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S. STEPHENS/T. Pironkova

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An interview with:

SLOANE STEPHENS

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. I think you won five straight games after speaking with your coach. What did he tell you out there?

SLOANE STEPHENS: I can't tell you. It's a secret. No, actually we broke our streak, because he's been on the court in every match since Wimbledon, and every time he comes the court I lose like four games in a row or something.

We were just happy that I didn't lose games after he came out.

Q. Talk about your coaching change. You've had a switch there.

SLOANE STEPHENS: Yeah, working with David. We're kind of sharing; me and Sam are sharing him. It's worked out well. It's different sharing with a guy, and obviously Sam gets priority. Well, I get priority because I'm a girl, but Sam gets priority because he obviously Sam.

So it's definitely different, but we like the change. We're having a good time, so it's good.

Q. How did that come about?

SLOANE STEPHENS: I worked with David actually a lot when I was with the USTA. I kind of am really comfortable with him and trust him, so it was just kind of an easy transition for me.

I think he was pretty excited, so it worked out.

Q. Why the transition? You had some pretty good results under Roger, huh?

SLOANE STEPHENS: Yeah, of course. Just kind of needed a change. Everything was going well. You know, it was time. I think Roger and I had an amazing journey together; now he's working with Donald. I saw him here and I was so excited to see him.

You know, things happen; people change. It's something I think it was best for both of us. We're both heading in the right direction.

Q. So this was right after Wimbledon?

SLOANE STEPHENS: That was right after Wimbledon -- no, I worked with David at Wimbledon, so...

Q. The decision to make the change from Roger to David full time was Wimbledon?

SLOANE STEPHENS: Yeah, sure.

Q. You had the great Roland Garros and then third round at Wimbledon. You didn't feel like you were progressing quite enough?

SLOANE STEPHENS: No, I think that's pretty great progression, fourth round at a slam and third round at Wimbledon. That's pretty good.

Like I said, it was time for a change and something I committed to before. I think when I decide things, it's going to happen. That's it. So for me, I made the decision and it was time to move on.

Here we are.

Q. You committed to it before what?

SLOANE STEPHENS: No, just when I decided, that's when I decided. That's when things change. (Smiling.)

Q. You had some really good results on clay. Is that your most comfortable surface?

SLOANE STEPHENS: Yeah, love clay. You know, grew up playing on clay in Florida.

Something I really enjoy. My favorite surface, but only a couple tournaments a year on it which is unfortunate. I can't wait to get back to the clay next year.

Q. Will you be training in Europe for the clay court season or here?

SLOANE STEPHENS: Yeah, I always go to Barcelona before I start playing on clay. I think that'll be good. Just keep the same routine basically and just enjoy it.

Q. You had a nice result in D.C., but after Wimbledon was there a bit of a letdown? How big was it get this win today?

SLOANE STEPHENS: After Wimbledon wasn't ready to play. Wasn't healthy. Shouldn't have been in Stanford and Carlsbad. But just insisted on playing anyway.

Being 19 I wanted to do whatever I wanted to do. Wasn't the right decision, but got out there and played and learned my lesson obviously.

Went back and trained for a while in L.A. when the guys were there. Had a good week of practice. Did well in D.C., had a couple rough matches, good wins.

Was just kind of ready to play and ready to do well again. Battled in D.C.; lost in the semis. Played, practiced some days at home again, trained hard, and here I am.

Q. Healthy?

SLOANE STEPHENS: Yeah, ready to go, so it's good.

Q. Hat's best for you going into the Open: going in playing matches or going in resting that few days before?

SLOANE STEPHENS: I'm going to play New Haven, so I'll still be playing. Just see how it goes there.

But I kind of want to stay in the gym and keep working so I can peak at the Open and do my best.

But every tournament is important; every match is important, so...

Q. How much do you know about your next opponent?

SLOANE STEPHENS: Not so much. I think we're kind of around the same age maybe, or she's a couple years older than me. She's played a lot of challengers, so I know some of the USTA girls have played her and stuff.

Never actually seen her play. Definitely something I'm going to have to look out for. Be a good match.

Q. Today was the first I learned about your coaching change. Can you just share a couple of points of what you really extracted most from your guidance under Roger?

SLOANE STEPHENS: Definitely Roger is a great guy. We had some really great times. We were together for a long time. He was kind of like my dad. We always worked together. We just had a really good relationship.

Even now I think we'll be pretty good friends. When I see him, like I said, we're happy to see each other. Just, you know, taught me to be patient, taught me that you got to work hard and fight every day. You just can never give up.

