

April 4, 2019

S. STEPHENS defeats A. Tomljanovic
4-6, 6-4, 6-4
Third Round

An Interview With:

SLOANE STEPHENS

Q. Sloane, congratulations. When do you remember having a comeback like that, and just what was, I guess, your mentality midway through that second set when she was pretty much in control of the match?

SLOANE STEPHENS: Just to fight back, obviously. You don't remember a comeback like that that I just had?

Q. I mean not off the top of my head.

SLOANE STEPHENS: How do you not remember? Courtney knows. What was it, Courtney?

Q. I don't know.

SLOANE STEPHENS: You don't know? It was like so epic. Do you know, Chase? Nobody remembers when I played Pliskova in Singapore and I was down 6-0, 3-0, or something like that. Nobody?

Q. Oh, yeah. It was the Pliskova match in Singapore. It was amazing.

SLOANE STEPHENS: Nobody cares. Okay. Yeah, I was just thinking, fight! Obviously, like I said, I haven't had the best start to the season, and sometimes you gotta just like gut it out. But Ajla played really well today, and I think she played at a really high level, and it made me raise my level. And for the first time in a long time I really was like, I gotta beat this girl. Like I wanted to be out there, and I was really fighting, and I didn't care what it took. But you guys obviously see me play a lot, and I was like running to the baseline on the changeovers when I was down



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3-0. I was like, okay, I gotta figure out a way, and I definitely think my attitude is what won me the match today.

Q. The attitude was obviously great today, but in terms of any technical or changes in terms of how you were playing halfway through, did you kind of feel anything click for you?

SLOANE STEPHENS: I thought she was playing really well and she wasn't missing a lot. She obviously was ripping through the ball, so that's tough when you're playing someone like that because you don't really get a great rhythm. So I was kind of on my back foot, and once I started hitting and getting into it more, I kind of got a better rhythm.

So I was like, okay, she's going to hit; I have to hit. So once I think I started doing that, I just kind of settled down a little bit and stayed calm. I didn't panic. I think in the last couple of matches I've been playing, I normally don't panic, but I was just like really uneasy. But today, I was like, just wait it out, it'll be okay, bounce up and down a little bit, and Jesus take the wheel.

Q. We've been seeing a lot of good comebacks this week already in Charleston, and I don't know if that's just the clay and just that it provides more opportunities because there's more opportunities to break and stuff like that. What do you think is kind of the secret there?

SLOANE STEPHENS: Yeah. I mean, obviously new surface; it's tricky for everyone, but I mean, on clay you have a lot of time. You have a lot of time to figure it out, and even like today when you're down 6-0 or 6-3 or whatever the score was and 3-0, it's never over because you can kind of fight your way back and battle your way back and run around and try to figure it out. So I think that's what's pretty cool about clay.

Transcripts Provided By:

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Q. I think I'm right in saying she was up 4-3 and had a game point. Was that it? And she was about to pass you, that ball hit the net.

SLOANE STEPHENS: Oh, so unlucky.

Q. For her, right?

SLOANE STEPHENS: Yeah.

Q. But lucky for you.

SLOANE STEPHENS: Most of the time you're at the baseline and that happens and the ball goes over. That never happens when the ball hits the net and you're standing right there. So that was like --

Q. But then you made a really good play on that ball. I guess what went through your mind in that moment, and then did you feel like maybe that was a second life for you in that set?

SLOANE STEPHENS: Yeah. Just to keep fighting. Obviously I was thinking the whole time like, okay, I'm going to have my chance, I'm going to have my chance, I'm going to have my chance, and even when I was down and she had the game point and when I got broken, I was just said, okay, like figure it out. You can fight back. You can find a way to like make it happen, and that's honestly, I was thinking, okay, I'm going to get my chance and I just gotta be ready to take it.

Q. Why did you want this one more than other ones?

SLOANE STEPHENS: Because I'm tired of stinking losing! Stuff sucks! Oh, my God! (Laughs). Oh, man. I'm totally going to get fined for that. Oh, wow. My mom is definitely texting me right now.

Yeah, no. It's just obviously a slow start to the season. You gotta figure it out somewhere, and it kind of like eventually gets going, but you have to like make it happen for yourself. Like I have to show energy and fight and try to like turn it around for myself. And, I mean, the other day when I was playing whatever --

Q. Sorribes Tormo.

SLOANE STEPHENS: Her, yes. It was like, it was a grind. It was such a battle. But I was

like, I gotta find a way to get through it, like show some energy, show some fight, show something. And I guess that helped today, and then the same thing, like, yeah, she was playing really well, but I was like, okay, I just gotta wait it out and try to figure something out.

Q. Sloane, do you think that everything you had to go through tonight is kind of a blessing in disguise? Do you think it's going to help you out tomorrow?

SLOANE STEPHENS: Yeah, I mean, even if it doesn't help me out tomorrow, like I won two matches in a row. Hello! I haven't done that since the Australian Open. So it's a good start. You gotta start somewhere, and obviously just like my attitude and being happy to be out there and wanting to compete and fight and like having just a better outlook on it, I think, will help me just in general in the next couple of weeks or whatever. And whatever happens tomorrow I'm going to go and do the same thing I did today, try to do my absolute best, and whatever happens happens.

Q. You have Maddy next. 3 and 0 against her. You've never dropped a set and actually have been pretty dominant overall. Why do you feel like your game matches up or why do you feel like you have her number in a sense?

SLOANE STEPHENS: I don't know. I think -- honestly, I have no idea. Like we practice together a lot. We've only played three times. But I -- honestly, I couldn't even tell you. I just go out and try to play my game and execute a game plan. And it's worked so far. So I don't have any like magic secret stuff, and if I did, I wouldn't tell you because then obviously that's printed.

Q. I guess just from like a Charleston or fan perspective, do you sort of see how exciting it is for fans, especially for young girls, to watch you and Maddy go head to head here? You both have had great success for this tournament and how exciting that'll be for the fans.

SLOANE STEPHENS: Yeah, obviously whenever Maddy and I play, we always play really great matches and we play on big stages, so I

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think it's nice to be able to play her here. This is both of our top tournaments of the year. We love playing here. But for Bob and Eleanor I would want them to watch our match tomorrow. Like I would want them to come out and watch it.

Throughout the year they're probably the most like supportive tournament director and manager. Like I think throughout the year they're so supportive, and they have been since we've been so young. So I think to play here a match that we both really enjoy playing, Maddy and I, I think that's pretty cool for everyone here.

End of Interview

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