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MADRID, Spain - Simona Halep's physical comeback had only just begun when she appeared to hit an emotional dead end at the Miami Open.

Unable to close out Johanna Konta in the quarterfinals, [Halep argued with coach Darren Cahill before falling in three sets to the eventual champion](#)

Just under seven weeks later, the Romanian turned it all around at the Mutua Madrid Open, the tournament where her surge towards the top of the game began back in 2013, when tournament owner Ion Tiriac gave her a wildcard.

Halep revealed that Miami was almost the end of her and Cahill, making the mental and physical triumph over Kristina Mladenovic, 7-5, 6-7(5), 6-2, in Saturday's final all the sweeter.

"After Miami, he stopped working with me because he was upset about that match," she told **WTA Insider**

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"Today, I showed it's a new Simo, that I don't give up anymore, even if I lose a close second set."

WTA Insider: Simona, you look very happy, very relieved, and maybe a little bit tired after a very tough final against Kristina Mladenovic.

Halep: Yeah, it was a great feeling on court, but now I'm really tired. I had a lot of emotions before the match and was feeling blocked in my stomach. I was nervous because I really wanted to win this. As I've said many times, it's a special event for me, and I just wanted to give everything I had, give my best to win this match and play well. I'm happy that we played a great match; both of us showed a great level of tennis, and I'm really proud to be the winner in the end.

WTA Insider: How pleased are you, knowing you started the year with injuries, to make it through a tournament playing multiple three-set matches, and then your fitness helping you win the final?

Halep: I had a knee injury and was really scared about it at the beginning of the year because I'd never had that. It was something I knew and I didn't know how to manage it. I panicked a little bit. I still feel it a little, but it's not a big pain, so I can go through it without thinking too much about it in matches.

My legs and muscles are stronger; I'm working every day, exercising. I think I did pretty good in the gym over the last seven weeks. I have my trainer back - we split for one year, but now he's back - and he did a good job with me. I thank him because he's by my side again. I have a strong team, so maybe that's why I'm back, feeling relaxed to have good people around me.

WTA Insider: This final was two hours and 44 minutes. Kiki thinks you should enroll in the Madrid marathon because she thought the key was your ability to run. How key was physicality this week?

Halep: I feel I was physically and mentally stronger today. I hit the ball pretty well, even when I was on the run from difficult positions. I was able to hit strong and put her in difficult positions on the court. That's why I think I won in the end; she played out of her mind today, and she's been playing great this year. I'm sure she's going to be in the Top 10 soon.

WTA Insider: Going back to that match in Miami, you lost that tough match to Konta where you felt like you should have closed it out. It was a similar situation here, losing a second set tiebreak and heading into a third set. How different is the Simona sitting across from me today from the one in Miami?

Halep: Now I can finally speak about this; I told you a few weeks ago that I would tell you later. Today, I thanked Darren in my speech for coming back. After Miami, he stopped working with me because he was upset about that match. It wasn't because I lost, but because of my attitude and him feeling like I gave up. That's why I started to work hard on my mentality, and my

psychology.

Today, I showed it's a new Simo, that I don't give up anymore, even if I lose a close second set. It makes me proud that I was able to change this in such a short time. Now, I just want to work to keep it and make it stronger. I don't want to lose this, because my personality can be a bit crazy on court. Now I just have to stay calm because now I can see that when I'm calm, I can see the game and what my opponent is doing. That way, I can play better tennis.

WTA Insider: But how do you actually do it? So many players talk about wanting to be more positive, or change their attitude on court. You've done it very quickly, and it's still a work in progress; you'd be the first to admit it's still not perfect. But how do you flip a switch from Miami to even Stuttgart?

Halep: I admire and respect Darren a lot. I think I have to thank him for making that decision after Miami, because it was a shock for me. I said that I have no other way but to change it.

Honestly, I was strong; I don't want to talk big, but I'm strong to change it so fast. Now I want to show myself that I can keep it, and be consistent with this because it's much better for me.

WTA Insider: We know during tournaments and after wins you like to reward yourself - you joked in press about a chocolate mousse that's waiting for you. Has the mousse been your lucky dessert in Madrid?

Halep: Every day, I had one before the match. Maybe that's why I was so strong physically! Yesterday and today, I felt like I needed more chocolate, maybe because I was playing doubles, as well. It wasn't easy after a few months off, because I didn't play matches and didn't train as much as I wanted. I feel the matches a little bit, but I'm still strong. I need massages now, a little more chocolate, and everything will be fine!

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