



NCAA DIVISION I MEN'S & WOMEN'S INDIVIDUAL CHAMPIONSHIPS

PLAYER QUOTES – THURSDAY, MAY 27

[3] Emma Navarro, Virginia (d. [1] Sara Daavettila, North Carolina, 6-4, 2-6, 6-2)

On reaching the national singles championship match...

"It feels really good. I've worked really hard this season and I wasn't feeling my best at the start of this tournament. I was feeling a little tired, a little worn out. So I'm happy with how I was able to fight today and the past four or five days and get to this point. It's really special playing for a school like UVA. I'm very grateful."

On playing No. 1 seed Sara Daavettila in the semis, and now No. 2 seed and defending national champ Estela Perez-Somarriba in the final...

"I think actually playing better players, it helps you to raise your level. So I'm really looking forward to [the final]. It'll be challenging for sure. She's a great fighter. So yeah, it'll be tough. She's my only loss this season, so I'm out for revenge."

On her decision to come to UVA rather than going pro...

"I think that's one of the best decisions I've ever made. I've had the most fun playing tennis this season at UVA and I couldn't have asked for a better coaching staff or a better team to have by my side. I'm sure you guys watching heard them out there cheering for me. So I think it's been really awesome. We have a great program in place on the court and off the court with fitness, and our team culture is awesome. That's definitely been something that we've been working on. So, yeah, I've had a lot of fun and who knows what the future will hold."

[2] Estela Perez-Somarriba, Miami (def. Janice Tjen, Oregon, 7-6, 6-0)

On making it back to the national championship for the second year in a row...

"It feels great. Honestly, I think it means that I've put the right word in that during the pandemic and last year, that was very tough for everybody. It basically means that I kept working and trusting the process. And everybody has improved a lot since the last time I was here. So just very excited, very happy and ready to play tomorrow."

On her success on deuce points in the second set...

"I think that I played those points aggressive, playing my tennis. I was basically playing smarter than in the first set. I was dictating a little more and trusting my shots a bit more. And I think that, basically, that paid off, honestly. I also lost some deuce points in the first set, so I knew that I just had to play with confidence and the tennis will just take care of itself."

On how she feels physically entering the final...

"I feel great and ready for tomorrow, ready to battle and to stay on the court. Basically whatever it takes to get a 'W' tomorrow, that's what's going to happen and that's what I'm going to do."

[6] Sam Riffice, Florida (def. [1] Liam Draxl, Kentucky, 7-6, 1-6, 6-1)

On reaching the NCAA singles final...

"It's incredible. I mean, it's really incredible. There's so many good players in college tennis, especially this year I feel like the draw was so deep with some of the fifth-years and some of those guys. To be able to be in the finals, it's a huge accomplishment for me."

On what adjustments he made for the third set...

"I realized I did not want to have a rally over like five shots from the baseline. So every time that I got a short ball, I came in. I tried to hit kind of an angle off the court because he's so good, if you play hard through the middle, at hitting passing shots. And I just tried to open the court a little bit, get to the net. And I feel like over time my level picked up a lot and I didn't give him any rhythm. And I just put a lot of good points in a row and I was able to get a big lead. And when it's that hot out there and it's this deep in the tournament, I feel like whoever got whoever struck first and the third was going to come away with it."

On when he was able to tap back into his competitive instinct, after celebrating winning the team title with Florida the night before the start of the individual tournament...

"I think after I lost the first set, 6-1, in my [first-round] match. I felt like I warmed up well, I felt good. And then I got out there and I was just moving in slow motion. So I think after that set, I just really focused on making balls and trying to work from there. And my level picked up and I was able to just be really tough and tough out that match."

[2] Daniel Rodrigues, South Carolina (def. Adrian Boiton, Baylor, 7-6, 3-1, ret.)

On how it feels to be in the NCAA singles final...

"Like I said in the second round, for me, everything that is happening is extra right now. I was already happy with my season. So it feels amazing to be in the final, but it's not done yet."

On learning from South Carolina alum Paul Jubb, the 2019 NCAA singles champion...

“Him doing what he did definitely helped me to do what I'm doing right now because he showed me that was possible, and I just try to follow his steps. Even when I was practicing with him, trying to just follow whatever he was doing because he was definitely doing something right...”

“We talked a lot before the tournament. I called him myself to ask, ‘How did you approach the beginning of the tournament and each round?’ And he definitely advised me very well. And we keep talking every day, he keeps telling me to keep going and the job’s not done. After the tournament, we’re still going to talk about the future tournaments too.”

On the difference between team matches and the individual tournament...

“I feel like I approach it the same way. I'm playing these matches like I'm playing for my team as well. I'm not playing like I'm playing by myself. I know that if I play on a team, the pressure is a little bit more because the team depends on you a little bit more than if you play by yourself. But I'm thinking these matches like representing my university and my team.”

Kylie Collins/Lulu Sun, Texas (d. Johanson/Navarro, Virginia, 4-6, 7-5,[10-8])

Collins on today's match...

“I think we try to keep it as simple as possible. It wasn't our best today, so we knew if we could just get back to the basics and just really hone in on those and just execute the game plan, that is going to be pretty simple and we could turn it around.”

Sun on refocusing after winning the team competition...

“Well, first two singles I was kind of struggling physically, but after a couple of days, I quickly recovered for today, turned it around. So I think for me it was more physically and mentally.”

Makenna Jones/Elizabeth Scotty, North Carolina (d. Rogers/Smith, NC State, 6-3, 6-4)

Jones on reaching the doubles final...

“Kind of surreal but really awesome, as I'm sure people have seen the scores we've been down match point on two different matches. So we just keep saying one more day, one more day, keep working at it. So just really exciting.”

Jones on what it would mean to bring the win to North Carolina...

“Yeah, I think it would be awesome. Like Scotty said, it was really hard to see our team's season end, but I think both of us came out motivated after that. And we just keep getting better each and every match. And like she said, representing Carolina is just such an honor. So I would love to bring that back to our team and our school.”

Scotty on how being in the ACC has helped them prepare for this stage...

“Yeah, you get pushed a lot. Every match matters. Every match counts. So I think it was kind of that no days off mentality... I think we played doubles almost every time that we could. So we're used to it. And we're going to do our best tomorrow.”

Janice Tjen, Oregon

“It was a very good season for me. I'm happy with my results this season and at this tournament and am going to work harder and come back even stronger. I will use what I learned today going forward in my career. Perez-Somarriba is a strong player. Best of luck to her in the final.”

Liam Draxl, Kentucky

“What a run. I fought my butt off every match. I wanted to win the tournament, but I left it all out there.”

Constantin Frantzen, Baylor

“I'm just thankful to have been a part of it and thankful that it happened. I'm sad it's over now and that I can't compete with the boys anymore. I was able to do amazing things with them, but at the end it's more the friendships and relationships I've made here that mean the most. It's hard to put into words what these last five years mean to me.”

Sven Lah, Baylor

“I haven't thought about it much yet, it's going to come with the next few days. Seeing Coni enjoying his last season, I think I can learn from him to enjoy every moment a little bit earlier, to give my best during practice and prepare as hard as I can for the season. Just go out there and compete hard every night, hopefully by May next year we'll be in a similar spot as we were this season.”