

# HSBC Championships

Tuesday, 9 June 2026

London, England, UK

Queens Club

## Victoria Mboko

## Serena Williams

### Press Conference

MBOKO-WILLIAMS/MelicharMartinez-Routliffe

7-6, 6-2

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

**Q. Venus, in the past, has often talked about how there is nowhere to hide on the tennis court, and when you are against an opponent in front of a crowd, it can be quite vulnerable. When you started thinking about coming back here, was any part of you kind of nervous, tense, or doubtful about what this would look like?**

SERENA WILLIAMS: Yeah, I mean, I think I was nervous, but I didn't really think about it. I didn't really think about being nervous.

I just thought about having fun, which I did today. I just thought about -- that's it. So I didn't really have time. I got nervous right before the match, like, maybe 30 minutes before, and then I just let it go. Yeah.

**Q. Serena, I'm curious to know, what was your training like? You were moving so well on the court today, and obviously you're coming back with a different journey. Was it the same in terms of training, dieting? What was it?**

SERENA WILLIAMS: Yeah, well, I reassembled our team, which you can check out on my Instagram. The trainer, Derek, he's very intense, a former athlete himself.

We always work out together. We got back together, and yeah, we just had fun and fought and fought and had fun and fought. So I think we just -- you know, speed comes by practice, and yeah.

VICTORIA MBOKO: I mean, I thought she was moving great. I mean, there was moments in the match where I think there was that one shot you hit, remember, you were on the run, on the back, and I was like, Oh, my gosh, she's got it.

On my perspective, I feel like it's all great. It was a lot of



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fun, and yeah, it was amazing.

**Q. I noticed Rennae Stubbs, who I think you worked with at the US Open four years ago. Curious why you brought her back on the team and what her official role is and what she brings to your project.**

SERENA WILLIAMS: I didn't hear anything you said.

Oh, Rennae Stubbs? Okay. Yes, she's on the team. She's the assistant coach, as you can see on our cards. She's great. I loved working with her in New York, and we always stayed in contact. I said if I ever do this again, we'll see what happens.

She always was there to motivate me in case I did want to try it again. She's very light, lighthearted, which is nice.

**Q. I wondered if you'd give us a report card on how you felt your game was? What was working really well? Anything you think you needed to tune up for next time?**

SERENA WILLIAMS: My God, I think I would give myself -- what do you think? A C-minus?

VICTORIA MBOKO: I mean, it's funny, because there were moments in the match where we were, oh, this isn't going great or kind of very self-critical, but I understand. It feels like it was far from our level a little bit, but, you know, I think it's great knowing that you have so much room for improvement. You know and have the motivation to get better.

Yeah, there was moments where it was tough, but, you know, like, I think that's a part of the sport and with the adrenaline and everything. I mean, overall, I'd say it was pretty good.

SERENA WILLIAMS: With all the elements, considering coming back on grass is probably not the easiest surface.

VICTORIA MBOKO: Yeah, coming back on grass, too. We talked about if it was hard, it might have been a different story.

SERENA WILLIAMS: Yeah, maybe a little different.



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Grass, four years.

VICTORIA MBOKO: Yeah. Don't be too hard on yourself.

SERENA WILLIAMS: Overall, I think it was decent.

**Q. Serena, a lot of the younger players have talked about how wonderful it is to have you around again and how much they have to learn from you. I was wondering whether it felt like that from your point of view and whether you have particular things you'd like to pass along. And has the game changed a lot? And to Victoria, you said a little bit earlier, but what does it feel like to be next to a legend like that?**

SERENA WILLIAMS: Yeah, I think it's so many new faces. You know, a lot of the young players I actually watch. I love watching their games, and I think everyone has just gotten so good and so talented. And they're so young.

It really feels good to be a part of a sport that you can see so much growth in.

VICTORIA MBOKO: I mean, of course even knowing I could play with Serena with me, that was very -- I'm so grateful, first of all. I don't play that much doubles, but I think sharing the court, I think I can learn a lot, even though we're still competing. I just, if anything, I just had so much fun today. I feel like we complemented each other on the court very well.

I just really liked our attitude on court. We had the same mentality. That's what I always look for in a partner. I just was enjoying myself.

**Q. What did your kids say after the match? What was their impression of your return?**

SERENA WILLIAMS: Adira wanted to go to the toy store, and Olympia wanted to know what was for dinner (smiling).

**Q. Congratulations to you both. Serena, welcome back. After that performance, are you any closer to deciding whether or not to play doubles at Wimbledon as well?**

SERENA WILLIAMS: Yeah, like I said the other day, it's just a day at a time. I still have a little time to decide, and they have been great about giving me that space and time to decide.

**Q. Serena, congratulations. Now that your first game is in the books, now that you hear the crowd hailing you as the queen of tennis, do you think it's ever going to be normal with you without all this fanfare about you coming back, it's just going to be**

**you playing tennis?**

SERENA WILLIAMS: I mean, for me it will be. It's not my responsibility to know what it is for everyone else, and I think that's the beauty of being an athlete and understanding the importance of honing in and, you know, concentrating.

I feel like once you have been there and you understand that, it doesn't matter what's going on in the outside world, as long as you know what you're there for, and that really helps and makes a huge difference.

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