

Tennis

Williams, coach won't discuss '22' at Wimbledon

By HOWARD FENDRICH
Associated Press

LONDON — Leave all the chatter about Serena Williams' pursuit of her 22nd major singles trophy to others.

Williams and her coach, Patrick Mouratoglou, do not discuss that number.

"We don't talk about it all. Zero," Mouratoglou said Tuesday at Wimbledon after watching Williams win her first-round match.

Why is that?

"Because there is nothing to talk about. We have a Grand Slam (title) to win, and that's what's most important. We don't talk about the reward," he said. "We talk about the work we have to do."

That is going to include some extra time spent fine-tuning the top-seeded Williams' serve after she delivered five double-faults, including three in one game, and faced five break points during an uneven 6-2, 6-4 victory over Amra Sadikovic, a Swiss qualifier ranked 148th and making her Grand Slam debut.

"It's very rare that everything works perfectly the first round. It's one of the things that were not good today, so we're going to work on it," Mouratoglou said. "But it's

Serena Williams of the U.S serves to Amara Safikovic of Switzerland during their women's singles match on day two of the Wimbledon Tennis Championships in London, Tuesday, June 28, 2016.



AP Photo/Ben Curtis

not a big deal. I don't think it's a big deal."

Didn't take long for the first rain of this year's tournament, which cut short action in the early evening and limited play to the main stadium, the only venue with a roof at the All England Club. In all, 14 matches were suspended in progress and 16 were postponed altogether.

Of the matches that did conclude, zero seeded players lost.

Winners included No. 2 Andy Murray, the 2013 champion, in the first all-British men's match at Wimbledon since 2001; No. 4 Stan Wawrinka, who eliminated 18-year-old American Taylor Fritz and now faces 2009 U.S. Open champion Juan Martin del Potro, participating in his first Grand Slam tournament in 2½ years after three operations on his left wrist; No. 7 Richard Gasquet, No. 12 Jo-Wilfried Tsonga

"I think more or less about winning Australia. I think about winning the French Open. Didn't happen. I think about winning Wimbledon. I don't necessarily think about winning '22."

— Serena Williams
21-time Grand Slam winner, one behind Open-era record holder Steffi Graf.

and No. 15 Nick Kyrgios.

Among the top women, No. 6 Roberta Vinci — who stunned Williams at the U.S. Open last year, ending the American's bid for a calendar-year Grand Slam — beat Alison Riske of the U.S. 6-2, 5-7, 6-3; No. 13 Svetlana Kuznetsova defeated unseeded Caroline Wozniacki, a former No. 1 who hasn't won a match at a major in 2016; and No. 27 CoCo Vandeweghe of the

U.S. had little trouble getting past Kateryna Bondarenko 6-2, 7-6 (3) under the roof in the day's last match.

Since earning her sixth Wimbledon championship and 21st Grand Slam title a year ago, Williams has gone 18-3 at majors, with the losses coming in the U.S. Open semifinals, the Australian Open final and the French Open final.

That led some to surmise that Williams has been beset by nerves as she seeks No. 22, which would equal Steffi Graf's Open-era record (Margaret Court holds the all-time mark of 24).

Williams dismissed the notion of a mental stumbling block.

"I think more or less about winning Australia. I think about winning the French Open. Didn't happen. I think about winning Wimbledon," she said. "I don't necessarily think about winning '22."

Then, in what sounded like a reference to various health issues that have put her in the hospital and kept her off the tour for months — blood clots on her lungs in 2010, for example — Williams continued: "Mentally I've been further down than anyone can be. Well, maybe not anyone, but I've been pretty low. There's nothing ... mentally too hard

for me."

With her mother sitting in Centre Court's Royal Box, Williams trailed 15-40 in Tuesday's opening game, then won 13 consecutive points and grabbed a 3-0 lead. In the second set, Williams made four unforced errors in one game to get broken and fall behind 2-1. But she broke right back.

When the players met at the net after Williams' return winner ended the match, they embraced like old friends.

Turns out that was Sadikovic's idea. She was a bit awe-struck by the occasion — and rightly so.

