

Rothesay International

Friday, 28 June 2024

Eastbourne, England, UK

Devonshire Park

Leylah Fernandez

Press Conference

L. FERNANDEZ/M. Keys

6-3, 3-6, 6-3

THE MODERATOR: Leylah, congratulations. You're into your first grass court final of your career. Just talk us through how you're feeling right now.

LEYLAH FERNANDEZ: Yeah. Well, first of all, thank you. I'm super happy with the way that I played, competed. It's super exciting to be in my first grass court final.

It's going to be fun, exciting match. I'm just happy with the way that I played, and I'm just going to try and enjoy the moment as much as possible.

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

Q. When you have had these tournaments where you have had the great runs, I think this is your sixth final, is there any inkling before the first ball is hit in the first match of the week that it's going to be a good week for you? Did you have any sense this week?

LEYLAH FERNANDEZ: No, actually none at all. You know, I think it actually started after the French Open. As we were getting ready for the grass court season, we were working, we were playing first indoor tennis, indoor hard, until we found a grass court, and, you know, I think since then I was just kind of enjoying my time.

I felt good, I felt lighter, I felt like I was hitting the ball well. I said, Ah, maybe this grass court season it going to go well for me. I think every day we just kept our head down and worked hard and just tried to execute the game plan that my coaches have given to me.

So I'm just happy that so far the results are showing. You know, I think we're just going to keep going this way, keep enjoying our time and just keep having fun.

Q. You said you were practicing on an indoor hard court. I'm curious in what ways does practicing on whichever indoor hard court you were on helped to prepare you for grass, and in which ways did you

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still have to make the most adjustments once you got here or to Nottingham?

LEYLAH FERNANDEZ: Yeah, actually, indoor hard helped because the balls fly, are extremely fast. It was a quick adjustment from clay to fast-ball hitting. So we just tried to get that out of the way as quickly as possible.

My coaches put, like, threw me in the water and said, Now, swim. That's basically what happened. I think that's what happened a lot to wake me up and just get all those fast-twitch muscles going.

I think the only adjustment that we needed to do, once we got to grass court, was staying lower. Because the ball doesn't bounce as much. It kind of just slice through. I think that was the only adjustment we did.

But throughout the whole training process, we were working on the footwork, working on hitting the ball early, hitting the ball quick, and just trusting instincts.

Q. You got off to a very fast start today, and then it became a bit of a battle. What do you think was the key to turning that one around for you?

LEYLAH FERNANDEZ: I think it's actually forgetting about what was going on. You know, I did start off really well. I was super happy with the way that I started. Then Maddie broke back, which I'm not surprised. She's a fighter.

So, you know, I think for me it was forgetting about the mistakes that I made, forget about the great shots that she's made, and just focus on the now and what's going on now, which was the return game and then afterwards focus on my serve.

I think I'm happy that I was able to execute that for the most part of the match and just kind of go with the flow. So, yeah, it was good.

Q. I believe there was some news yesterday from the Olympics side of things. I know you have been waiting for that call. Must be great to finally get the call, and given the heroics from the Billie Jean King Cup last year, surely you've got your eyes on doubles, as well.

LEYLAH FERNANDEZ: Yes. Oh, I was so happy once I

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saw the announcement. It was, like, double celebration for us at dinner. Once I saw the news, I, like, shared it with everyone. I didn't even let them tell me.

So I was super happy. I'm excited to be able to represent Canada this time at the Olympics. You know, I'll be playing doubles with Gaby, so it will be super fun.

No, we do have our eyes set on a medal. So far we have been playing super well together at the Billie Jean King Cup, and hopefully we can continue that momentum into the Olympics and just keep having fun. For us, just imposing our game, and more times than not the results will come.

Q. A draw happened this morning. Obviously you're very much still in the tournament here, and that's probably where your focus is. Did you see the draw? You'll be playing against Bronzetti in round one. How do you go about processing the fact there is still a final to play, and the Wimbledon draw is already out?

LEYLAH FERNANDEZ: Yeah, so I have not looked at the draw actually, because I am still in the tournament. I think the way I'm processing is that I try not to think about what's going on all around me.

Right now I'm in Eastbourne. My mind is in Eastbourne. Physically I'm in Eastbourne. So we're just going to try and focus on the finals for tomorrow.

Once we get to London, that's when we'll do our preparations for Wimbledon.

Q. Just looking ahead, obviously if you could break down the potential matchups either against Jasmine or Dash.

LEYLAH FERNANDEZ: Yeah, both of them, they're incredible players. Jasmine, she's having an incredible season so far. She's playing with so much confidence, no doubt. I'm sure that if I'm playing against her, it's going to be a tough match. Or if I'm playing either of those players, it will be a tough match.

For me, the important thing is to execute the game plan, talk with my coaches, see what I need to improve, and see what I need to execute for the finals.

Also, last thing is enjoy the moment, enjoy my time, smile when there is a good point, smile when she hits a good ball. You know, try not to stress over it too much.

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