

Internazionali BNL d'Italia

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Roma, Italia

Elise Mertens

Press Conference

E. MERTENS/D. Kovinic

6-4, 6-4

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. You are going to play Pliskova. About one month and a half ago, Palermo offered Pliskova a wildcard. But she decided she is not a great clay-court player, even if she had won Rome last year, and she decide to go to Lexington and then play Cincinnati and US Open where she lost all the time in the first round and very badly, more or less. What do you expect? Do you think Palermo helped you to do well now even if there has been one month in the middle and you didn't play too many matches in Palermo? How do you feel now having to play Pliskova who doesn't think to be that great on clay?

ELISE MERTENS: Well, I think Palermo definitely helped me to see where my level was at at that time. It was the first match. First match is always adapting on any surface. But I think it really helped me to see where I was at that time.

Unfortunately I didn't go into the second round, but I did well in Prague, so I think that week helped me to go into another clay court event in the week after to feel, you know, more confident, to play more matches.

Of course here in Rome, in the quarterfinals now, so that's a really good start, a really good feeling to also go to the French Open that you won some matches, some clay matches already.

Q. Are you optimistic in the end about tomorrow, or you would say I cannot be optimistic since she is the No. 1 seed and the defending champ? Be honest.

ELISE MERTENS: I think I can be optimistic. I will mostly focus on myself, because it's important to look match by match. Every opponent is different.

She's a great competitor, a great player, but I also feel good on clay. I have won three matches, so that gives you



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a little bit of confidence. So, yeah, I'm going to give it all tomorrow.

Q. Since tennis is a little bit like chess, you play your game, but you also have to figure out what are the weakness of your opponent, no? So where do you think she has any eventual weakness? And don't tell me you're not going to say it because she knows it.

ELISE MERTENS: I think, well, definitely her serve will be very strong. If her first serve is in, it will be very strong. But I think, you know, I have to be able to put it in the court, neutral position, to get the rally going. I think she's very good at her first strikes.

Yeah, I think for me to be able to continue the rally and then take the advantage would be a good strategy.

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