

**April 3, 2019**

**J. OSTAPENKO defeats S. Rogers**  
4-6, 6-3, 7-6  
Second Round

**An Interview With:**

**SHELBY ROGERS**

SHELBY ROGERS: Why is no one smiling? I was so close, you guys. Geez!

**Q. Big picture, how do you assess the week?**

SHELBY ROGERS: Unreal. So many positives from this week. The knee feels great. I just played I don't even know how long the match was and no issues with the knee. So I'm so thrilled with that. I think my level was really good at times, surprised even myself. And it sucks I couldn't close it out today, but I mean like I said, so many positives and just a lot of check marks this week. Coming in there were a lot of uncertainties and doubts and question marks, but a lot of that was erased. So that's very exciting.

**Q. Shelby, what happened towards the end of the third set? Did you run out of gas at all or was she just starting to play better?**

SHELBY ROGERS: Yeah. Credit to her, she played great. I would love to have that one backhand return that took a weird bounce back for sure. Thinking about that. But to even be in that position to close out that match is really cool for my first tournament back. So like I said, a lot of positives. But maybe ran out a little bit of gas. Yesterday I actually sprained my ankle and woke up this morning not sure if I was going to be able to play at all. I spoke to the supervisors, was kind of thinking about not going out there. So to bring that level today was a huge accomplishment for me, and next time hopefully in that situation I'll be able to close it out.



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**Q. For your first act to be back in Charleston, to play like you did, I know you didn't win, but what were the past two days like just to get back out there and hear that crowd?**

SHELBY ROGERS: It wouldn't be a comeback, I guess, without the best and the worst. So I got all of it first tournament back, and I was just thrown into the deep end. But like I said, I was so thrilled with the way I played. I felt like I was seeing the court well and using all these patterns I've been working on in practice.

I didn't serve great today. That really let me down. The ankle was really painful on the serve. I had to completely change it, actually, today. But overall I think my serve was really effective in the last couple of matches, and I want to continue that and keep that mindset of big server, get some free points here and there, that's great. Playing aggressive. So write it down in the notebook and keep working.

**Q. What's the one positive thing you're taking away from this?**

SHELBY ROGERS: The knee is not hurting, guys! That is the one positive thing! (Laughs). And I'm just so thrilled and pleased with these last two matches. And I'm going to continue to look at the positives and not fall into, oh, you know, I should have, could have, whatever won. Just really happy to have the opportunity to compete and hopefully have a long season the rest of the year.

**Q. Two questions. How did you sprain your ankle?**

SHELBY ROGERS: (Laughs). Yesterday at practice. I had a day off yesterday. I was getting a light hit. The weather was terrible. I don't know, I think it was snowing at one point. I could have sworn it was snowing. It was so cold. I just went out to a forehand, stuck in the clay and just went over and heard it pop. Kind of laid on the ground for a second, and I was like, I'm freezing! This sucks! I can't believe this happened! It was

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pretty terrible, and just tried to be proactive with it, do as much as I could and thankfully was able to play an incredible match and stay out there for that long.

**Q. And I wonder if you would reflect on what this week means for Charleston tennis. We have a local owner. Emma made her debut. You had your big comeback. Jessica had maybe the biggest win of her career. What does this all mean for Charleston tennis this week?**

SHELBY ROGERS: It's awesome to see. This tournament since it's been here has just brought the best fans out. It's such a tennis-oriented town, and I feel like the community has always supported it and always will. And so to actually see the Americans and the locals stepping up and coming through makes it that much more special. It's definitely one of a kind coming here and playing this tournament, for all the players. Everybody raves about it. It's just really cool.

I watched Emma's match last night and spoke to her a little bit ago, and she was like, "that was so much fun!" So it'll be fun to watch her progress and see her bright future.

**Q. Besides the ankle today, did today feel a little bit more normal, a little more like a routine match as opposed to yesterday with all the emotion?**

SHELBY ROGERS: Yes. I didn't cry after the first set today. But definitely I think every match I play moving forward is going to be a little bit more normal and back in the routine of things. I felt pretty focused for most of the match today. I was thinking about the pain a little bit, but I mean, going up against a player like that who loves the clay and my second match back, I thought -- I proved to myself that, okay, I'm back; I'm ready; I can go. So now it's no more, oh, Shelby's been injured. It's, okay, she's back! Here we go!

**Q. Did you ever hit a panic button in those situations in the third set? Because you're down 6-5, break back to make 6-6. Did you ever hit a panic button at that point?**

SHELBY ROGERS: I don't think so. I was just trying to find a way to settle in again. She

wasn't missing a ball. She was hitting deep. There was weird bounces going on. I felt her start being way more aggressive. There were just all these little variables that started happening and creeping in. So you just try to focus on the task at hand one point at a time, which is easier said than done, especially she's Top 30. She's not going to just give it to you.

I don't think it's panic, but it's something that you definitely need to take instead of waiting for her to give it to you.

**Q. Shelby, does this week change anything in terms of going forward? What are your plans just tournament wise and scheduling wise as you kind of dive back into things?**

SHELBY ROGERS: Doesn't change any of my immediate schedule. I'm going to Bogota next, and I think it was a good plan from the beginning. It just sort of reiterates and comforts me that I can make it through long matches. I can close out some matches. You know, I got a win; I had a tough loss. So I think it was a good first tournament back, and like I said, just gives me some confidence moving forward that, okay, I'm ready. Here we go.

**Q. And just in terms of the level that you were able to produce in these two matches, which was, I think, higher, relatively speaking, than a lot of players who first come back, do you feel as though -- what do you attribute that to in terms of all the work that you've done leading up to this match? Was it practice matches? Was it keeping it more chill, you know?**

SHELBY ROGERS: Yeah, I mean I definitely played a lot of sets in practice and practice matches, but there's no way to recreate what you're feeling out there. But I would say that every player I spoke to to try to get advice from said don't come back too soon. So my coach and my team and I just made sure that I was ready to come back and play. We don't want to come to a tournament to test it out. We want to come to a tournament ready to win.

And so I'm really thankful for all of the people around me that said, okay, Shelby, let's

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take a little more time. I know you're ready; you're antsy. You're tired of practicing and drilling, but let's take time and really be ready. So it paid off, and I'm very thankful for that.

**Q. Shelby, did you and Jessica cross paths a lot when you were younger? Friends? Rivals? What was your relationship and your view of her progress?**

SHELBY ROGERS: Yeah, we did. We grew up together. We've known each other for a really long time. And I've always seen incredible potential in her. She hits the ball harder than anybody I've ever seen. We've practiced quite a bit. She's such a sweet girl, really down to earth and one of the better girls out there to be around, such good energy. So I'm so happy for her. The best season, best year she's had so far, and I hope she keeps it up and still wants to practice with me. (Laughs).

I will say I want to add one thing, that I underappreciated my year away from the game and the lack of hate messages that I was getting. Now, like I did not miss that at all. So now I get to go on social media and just block a bunch of people. I'm excited. (Laughs). Thank you guys.

End of Interview

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