

April 5, 2019

**M. PUIG defeats D. Collins
6-3, 6-2
Quarterfinal Round**

An Interview With:

MONICA PUIG

Q. Monica, another great match today. I mean, playing a player that I guess you guys have played each other since you were younger?

MONICA PUIG: Since we were 10.

Q. So what was that experience like and what do you think was the key today?

MONICA PUIG: What was that experience like?

Q. To play her now.

MONICA PUIG: Now? Okay. I was going to say, when I was 10? Wow! No, it was great today. We played once in Indian Wells, I think two years ago. Last year we played in Miami, and she's had a great year and a half so far, so I really had to be careful. I was ahead in Miami, too. So I just needed to continue staying the course when I was ahead in this match, and that thought kind of creeps up on you a little bit, but I'm just happy with the way I settled in and how I was playing and how I stayed in the moment and just continued to stick to my game plan and happy with how I closed it out.

Q. Were you surprised that she was going to your backhand as much as she was today at all?

MONICA PUIG: No. I mean, I was just trying to stay within myself and just play each and every ball. I didn't really notice that many tendencies. Maybe only on my return of serve when she would start serving wide on the big points and on the ad side. But, no, during the point I was just trying to scrap the balls that I needed to scrap out and just be aggressive when I needed to



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be aggressive. So I was just kind of in the flow. Yeah.

Q. You haven't dropped a set all week. How does it feel to be in a semifinal playing this kind of tennis?

MONICA PUIG: No, it feels great. It's been a long time coming. I haven't really had many good results strung together in a long time. It's been a minute since I've had four matches in a row won. So I'm really happy with that.

But that being said, there's another match to be played tomorrow, and I just gotta continue to put my head down and keep fighting and keep believing in myself, and yeah, it's not over yet.

Q. What do you think has been working for you this week?

MONICA PUIG: I think just the composure has been the real factor, because in those moments when you're ahead, you want to stay ahead; and when it's tight, you need to stay in there and just keep fighting. So just in those moments, just taking my time, breathing, staying present.

It's really difficult, especially when you want to win a match. It's easy to think ahead, so when you stay present and just think about what you need to do every single point, it really makes a difference.

Q. Have you done some practicing of how to stay present?

MONICA PUIG: Actually, I've been doing a lot of meditation. But not during the day. I usually do it before I go to bed. I love Peloton. I love their workouts. I love everything about it, so the app actually has meditations, and one of the biggest things I struggle with is falling asleep, because my mind is all chitty-chatty.

They have two sleep meditations, one that's ten minutes, if I have more time, or a five-minute one, and I've done it 15 days in a row, and I've noticed the difference.

Transcripts Provided By:

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Q. That'll help you during the daytime.

MONICA PUIG: It's the thing where I'm able to fall asleep in two minutes where it used to take me an hour and a half to fall asleep, and on the court I feel more level or I feel more at peace. If I lose that, I'm just kind of like, it's okay. I'm okay.

Q. It showed.

MONICA PUIG: So I was not a strong believer in that, and coaches before have tried to press it on me, but I think it's just kind of like when you're willing to accept things and when you're willing to welcome new things after you resisted it for a long time and then you just start seeing it, you're like, okay, well better late than never. Now I really understand what mindfulness is all about and what I need to do to take the steps forward.

Q. How is your wrist?

MONICA PUIG: Oh, it's good. It's a funny story. I actually hit it against a door by accident before my first round. So that has just kind of like lingered off into other places, and yeah, I've been avoiding doors ever since. So like -- it's kind of like a weird thing, but yeah, it's good. I can deal with it. If I can play like that and have it all, it's okay.

Q. Back to the meditation, what made you finally decide to give it a try?

MONICA PUIG: I don't know. I think when I started using that Peloton app and looking at everything that it has on it, it has everything from like stretching to -- I like to do a lot of running. I used to hate running before, and I started doing all the running stuff. And I love it.

Actually, there's an instructor I reached out to, and they have their studio in New York. So when I go to the US Open, I want to take her class. So I'm really excited. When I saw the meditation app on there, when I saw there was one for sleep, I was like, okay, I need to do this because my sleep is terrible, and I have a really tough time falling asleep and staying asleep.

So that has been paying off. And I noticed the benefits of doing it, now I fall asleep in like two minutes. And little by little it has started creeping

into my everyday life of just being more in the present, in the moment and just being more zen.

Q. Have you checked out Insight Timer?

MONICA PUIG: I haven't. What is that?

Q. I'm not exaggerating. It's got like a thousand meditations on it. But it's very easy to navigate. It's divided into all kinds of categories and you can bookmark them.

MONICA PUIG: Oh, I'd like that.

Q. Obviously if somebody can't find something they like, they're hopeless.

MONICA PUIG: No. I have to definitely check it out. Meditation, yoga, stretching. Everything is just kind of like starting to take care of my body more. I'm 25, going to be 26 this year. I'm not the 18-year-old who used to go and play three set matches and come back the next day fresh as a daisy. So I need to take care of my body, especially having the past two years dealt with illness and injuries. So if I can stay happy and healthy on the court, that's always a plus for me.

Q. Monica, do you remember when you felt like you played four consecutive good, solid matches where you walked off the court?

MONICA PUIG: Rio.

Q. Rio? Fair enough.

MONICA PUIG: I mean, like I said, four matches in a row has not been my thing for a really long time, and the last time I did that was in Rio. Pretty sure that was the last time.

For me to be feeling this way and to be stringing them all together, I'm not saying I had a brilliant week in Rio because that was a really big eye opener. Now I'm actually very conscious of what I'm doing at all times. And Rio was kind of like, wow, I'm doing this; this is crazy!

So now it's more I know what I'm doing. I know what I need to do. I'm going to go on the court and execute. It feels like that type of performance, but this time I'm very aware of what I'm doing.

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Q. First clay semifinal since 2014 Strassburg when you played Madison Keys in that semifinal.

MONICA PUIG: That's actually -- that's true. I did not know that.

Q. Yeah, you guys have split your head-to-heads. You won the first two. She's won the last two. Can you talk about that? What do you remember of that Strassburg match at all?

MONICA PUIG: Well, when I was coached by Nacho, he said that she was super nervous before that match, as was I. So I think it was just who handled the nerves a little bit better that day.

But completely different match. And I think the last time I played her was at the French Open a couple of years ago. So completely different match, different kind of surface because this clay is different from red clay, but two completely different players from what we were back then. We've had some great results, you know, playing some great tennis.

So I want to enjoy the win tonight and then kind of get ready and prepared for tomorrow, but I'm not expecting an easy match. I'm going to go out there, put my head down, keep working like I've been doing this whole week, and whatever happens happens, but I'm really pleased with how I'm going about my business on the court.

End of Interview

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