

Miami Open presented by Itaú

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Miami, Florida, USA

Sebastian Korda

Press Conference



S. KORDA/A. Karatsev

6-3, 6-0

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. You played like a complete match. Your statistics in return of serve were great. You played amazing against a great player like Aslan who won Dubai a few weeks ago. How do you feel today on court?

SEBASTIAN KORDA: Yeah, I felt great. I mean, I think my game goes really well against his. I used my tactics that I used at the French Open, and it kind of worked out really well today.

Q. I'm going to ask you about your next match, that it's Diego. He said that your game reminds him of Berdych. What do you think about Diego? What are your expectations in the next match?

SEBASTIAN KORDA: He's an incredible player. He's having a really good year so far. I think he won a title a couple of weeks ago, and he's top 10 in the world.

It's going to be another cool and fun experience for me. Hopefully I can play some really good tennis and kind of just have fun out there.

Q. We spoke back during your run at Delray this year. I wanted to find out from you, how gratifying is it that you have done so well this season in both of your Florida tournaments? Especially to be able to do it in front of your parents and your sisters?

SEBASTIAN KORDA: Yeah, I think it's super cool. I have a really good support. There is a lot of support here. A couple of my friends came out and both my parents are here.

It's been cool and it's been super special, for sure. I think I'm just so used to the Florida heat and the humidity, and some guys aren't used to it. I mean, it's not easy, not something easy to get used to. I kind of adapt really well to it.

Yeah, I like playing these later matches, as well. They really suit me. I hope I can keep going.

Q. Growing up in Florida, I assume you had a chance to go to the Miami Open when it used to be out on Key Biscayne at Crandon Park. Can you compare the atmosphere between there and Hard Rock Stadium?

SEBASTIAN KORDA: Yeah, I mean, I haven't been to Key Biscayne in a super long time, but that's like my first real tennis memory was when I came here with Radek Stepanek, and I thought it was the coolest thing because he played Bobby Reynolds first round, and it was like 6-3, 3-6, 6-3, and I thought the scoreline was the coolest thing.

That was kind of my first memory of it, and, yeah, he actually beat -- I'm pretty sure he beat James Blake, the tournament director here in the third round, I want to say, in one of those years. Those are kind of my first memories.

I always remember the atmosphere was super electric there. Hopefully next year we can get 100% capacity here, and I'm sure it's going to be the same, as well.

Q. I just watched your interview on The Tennis Channel where you talked about your mom developing your game when you were a kid. She told you to be a cat on the court, to not make any noise. Could you talk a little bit more about that?

SEBASTIAN KORDA: Yeah, I mean, my mom, I mean, both my parents, they always loved kind of how Stefan Edberg used to move on court, how silent he was, he was like a cat at the net. That was always my mom's favorite thing was always try to be like smooth on the court and not make any sound and kind of just flow around the court in a way.

But, yeah, that was probably -- I think I played at the US Open against Shapovalov, and that was one of the things the commentators said, so that made my mom really happy.

Q. I just wanted to ask you, what were your expectations before the tournament began and dealing



with bubbles and dealing with all the other things that perhaps are a distraction to players. You're a young player making waves. What are your goals basically for the rest of the year, given all these distractions?

SEBASTIAN KORDA: Yeah, I think I do a pretty good job with inside the bubble. I always have two really good coaches that usually travel with me, and we have a lot of fun. I mean, I talk, always talking with my friends when I'm in the room or we're always doing something.

So far being in the bubble has been fine for me, and hopefully I can just keep enjoying myself and keep having fun on the tennis court. I think if I keep enjoying myself, then I can play some really good tennis and my ranking will go up, as well.

Q. You're facing Diego next round. What do you think is going to be important for you to keep on what it will be like, like maybe a secret weapon to bring it up on court against Diego?

SEBASTIAN KORDA: My secret weapon? I don't know. But definitely I'll try to be the aggressive one and kind of take the match into my own hands and, yeah, kind of dictate play a little bit, as well.

Q. Looking ahead, I'm curious about your schedule. This will be the first time playing a full European summer schedule, as full as the schedule is allowed to be right now. What are your attitudes towards how much you want to play over there, if you want to do a full clay schedule or hang back a little bit? I know the American guys aren't most eager to play a heavy clay load. What's your attitude towards that?

SEBASTIAN KORDA: Yeah, my plan right now is to go play the 250 in Marbella and then play a challenger in Serbia and then take a week off and play Barcelona. After that we haven't set a real schedule.

But, yeah, I mean, both my parents, they are European and kind of our whole family is European, so being in Europe is like home for me basically. If I have to spend a lot of time there, I'm fine with it.

Q. Do you think because of your parents and your heritage there, European tennis, you have a different attitude towards clay than maybe your average American tennis player might?

SEBASTIAN KORDA: Yeah, I mean, it could be. I think a lot of tennis players when they grow up here they always play on the hard courts, and I was kind of brought up on the clay courts, something completely different than most

people.