Sadikovic quit playing tennis two years ago, because she wasn't enjoying life on tour and had financial problems. After more than a year off, giving tennis lessons, she returned. So while Sadikovic knew she'd have a better chance to win against pretty much any other opponent, she was thrilled to play Williams.

"I always looked up to Serena, because she's like a beast, but in a positive way," Sadikovic said. "I always asked myself the question: How does it feel ... to play the best player in the world?"

Now she knows. "I just wanted to hug her, to be honest," Sadikovic said. "And I asked her. She was like, 'Yeah, sure!'"

Olympics

Security, not Zika, top concern for Rio organizers

By STEPHEN WHYNO
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The chief organizer of the Rio de Janeiro Olympics says security is his top concern, well ahead of the Zika virus.

Sidney Levy, CEO of the Rio Organizing Committee, said Tuesday that keeping athletes and visitors safe from terrorism and other crime is his No. 1 top priority. He called the biggest fear "lone wolf" attackers.

"Differently from Zika, security's at the top of my list — the very top of my list," Levy said at a Council of the Americas event. "We should never forget that these days we live in a society that's very in danger."

The plan is to have 85,000 security personnel on the streets. Levy said the 2013 visit of Pope Francis and the 2014 World Cup

were tests for Brazil.

Francisco Dornelles, Rio's acting governor, warned on Monday that budget shortfalls could compromise security and transit at the games. Levy said intelligence officials from 100 different countries are in Brazil monitoring potential threats.

Zika, a virus linked to birth defects, has drawn widespread international concern. Levy stressed he does not worry about the virus and said none of the people working for him has contracted Zika. He pointed to expected cooler temperatures during the Olympics in his attempt to assuage fears.

"If I have to write on a piece of paper my top 10 worries today, Zika wouldn't be there," he said. "I'm not saying it's not a public health issue. It is a public health issue. But we are going into the winter months

in Rio and if you see every statistic of last year's mosquitos' proliferation in the summer and in the winter, it goes very high up in February and reaches the peak, which is the height of the summer. It starts going down, down, down. Right now it's almost zero."

Levy said Rio organizers did not expect this level of concern over Zika, and he acknowledged that more people around the world are worried about it than Brazilians are. Several high-profile athletes cited it as their reason for withdrawing from the Olympics.

"We thought that there were too many people here in the States talking about Zika and this is too much. This is too much. Too many negative comments," Levy said. "I think it was good for them to hear other voices."

Levy was less optimistic

about water pollution, saying Rio "failed" on its promise to clean 80 percent of it by the Olympics, which are set for Aug. 5-21. He said four of the five sites on the Guanabara Bay are tested daily for bacteria and will not pose any problems and left open the possibility of moving the other.

"The fifth area is closer to the shore and we're testing that and depending on the rain and the wind sometimes good, sometimes not so good," Levy said. "If closer to the games we see that this is not good enough, we're going to change the location to further down the sea. We're very committed to not put at risk any athlete during the competition."

The Associated Press has reported that Guanabara Bay has shown astronomically high level of viruses for which the state is not testing.

Swimming

Franklin, Lochte struggle at US trials

Associated Press

OMAHA, Neb. — One by one, some of America's biggest swimming stars are going down at the Olympic trials.

First, Ryan Lochte. Then, Missy Franklin. Lochte, an 11-time Olympic medalist but slowed by a groin injury, missed out on his second chance to make the team in an individual event with a fourth-place finish in the 200-meter freestyle. There was some consolation: Lochte at least clinched a spot in the 4x200 relay, so he'll be in Rio.

Franklin can't say that yet. The bubbly star of the 2012 London Games struggled to a seventh-place finish in the 100 backstroke, denying her a chance to defend the gold medal she won four years ago.

Racing just 23 minutes after qualifying for the final of the 200 free, the 21-year-old Franklin couldn't pull off the grueling double. She finished nearly a body length behind winner Olivia Smoliga and runner-up Kathleen Baker, who will represent the U.S. in what was once Franklin's signature event.

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