

Miami Open presented by Itaú

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Miami, Florida, USA

Sebastian Korda

Press Conference



S. KORDA/D. Schwartzman

6-3, 4-6, 7-5

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. Could you just talk to us about what you're feeling inside? Is this something that you have just worked hard for for a long period of time? Are you just pretty amazed yourself about this run that you're on?

SEBASTIAN KORDA: Yeah, I played an incredible match today. I think mentally I was great out there. I stayed calm. Even when in the tight situations I believed in myself and I went for it. I'm super proud of that.

Yeah, just a lot of joy inside. Yeah, all the hard work that I have done with my team is paying off.

Q. And the greatest strength you showed out there in a tight, tough match?

SEBASTIAN KORDA: I think mentally. Mentally, I mean, I'm super happy with how I handled it, especially serving for it the first time and having a match point and then him just playing a good couple of points there. Then somehow I found a way to break him and then served it out.

So I think mentally that's probably the biggest thing for me today.

Q. You were talking about, I think it was yesterday, someone had asked you about growing up with your mom teaching you. I saw a video of you and Jess when you were like tiny just both hitting balls. How well do you remember those days and how crazy it is to think about how far you have come from then till now?

SEBASTIAN KORDA: Was that a Trans World, by any chance? That was my sister Nelly. When I was like a super little kid, my dad would coach, or even throughout my whole childhood, he was coaching Radek Stepanek. I would always come and watch and ball-boy even when I was a little kid. I would always take the singles sticks and

try to hit balls with that. I was pretty good with it.

So, yeah, that was like always my big thing. I always wanted a singles stick and just hit balls with it.

Q. Considering where you're from, I don't know if you saw Diego compared you to Tomas Berdych, but is that pretty cool to see? How does it feel to have someone compare you to a guy who was such a pure ball striker, especially from where you're from, held in such high stature?

SEBASTIAN KORDA: Yeah, a Czech background. Both my parents are from the Czech Republic. Tomas Berdych was an unbelievable player, the power that he had and he was pushing, I mean, the big three pretty much. He made, was it one slam final, two slam finals? I think it was one or two.

And, yeah, to do that when the big three were in their prime, it's incredible. Yeah, to be compared to a player like him, it's cool. Hopefully I can keep building myself and keep putting in the hard work, and then hopefully I can be like him one day.

Q. Can you talk a little bit about the dynamics between working with dad and how Dean Goldfine fits into that?

SEBASTIAN KORDA: Yeah, whenever I'm home I'm always practicing with my dad. Then usually when I'm traveling around the U.S. or somewhere close to the U.S., then Dean will always come with me.

Yeah, we have a really good relationship. We have a really good communication between the three of us. And, yeah, Dean has worked with some really great players and players like myself, big, tall people who are aggressive. So, yeah, I think Dean...

Q. Just like Dean?

SEBASTIAN KORDA: Yeah, just like Dean. But yeah, I think Dean fits in our team really well, and he's a super positive person, just like me. Yeah, I love traveling with him and he's an incredible guy to me.



Q. Is he a tactic guy or emotions, how to handle that? Is it split up at all?

SEBASTIAN KORDA: Dino does it all. He's a great guy. He's super special. We have built an incredible relationship over the last four years now. Yeah, four years we have been working together.

So any time we can go to a tournament, it's always special and we have a lot of fun and we put in the hard yards together.

Q. Do you sort of appreciate the conundrum you have put your parents in on the scheduling front this week?

SEBASTIAN KORDA: Yeah, they were supposed to fly out -- is today Wednesday? They were supposed to fly out today to Palm Springs to actually go watch my sisters. They have their first major of the year in Palm Springs.

So, yeah, probably they are going to change their schedule a little bit and hopefully they stay with me (smiling).

Q. Nelly said today, she did an interview out there and said that she was, one, rooting for you so she hoped that the flight would be changed. The fact that you obviously have parents who were elite athletes, your sisters are elite athletes, I don't even want to know how intense the competitiveness is in your house, but how much does that help with your sisters sort of going through this path that you're embarking on now?

SEBASTIAN KORDA: Yeah, I mean, whenever we get all together, it's not very often we all get to sit down, all five of us, because my schedule is completely different to theirs. And, yeah, it's tough for my parents because sometimes my sisters are playing in Asia and I'm playing in Europe. So my dad changes his sleep schedule completely.

Yeah, it's not easy for them. Yeah, I think it's cool kind of. I grew up at the time when my sister was just starting to be a professional golfer and my dad was traveling with her. It was kind of cool just to share those experiences and go to the big tournaments with her and just watching her grow. It's been cool.

Then my sister Nelly who is, I think this is her fourth or fifth year on the LPGA, so they have had a really good career. I know they will be better.

Q. I wanted to find out what kind of encouragement your father gave you before the match this evening. Did he have anything to share with you after the victory tonight?

SEBASTIAN KORDA: Yeah, I saw my dad like for a couple minutes after. They are staying with, well, my sister's boyfriend. She and her fiance they live in Palm Beach, so they drive up and down.

Yeah, just, I always talk before the match with both my parents and they just kind of wish me good luck, have fun, work hard and stay calm and do your thing. So, yeah, they always keep me calm and keep me motivated.

