

Rothesay International

Tuesday, 25 June 2024

Eastbourne, England, UK

Devonshire Park

Katie Boulter

Press Conference

K. BOULTER/P. Martic

6-1, 7-6

THE MODERATOR: Katie, great performance. How pleased were you to have got that done in two sets today?

KATIE BOULTER: Yes, very happy to get through today. Obviously this time last year I played her on that exact court, so it was a really good mental battle for me to get through that today. I know what she can do, and I know how well she can play and she showed it at the end.

I managed to battle through, and yeah, I'm very happy with that.

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

Q. Congrats. Just how tense was that tiebreak, and how did you manage to get through that when it could have obviously gone to a third set?

KATIE BOULTER: It was tense. I was tense (smiling).

No, it was a battle. I think I did have in my mind that I played a really close battle against Emma in Nottingham, and I didn't quite get over the line in that one. I just didn't want to make the same mistake again, which I did in that one.

So I think for me it was a good learning curve. To kind of push myself over the line takes a lot of guts, and I'm happy with that today. I feel like that's a step in the right direction.

Q. How did you actually turn it around? Was it a mental thing to turn it around? Was there a tactic?

KATIE BOULTER: Yeah, no, it was completely mental. I feel like as the set went on, I think I got a little bit more tight and a little bit more nervous. I think my hand became a bit stronger on the racquet, which for me as a tennis player is not the best thing.

As I'm 4-Love down, I'm thinking, okay, this tiebreak is pretty much done here, and I can almost relax a little bit.

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I felt like I took a deep breath and managed to hit a couple good shots which got me back into it.

I felt like at that point I wasn't going to let it go. I was there. I was playing well. I just wanted to keep fighting. Those moments are all about heart and trying to get yourself through. Yeah, I just managed to squeak it today.

Q. What are your thoughts on Eastbourne being downgraded next year? How have you found being in Eastbourne so far?

KATIE BOULTER: Yeah, I mean, obviously there is a complete change of schedule going into next year. I absolutely love playing Eastbourne. I do very much enjoy coming back here every single year.

There is still going to be some very, very good tennis players coming down here and playing, and hopefully I'll be one of them. You know, it's such a great event, and I'm so glad they have kept an event here. I think that's awesome. It's such a good crowd out here.

I'm also very much looking forward to having Queen's, as well. I think that's such a big step for women's tennis. Yeah, I'm just looking forward to something exciting and new and different, I guess.

Q. When things aren't going your way, you still manage to keep a cool head. How important is that for you not to get the opponent to feed off any frustration?

KATIE BOULTER: Yeah, I would say it's probably one of my strengths. You know, I always say to my coach, you know, we have this discussion about some of the other players and sometimes their attitudes let them lose the match.

I think I kind of swore to myself that I'm going to step out on court, I'm not going to lose it because of my attitude and my drive and my fight and my will to win. I think that's when I feel I would probably be a little bit guilty. I think I just try to stay in it as much as possible and take a deep breath on some of the big moments when I haven't quite made things go to plan.

I do think it's one of the reasons why I'm where I'm at right now. I do think it helps me on a daily basis and gets

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me through a lot of matches. I'm very proud of that.

Q. In terms of the schedule for grass, as a player who who loves playing on grass and one of the match leaders on grass over the last couple of years, you love playing at home as well, is it sometimes tough to manage the schedule when you want to play every week but sometimes from a performance perspective or health perspective, a short window makes it quite tricky?

KATIE BOULTER: Yeah, that's such a great question. It's funny, because one of the girls messaged me after Birmingham saying are you still going to play Eastbourne? What's your plan? You're not going to go straight to Wimbledon?

My response was I don't want to miss a week on grass. I want to play every single week that I can possibly play.

You know, I just enjoy it. I think there is obviously an element of being smart with your schedule, and I have chosen times to not play certain events for that reason, but for me, you know, I just keep want to keep building on the grass. Every week is an opportunity.

You never know what's going to happen, and every single tournament, every single draw is going to be different. You've just got to try and pick something with your team and commit to it.

But for me, you know, I do like playing quite a few weeks in a row if I can, but I do also know that I have to take a few days after Wimbledon to then recuperate and get myself back again and fresh mentally and physically ready for the next block.

Q. Off of that question, I'm curious what your thoughts are in terms of when Americans and Brits and Australians approach the grass, they get very excited about it. There is good vibes. It seems to translate into the results on the court. Europeans, players who are maybe unfamiliar with grass, that mentality is a little more negative sometimes with the surface. Can it be that much of a cause and effect in terms of the energy and how you see a surface, or is there a way that your guys' games are built stereotypically across the board that allows for the game to be played better by certain...

KATIE BOULTER: No, I think half of it is embracing it. I think if you embrace the surface, as you know, my relationship with clay is probably not the closest it could possibly be. I'm a little closer with the grass courts, and I do love those a little bit more (smiling).

But, yeah, I think you just have to embrace it, and you have to trust that what you're doing and the way that you're improving as a tennis player is going to translate

onto the tennis court.

I think, you know, the biggest thing for me is that you're improving week to week. I started the clay court season probably not playing some of the best tennis, but as I went on, I think I played a very, very good match in Roland Garros. You know, I didn't come off the winning end of it, but I saw the positives.

I do think that is half of it. I think we just naturally embrace it a little bit more. You know, we haven't practiced on it that much more than most people, but just automatically, if you're British, you have to love it. That's just the way that it is.

You know, I'm lucky that my game does translate very well on it as well. There are some players' which don't. But for myself, yeah, I just try and do my best on every surface, and grass is just the pinnacle (smiling).

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