

April 8, 2018

K. BERTENS defeats M. Keys

6-4, 6-7, 7-6

Semifinal Round

An Interview With: MADISON KEYS

Q. Very tight match obviously with the back and forth. What do you think, if anything, ultimately made the difference between the small margin of winning and losing today?

MADISON KEYS: I mean I think in the first set I played a sloppy first game. That obviously, you know, early break could have done something. But I think the biggest thing was at the end I don't think I was 100 percent playing to win. I think I was playing just kind of waiting to see if she was going to give me an unforced error, and she played great. And you know, it's always hard to decide whether or not you see what they're going to give you or if you have to like really go for it.

Q. Not easy, I don't think, for anyone yesterday. Just kind of the last 24 hours, what was it like for you and then trying to get ready for the match this morning?

MADISON KEYS: I mean pretty much knew I wasn't going to play yesterday. So I was just kind of waiting for that decision. And then obviously it was an early morning, but same for everyone. And you know, it's always tough when you have to play two in one day, but I think all of us were just kind of mentally prepared for that to happen, even yesterday.

Q. Madison, how do you think the run this week sets you up for the next few tournaments? Do you feel like this is something you can build off of?

MADISON KEYS: It's definitely something I can build off of. You know, it's a good solid week, first one I've had since Australia. So looking to keep working on that. And I'm going to Fed Cup. So hopefully I can have these good matches going into that.



Volvo Car Open



Q. It was a tough

one out there, but towards the end you were definitely getting a lot

of crowd support, and I was just wondering if you had any last words for the Charleston fans about your experience here this week.

MADISON KEYS: Charleston fans are always amazing, and it's always so great to have kind of the home crowd whenever I come here. And it's definitely not going to be my last time I'll be here.

Q. Madison, on the two service games towards the end when you were trying to serve it out, what do you think would have been the difference there? Do you feel like they were bad games from you, great step-up games from her? Where do you think it flipped?

MADISON KEYS: I think it's somewhere in the middle. I definitely think I mean maybe if I had stepped up a little bit more, maybe she would have made an error, but it's always that tough decision, and I was definitely really nervous, and it's been a while since I've had to deal with those nerves. So I think just trying to put myself in that position as many times as I can I'll get more and more comfortable.

Q. And then just on her game a little bit, she's kind of a clay court stalwart, loves the surface. What is it that makes her particularly difficult on clay? You've played her twice now.

MADISON KEYS: I would say the biggest thing is she's so good at defense. Like she's obviously really good at being offensive and going for her shots, but she's just such a good job at resetting the point over and over and over again. Every time she gets pulled out wide, every ball lands almost on the baseline. So it's always really hard to try to commit to coming forward on balls like that.

Q. This may be a bit of what Courtney refers to as like the pep talk time of year for clay, but you were a couple of points from

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making your third clay final, all premier and above here and Rome. What is your belief like after this week in terms of what you can do over the next couple of months?

MADISON KEYS: I mean it's one of those things where I know I can play on clay. It's just taking a deep breath mostly. I'm actually really excited to go to Europe this year and play on clay. You know, it's always really nice to have a good solid week at the start of it. And I've added -- I'm going Fed Cup and I'm going to play Stuttgart. So I've added some tournaments, and hopefully this is the year that I say that I love it.

Q. What's the toughest part of keeping that belief going?

MADISON KEYS: The 45 ball rallies. (Laughs).

Q. You mentioned the nerves. It never gets easier, and in those moments, what are you talking to yourself about sort of internally to try to get yourself through those nervous moments?

MADISON KEYS: Never gets easier. I think there's times when you handle it better, especially if you've been in that situation over and over again, you know that they're going to come. My biggest thing was I just kept saying like just try to go for it, try to go for it.

Q. These are heavy balls, and this morning it was pretty cold out there. So I'm curious, when you wake up and you kind of look outside and step outside, does that --

MADISON KEYS: I'm like, yay! (Laughs). Whoo! Longer points!

Q. Insert sarcasm. Yeah, does that play at all into your head a little bit in the morning before the match just realizing I'm playing a clay courter. The weather is not hot. Things are going to be slow and heavy today. Roddick used to say that it would mess with his brain a little bit.

MADISON KEYS: I don't know that it messes with my brain. I just know it's going to be that much harder today. Like I know I'm not going to be bombing aces or having really solid like forehand winners, not any of that. So it's just kind of mentally preparing for a long day of long rallies and she's going to get a lot of balls back. So I

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wouldn't say it's like my favorite thing in the world, but it definitely doesn't psych me out.

Q. Madison, you talked about learning to love it on the clay, but do you feel like when you think about a few years ago, do you feel like you really have gotten a lot better on this surface over the years?

MADISON KEYS: I would say yes. I think I've begrudgingly taken a step back and tried to play a little bit more conservative on clay and not gone for things too early. I definitely think I get more and more comfortable on it every year and I think results usually are showing that way, but you know, I'm sticking to it. This is going to be the year. (Fist pump).

Q. I don't know if you knew, like four of Lindsay's first five titles in her career were on clay, even if she hated it at times also. As someone who had a similar relationship to clay, how do you two talk about this time of year?

MADISON KEYS: She just tells me how much she hated it and how she would like avoid every tournament and just show up for the French. Unfortunately I can't do that in my schedule.

Q. Why not?

MADISON KEYS: Because she was No. 1 in the world, and I'm not. (Laughs). So definitely not going to do that. But yeah, she's just always saying like it's always going to be one of your tougher surfaces, but you're good on it, like you just have to embrace it better than I did. It's like, yeah, but you say that now and you don't have to play on it anymore. But this is the year, guys. This is it. (Laughs).

Q. You obviously love fast courts better than this, and do you battle with your head to slow down and to like take it more like easy?

MADISON KEYS: I don't know what you're talking about.

Q. You don't? Let me try it again. Are you being sarcastic?

MADISON KEYS: Yes. (Laughs).

Q. Thank you.

MADISON KEYS: No. It's something that I have to constantly remind myself, okay, you're not going to win the point in two balls. Like you have to build the point. And I mean you'll even see it in matches where I play great first set building the point, then the second set all of a sudden I'm redlining off of balls that are by the back fence, and I'm like, oh, I'll hit a winner on that. So I feel like I've gotten better at resetting and trying to play points better, but it's definitely an internal battle.

Q. And how is that battle going?

MADISON KEYS: This is the year!
(Laughs).

Q. This is the year.

MADISON KEYS: This is it!

End of Interview

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