I think he's a really firm believer in that. I think that will help him with Donald because they have a really good relationship also. So I think he will help Donald and they'll break that streak, so...

Q. Any particular tactics that you were able to get from him?

SLOANE STEPHENS: No, I mean, he had me from when I was young so I've learned so many things, like over the years. We were playing juniors and I was playing pros, I've been through such a transition that everything I've learned has been so crazy and up and down and always trying to improve things.

Nothing like way drastic than any other person.

Q. Specifically what do you think you need to improve to get where you want to go?

SLOANE STEPHENS: Definitely improve my focus. I've got to concentrate and stay it in it more. When I get out my teen years that'll go away. (Smiling.)

But we'll see.

Q. So it's something you're actively working on with David, just going point by point and not mentally checking out in important times?

SLOANE STEPHENS: Yeah, definitely. So it's something we're working on. (Smiling.)

Q. What makes you lose your focus? Is it surroundings?

SLOANE STEPHENS: No, nothing in particular. Just I have moments where I have brain farts and stuff. I don't think that it's that bad, but it's something that you can always improve on.

I think it's gotten better, so that's always good.

Q. During matches do you ever hear photographers clicking, things like that?

SLOANE STEPHENS: No, not really. I mean, no, no. (Smiling.)

Q. What do you love and what do you hate about the US Open?

SLOANE STEPHENS: Oh, my God somebody asked me this and I was just like, What? First of all, I don't hate anything about the US Open.

I do love the fans there. I love how when year on a court and they put you on, like Court 11 I think is one of those singles courts, and they're just packed and everyone is roaring and the crowd is going crazy.

I think that's like -- I mean, it's obviously like not as cool when you're playing someone that the crowd is only cheering for you, but it's kind of a good feeling.

So I think going to the US Open and just having everyone cheering for you and everyone wanting you to do well and hug and you lick you and just, you know, be around, touch you, like even when you're sweaty.

I just love the environment. It's so amazing. Just makes you so proud to be out there playing. I don't know, I just love it.

Q. Nothing you dislike about it?

SLOANE STEPHENS: No, nothing at all. Despite the fact there was a hurricane last year. That was kind of crazy. Other than, that no. And Carly Rae Jepsen is going to be at the kids' day. I love that they have her there.

Q. Do you find yourself playing better in front of big crowds? Do you like having a big crowd around you?

SLOANE STEPHENS: Um, sure. I don't know. I guess since I play so well in front of a lot of people, so I guess you could say that's accurate. But it's not something I think about. I just go out and play and have fun.

Q. Who has been your favorite doubles partner?

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SLOANE STEPHENS: Well, my favorite doubles partner has been -- I don't know. I kind of retired from doubles, but now I'm playing again, playing this week with Varvara; rekindling with Timea Babos, the three Grands Slam champion undefeated will rekindle for New Haven and the US Open.

Q. Are you planning to play mixed too or just doubles?

SLOANE STEPHENS: Oh, my God. Nobody will play with me. This is an open invitation. If anybody knows a guy that's looking, I'm available, okay?

I'm single, too, but I'm definitely available for mixed. You guys put any feelers out in the press conference, just let me know.

Q. Sam won't even play with you?

SLOANE STEPHENS: No, he will definitely not play with me. I'll be like, Oh, my God, you are so stupid. He's so funny.

Now, I doubt he would a play with me either.

Q. What about Donald?

SLOANE STEPHENS: No doubt I could play with Donald. I think he would play with me. (Laughter.)

But, you know, maybe, yeah, you're right, maybe I should ask him. Hmmm, we'll see.

Q. Why do you say nobody will play with you?

SLOANE STEPHENS: Just like I asked -- like when my coach like asked someone he was like, Hmm, wait until the last minute. I don't have a partner. Yeah, I don't know. That means you don't want to play with me. Fine. Yeah, no, I just can't get -- I don't know. They just don't like me. It's strange.

Q. What results would make you happy over the next month?

SLOANE STEPHENS: Over the next month results? I mean, not really looking at results. If I just have a good attitude and I play well and I can concentrate for two hours, that's great. I could lose and play well and whatever, doesn't matter.

Q. You got to the second week of

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Roland Garros; second week of the US Open a possibility?

SLOANE STEPHENS: Definitely a possibility for sure. I mean, so excited to be like -- just so excited to just come up on that again. I don't have any points to defend, nothing to defend for the end of the year.

Hopefully I still stay healthy and be able to play Tokyo, Beijing, Osaka or whatever, and play the full season for the rest of the year.

I'll be very pleased. Even if I lose first round the next five tournaments doesn't matter because I'll still be able to play.

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