

Miami Open presented by Itaú

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Miami, Florida, USA

Ana Konjuh

Press Conference



A. KONJUH/I. Swiatek

6-4, 2-6, 6-2

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. What are you most proud of from today, the fact that you beat a top 20 opponent in Iga?

ANA KONJUH: Well, the fighting spirit probably. I've been facing these really important matches all throughout my comeback. I'm real happy to have this chance and opportunity to be back and competing on such a high level.

Obviously I didn't play Iga before, but obviously she's a great player and great champion. I knew it was going to be tough. I just told myself I need to stay and be offensive and not give her many chances.

That second set maybe I screwed up a little bit, but overall, credit to her. You know, she stepped up her game.

But I just wanted to stay mentally in it in those key moments just to be able to, you know, produce some great shots. I did that.

Q. With all that you went through with the multiple elbow surgeries and being off the tour for a few years, what is it like to be able to finally get back on tour to be pain-free and to actually get out and play tennis again?

ANA KONJUH: I'm really happy to be back. It's been frustrating the past couple of years, just having been through all these surgeries and comebacks and just never getting it right.

So just to be back, you know, healthy and to compete at this level, it means a lot. I just appreciate things much more right now. You know, when you are just hitting the ball and there is a possibility that you might never play again or that you might never be on this level, so you just kind of put things in perspective. Yeah, it means a lot to me right now.

Q. You mentioned that it was really frustrating for you for the past couple of years when you were out with so many injuries. What was your mental space like at that time? What helped you keep fighting on? Did you ever think of maybe quitting altogether or maybe not wanting to get back on tour? What kept you going through all that, all the difficult times?

ANA KONJUH: I mean, love for the sport, for sure. There is my family and my team that has been by my side ever since day one and supporting me, whatever I choose and decide to do.

Thankfully all of that is behind me right now, but in those key moments where you're sick of everything and you're just questioning yourself like should I go back and is it worth it and whatnot, I just remembered, you know, why I started playing this sport and why I love it so much and just the feeling that I had when I was in the top and having these great results and what it meant to me.

So, you know, I decided I'm not going to stop until I do everything there is, every possibility to help me. Here we are (smiling).

Q. Before the Madison Keys match about facing someone with power, you wanted to see how your power matched up with hers, so I wondered how you found Swiatek's power today?

ANA KONJUH: They are a little bit different player in my opinion. Keys is more like me, offensive and has the power just to kill you. Whereas Iga is really mentally tough, as well.

She's smart. She knows your weaknesses and your strengths and what to play in what moment. I just knew that I have to beat her today on both fronts and mentally and physically, so it's going to be tough.

But I'm just happy that I produced great play and great shots, and I had my serve most of the match, which was good. Just I knew that I had to keep attacking her with my game and being offensive. But then again, not as much as to make as many mistakes, and I think I did that well today.



Q. My question is about not specifically about everything you have been through in the past but wondering what type of player do you feel you are now compared to maybe before you had all the injuries? I mean, you have had some great results, top 20, quarterfinals US Open, know you were good on the grass. Do you think having been through everything you have been through and dealt with it so well and overcome it, do you think you can be a better player in the future than you ever were before?

ANA KONJUH: For sure. That saying "What doesn't kill you makes you stronger" is kind of true. Having my coach with me, and he's just trying to produce this new level of my game, not being as offensive but keeping it but also being smart about it and not going for the, you know, killer shots at the moments that are not there for.

Yeah, I just wanted to be mentally tough as I was before and just having that new level of my game and just staying in a point where I can, and also not making too many mistakes, keeping my serves. And, yeah, for sure, I think I have to keep evolving, keep improving. I'm just really looking forward to it.

Q. So the new Ana is a little bit more patient than before?

ANA KONJUH: Yeah, you can say it like that (smiling).

Q. The last time you were kind of playing at this level you were a young teenager just starting out. I was wondering how different you feel as a person in the past four years and given kind of all the life experience you have had?

ANA KONJUH: Wow. Well, yeah. When I was still in the top and playing, I was what, like, 17, 18, I think? Just never knew what I'm going to go through and suffer through.

But at the time I think I was just -- you know, I didn't know better. I was still -- I was always winning and always moving forward. So I don't think that I appreciated the game as much as I do right now. I was playing more on instinct than just thinking about it.

As compared to now where I'm actually just, you know, sometimes maybe overthinking things, which is not a good point, but also just being aware of everything on court. Yeah, just having been through what I have been through, it just gives me much more strength and much more just will and power to keep pushing. I don't want to quit. I don't want to give up. I think that's a good thing.