

**April 4, 2019**

**M. PUIG defeats A. Sabalenka  
6-2, 7-5  
Third Round**

**An Interview With:**

**Monica Puig**

**Q. Monica, very nice win.**  
MONICA PUIG: Thank you.

**Q. What do you think has clicked well for you this week in Charleston and also just can you talk through the match a little bit today?**

MONICA PUIG: Yeah, I think just putting into play all the hard work that I've been doing with my team, you know. I've been a little bit impatient, I'm not going to lie, with wanting results right away as soon as we started working together, because we were changing a lot of things and working, and everything was working in practice, so I just thought, okay, it's supposed to translate over into the match. But it's not like that. You know, you need patience.

It finally started clicking for me a little bit this week, so I'm just riding the wave, and today I just tried to continue to stay disciplined with the game plan that my coach gave me before going out to the match and just staying calm and composed, especially in those moments where I got tight there in the second set.

**Q. You say your coach isn't really changing anything, just repeating a lot of the stuff you've done previously. Is there anything specific that he's done to help you along the way or a goal he's setting for you that's different from previous coaches?**

MONICA PUIG: I think the main thing is just that composure and believing in my work. You know, sometimes, like I said, I want the results right away after putting in all that hard work, but sometimes it just doesn't happen like that. And I did get impatient, and I got frustrated after Miami,



Volvo  
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Open



and I was just kind of like, okay, what's going on, because I'm putting in all this hard work. But he was just kind of like, relax. You know, there's a lot of progress being made. You can see it in the matches. You're playing differently than you have before. It's going to happen. Just like give it time. So I think just staying patient.

And also this week we've all been staying in one house, so it's like all of us together all the time. So I think they just help me maintain a really fun and light dynamic off the court and just kind of being like a family. And I really love it. It's really kept me grounded this whole week.

**Q. So with Kamau and O.G., I mean, like how different of a dynamic is it bringing them in? They're both very different personalities. And with Kamau specifically when you first started talking to him about coming on, how did he see your game and where does he kind of tell you he wants to see it going forward?**

MONICA PUIG: Yeah. They're both great people to work with. Both very vocal. When they want something done, they explain what needs to be done, why we're doing this, what changes are going to happen and this and that. They're very process oriented, and I wasn't very process oriented from the start. I'm very result oriented, and I'm trying to change that. But they're like, just trust us. Like stop talking and just trust what we're saying. So that's great.

And, you know, when I first started talking to Kamau, but what I wanted to do and what needed to be done, he was just -- he liked my game in general. He likes the way I play but I think it was just organizing myself a little bit more, settling in a little bit more. Sometimes not wanting to go for broke on a really long point, and just hanging in there and staying and fighting. I thought after the Olympics, it's kind of hard for you to keep fighting for matches because you put so much pressure that it just suddenly becomes such a struggle to fight, and you get discouraged a lot

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easier. So that's something really big that he's taught me is to continue to fight, and even if the match is getting tight, just hang in there. Just keep trusting yourself and keep going for your shots, and it'll happen when it's supposed to.

**Q. Ostapenko was in here yesterday and she was talking about how she remembers when she won Roland-Garros that she was fearless, and she played that way and we saw that, similar to kind of what you did in Rio. And she said she's been surprised by how difficult it's been ever since then to find that again and to tap into that fearlessness. So I pose the question I suppose to you. How has it been for you and just when we talk about fearless playing, what exactly is the thing that you all are scared of?**

MONICA PUIG: Well, I agree with her 100 percent because we've both been in the same boat. I actually did play her the year that she won. And she played some of the most flawless tennis I've ever seen her play. She was hitting all the lines, winners all over the court. She pretty much kicked me off the court. She gave me a tennis lesson. So sometimes, you know, when you have those weeks like I did at Rio, and all of a sudden you're a Grand Slam champion or Olympic gold medalist and all eyes are on you all of a sudden, and you expect so much more from yourself and you don't tolerate yourself losing in the first round of a tournament or you expect yourself to get to the quarterfinals or better every single week, there's that added pressure and you're just kind of like, when it's not there, you're discouraged, you get disappointed. And then losses and confidence issues.

But, you know, I think it's just settling into your own skin and just saying, hey, you know, it happened, it can happen again. And I didn't play that way by chance. It's in you. It's always going to be in you. You just have to find the courage to bring it out time and time again. And I think as we get older, too and we start maturing a little more mentally, we kind of are able to give ourselves a break when we're not playing our best tennis and still find a way to win.

And, yeah, you know it's a learning process. And she won it when she was super

young, and I won when I was 22, and again, out of nowhere. Nobody expected us to do that. So it was great. At least we can say that we have that under our belt, but I know in our hearts we want more, so we're just going to keep scrapping and finding our way out of these little holes that we get ourselves into from time to time. And I really look forward to getting further in tournaments, as does she. So it'll be a good step forward if we can kind of like break the ice on that little barrier that we have.

End of Interview

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