Q. Did you ever think in your wildest dreams this week that within a matter of days you would not only get a top-20 victory over Fognini but then top it with a top-10 win over Diego Schwartzman this evening?

SEBASTIAN KORDA: Yeah, I mean, my parents are super big on just baby steps. I mean, you can play tennis for so long if you stay healthy for 15-plus years. Especially guys now they are playing until 40. It's incredible. There is a lot of years ahead of me.

And, yeah, any win is a good win. I'll always put my head down and keep working, and hopefully one day I could achieve something what my dad achieved.

Q. You had a great run in Delray Beach, phenomenal. You got to the finals against Hurkacz. You're having a great run here. So I have to ask you, first and foremost, what is it about South Florida that you like so much, my friend?

SEBASTIAN KORDA: Yeah, I love the heat and I love the humidity. The hotter it is, the more humid it is, the happier I am.

Yeah, hopefully I can keep this run going and keep playing some good tennis and keep enjoying myself. All the fans, they always come out and support me. I can hear them every single match. It's been super cool having a few fans come. Yeah, hopefully I can keep going on this great journey.

Q. We just talk with Diego Schwartzman. He said you look like a veteran, like a ten-year player on the circuit. So congrats on that, because it's a big recognition on his part. I'd like to ask you, who did you prepare this match with? How did you prepare mentally for a tough battle with a runner and a hard hitter like Diego?

SEBASTIAN KORDA: Yeah, I mean, I sat down with my whole team. My dad, my coach Dean, with Andre, and we just kind of sat down and kind of decided what the play was, what I'm gonna stick with. Yeah, how the match is going to play out.

I was going to think that I was going to be the one setting the pace and dictating, and then it was just all about committing to myself and then staying calm. Those were probably the biggest things for me. I think I executed really well on the big points, and I'm super happy with how it finished.

Q. Could you elaborate on the relationship you have with Andre Agassi and how he's helped you developing your game and the plans ahead?

SEBASTIAN KORDA: Yeah, I mean, we have a really special relationship together. We built that over November/December. We spent a couple of weeks together, and we just hung out and talked.

Yeah, he's a special person to me. He really helps my game, especially mentally and seeing the court and certain situations when I showed what I shouldn't be doing.

Yeah, he's a great guy. He's a really positive person around me, and I love positivity.

Q. Have you read his book 'Open'?

SEBASTIAN KORDA: Yeah, I have read it. I read it a long time ago. I don't remember much from it. I'll have to read it again.

Q. Andrey Rublev, set and a break up against Cilic. What do you think about this possible match against him?

SEBASTIAN KORDA: I think it will be a lot of fun. We are both big hitters, and he's having a great season and a great whole year pretty much. He's probably the hottest player on tour right now, and it's going to be another cool opportunity for me and another cool experience to play such a player like him.

Q. Last week in Acapulco, Musetti beat Schwartzman. Now you beat Schwartzman. What do you think about this new generation, under 20 years old?

SEBASTIAN KORDA: Yeah, I think, yeah, we have a really good group. Myself, Nakashima, Musetti, Alcaraz, I mean, it's a cool new group. Hopefully we can keep doing the right things and then we can break that barrier and take our tennis to the next level.

Q. Tonight you beat an Argentina player. There are brothers, Cerundulo, Francisco and Manuel. And a sister that plays for the hockey national team in Argentina. It's a family very similar to yours. Both

parents who are sport. I would like to know if you know their story?

SEBASTIAN KORDA: No, I don't know their story, but I know I played the youngest of the two brothers. I played him in like Austria in 2017. I'm pretty sure I played him. Even back then I knew that he was a really good player.

He's had an incredible year so far, making his first final -- I mean, winning, yeah. I'm sure he's just going to get better from there on.

Q. How is to have a family like this one with so much sport, well, all your family is connected with sport?

SEBASTIAN KORDA: Yeah, I think it's really cool, because we all share a passion for something. We all work really hard to be the best at our sport. It's a cool thing to share between us, and I don't know how it is with his family, but I'm super close with everyone in my family and we all support each other really well. Yeah, it's pretty cool.

Q. In one sense, are you pinching yourself, you have had your first win over a top 10, you're in this stage at a Masters 1000, emulating the old man? Can you just address that?

SEBASTIAN KORDA: I didn't get the last part.

Q. I said semis of an event at this stage of a 1000, emulating your old man? What's mom and dad said so far?

SEBASTIAN KORDA: I only saw them for a couple of minutes after the match, but they just told me how proud they are of me and how focused and how patient I stayed. Having them here, it's a dream come true. I always dreamed about playing around my family and playing the big matches and winning the tight matches.

It's cool to share this experience with them. I wish my sisters were here, but they are doing their thing in California. Yeah, hopefully I can keep going.

Q. Are you pinching yourself in one sense?

SEBASTIAN KORDA: Yeah, I mean, it's been a long journey, and I have worked extremely hard both physically, mentally, and on my tennis. So all the hard work is paying off.

To beat a player like Diego Schwartzman, it's something you dream about, and hopefully I can keep getting wins like these.