I feel comfortable moving on clay and playing on it. It's nothing kind of new to me and not something I really have to learn compared to some other guys.

Q. You mentioned that you were going to be playing a challenger on clay. The fact that you play tournaments both on the ATP Tour and the challenger, do you prepare for them any differently? What is the difference that you see in the level of competition?

SEBASTIAN KORDA: No, I don't think I prepare any differently whether it's a future, challenger, ATP event or Grand Slam. I take every match pretty seriously, and I'm pretty good at focusing and kind of just doing my thing.

But definitely playing a clay court, I'd love to get a lot of matches under my belt and kind of just so I can build up and have another good result at the French Open.

Q. How important has it been for you in your young career to, besides your mum and dad, to have had a lot of experienced, established players around you? Meaning I know how friendly and how close you are to Radek and the Lendls, Ivan being around, et cetera. The benefits of something like that for you.

SEBASTIAN KORDA: Yeah, I mean, I'd say I have one of the best teams around me experience-wise. I mean, I have my dad who was a Grand Slam champion, No. 2 in the world, my mom who was a top 30 player, Radek Stepanek who is like my brother, we are always in contact, who was 8 in the world. And then to have a friend and mentor as Andre Agassi, I mean, I don't think you can have a better team. There is a lot of experience and a lot of knowledge passing around.

All I'm trying to do is just kind of keep my ears open and listen to as much of it, and hopefully I can take it and then do something with it.

Q. Does your dad get involved completely at the moment? I remember him saying to me a number of years ago when you were still much, much younger obviously, that you wanted to go and do this, that you wanted to go and play that, and he had to put a lid on it and tell you, it's going to be this way and this is the advice and this is what you need to do. Does that sort of thing still happen?

SEBASTIAN KORDA: Yeah, of course. I mean, he's still my dad. He has a big say in a lot of the things that I do. And, yeah, I mean, I try to listen as much as I can. I mean, my dad is still the main guy on my team. He still kind of

controls and overlooks everything.

I think the way that we're doing everything is the right way for me, and it might not be the right way for someone else, but, yeah, I love the way that my dad does things and how he thinks. He thinks completely different schedule-wise and playing time and all this compared to everyone else. So we have a really good setup going, and hopefully we can keep doing it and keep going in the right direction.

Q. I believe this will be the first time since 2004 that four Americans have progressed as far in Miami. What does that mean for yourself mainly, and to look back on some of your dad's contemporaries of when the last time that it happened?

SEBASTIAN KORDA: Yeah, no, it's cool. I mean, I think there is a lot of really good young Americans coming up. Especially Taylor Fritz, he's really pushing. And then John Isner, he's still around and still playing some really good tennis. Then you have myself and Brandon Nakashima trying to knock on the door and start playing a little bit better tennis.

Yeah, I think all of the Americans are doing a really good job so far, and hopefully we can keep going.

Q. Were you ever at the tournament in 2004?

SEBASTIAN KORDA: 2004? I don't think so. No. I don't know. I can't remember. I know my first -- I posted on Twitter my first Miami Open I took a picture with Andy Roddick. I don't know what year. I think that could have been 2007 maybe, my first real memory of the Miami Open. I don't know if I came before that.

Q. Andre Agassi is one of the special men that have come to American tennis over the years. He has an incredible mind, a great spirit. Could you just talk about working with him, what you have picked up, what makes him special?

SEBASTIAN KORDA: Yeah, he's an incredible, supportive and positive person. I think those are two of the really things that he's trying to push. And, yeah, we spend a lot of time on the phone together and we spent two weeks together at his, in Vegas.

So it was really special to kind of meet him and to kind of pick at his brain a little bit. We went to a lot of dinners and we spent a lot of time together.

He's a special person to me. He's been a super big help for me and my mentality on court.

Q. Today Miloslav Mecir was mentioned, the great Czechoslovakian player, had such great movement, beautiful strokes, fun to watch. Have you heard about him with all your Czech heritage?

SEBASTIAN KORDA: Oh, yeah. No, I'd say my tennis knowledge is pretty good. My parents were -- I mean, the ATP used to send out a handbook of all the players, and I think I have one from 2008 to 2009, so that was my Bible growing up in a way. Yeah, my tennis knowledge I'd say is pretty good.

But, yeah, I think I heard that on Tennis Channel, someone made that comparison of my movement or something like that. Yeah.

Q. Just talk about Czech tennis. Just such a heritage of achievement, beautiful shot making, strokes. Just talk about that.

SEBASTIAN KORDA: Yeah, I'd say kind of Czech tennis has their own style of play kind of. A lot of big guys who hit the ball pretty clean and flat and try to come in as much as possible, I mean, with especially Tomas Berdych, how much he would pound the ball.

Then you have someone completely different as Radek Stepanek who would come to the net and try and disorient you in different ways. Then you had my dad, Lendl. A lot of great players have come from such a small country.

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