match and what do you think of her game? What do you expect?

NAOMI OSAKA: Well, I've practiced with her in Wimbledon last year, and she's really good, like she has a really good serve, and if she steps in, it's basically the point's over. So I'm just really thinking of it as a challenge, and I'm just going to try to do my best and just have a really positive mindset.

Q. And then just now that there's been a bit of distance from Indian Wells, when you reflect on that week, that couple of weeks, did we see peak Naomi there or like in your head was that, like whoa, I played really, really good for those two weeks or was that actually a pretty standard level for you? What do you think when you look back on it?

NAOMI OSAKA: I'm not really sure, because that's literally the only tournament I've won, so I can't really say it wasn't, but I don't think it was the best I can play. I feel like there's a lot of things that I can improve, and every day I'm trying to get better at something, so yeah, I don't want to say that was my best play ever.

Q. In that second set a couple of times you looked like you really wanted to smash your racquet and then eventually when you -- eventually you kind of just let it go. At one second you threw it and kind of just dropped it. What's your thought process in that moment in terms of are you thinking of people watching you not wanting them to judge you for having smashed the racquet and were you able to get anything off your chest at that moment with that action?

NAOMI OSAKA: Well, like before I was the type of person that would like smash my racquet and stuff. But I feel like who wants to cheer for someone that's constantly having an attitude and stuff. So like I'm really disappointed in myself that I even dropped my racquet or anything, but I felt like I was just so disgusted at the way I was playing that I didn't even want to touch my racquet so I was just like, ugh, disgusting. So yeah, that's basically why I did that.

Q. What did you get your sister for her birthday?

NAOMI OSAKA: Air. (Laughs). I didn't get anything for her. And the thing is she's not at

home right now. So I can basically -- I'll just buy something real quick when I'm at home and just when she comes home, then I'll give it to her. Or if I'm gone then I'll just put it like where she can see it.

Q. Sascha was watching your match and I don't know who the other gentleman is with the Yankees hat on and then there was a woman. Is that woman related to you? Is that your mom?

NAOMI OSAKA: The guy with the Yankees hat is my trainer, and the lady is my physio.

Q. Your physio.

NAOMI OSAKA: And literally everyone thinks she's my mom. But no, she's not.

End of Interview

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