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Sharapova Grinds Into Last Four in Paris

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Sharapova celebrating on Tuesday.

Been there, done that. Maria Sharapova had just too much experience for the talented, yet still green, Garbine Muguruza at the French Open on Tuesday.

The Russian ice queen was 6-1, 5-4 down against the up-and-coming Spaniard in their quarter-final on center court but used all her experience to come through 1-6, 7-5, 6-1.

The 2012 champion is not one to panic in Paris.

In 2011, she fell 6-3, 4-1 behind against French hope Caroline Garcia before prevailing in three sets, inflicting a bagel on her opponent in the decider.

Tuesday was no different as Sharapova, who lost in the final last year, gradually regained the upper hand against Muguruza, who had knocked out defending champion Serena Williams in the second round.

“You are trying to set smaller goals for yourself, especially in tougher situations where you feel like not much is working for you, your opponent is playing confident tennis, doing so

many things well, not making mistakes," Sharapova explained.

"When you just do not feel like anything is going your way, you want to try to find a little door to get into."

The four-times grand slam champion broke early in the second set to unsettle the world No. 35.

"I have been there so many times. I know the feeling that once you get a little bit of that it's always that little part that's the toughest," said the Russian seventh seed.

"Once you start feeling that you got your foot in the door, then it is a little bit easier for yourself."

Muguruza conceded she lacks the mental strength to deal with tight situations.

"During the first set mentally I was so strong. I thought, I am going to win. Then I was a bit nervous. I saw that the opponent was nervous, as well. I thought that she was very nervous," the Venezuela-born Muguruza said.

"And then, little by little, when you start losing, it's a question of nerves. Then she started playing a lot better. We were almost on an equal footing, and then it's all these details."

Muguruza had her chances to come back in the contest in the fourth game of the decider but Sharapova held for 3-1 after saving five break points, and flung the door open, winning the remaining games.

"During the third set she was playing so much better. I was so close to this win during the second set, and therefore I started the third set saying, Okay, I must be well-focused to win this match," said Muguruza.

"But then it did not happen."

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