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Roma, Italia

Barbora Strycova

Su-Wei Hsieh

Press Conference

HSIEH-STRYCOVA/Friedsam-Olaru

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THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. Congratulations.

BARBORA STRYCOVA: Thank you so much.

Q. What has it been like for you getting back into a big tournament again for the first time in a long time, winning? How has this whole week been for you?

BARBORA STRYCOVA: Obviously when you go for a tournament after five months, you don't know what to expect, because I said during the speech, doubles, you have small court and it's tough to get into the rhythm.

But I felt like we started off right away from the first match. I felt we were playing better and better, but some stuff we have to work on and we have to get better obviously.

But to win such a tournament after such a long time, it's great before French Open, and for our confidence, it's really good.

Q. Do you feel like you're able to sort of continue where you left off? Because your stats for this year together, it's not a full year obviously, but they are pretty incredible. I think you're 21-1, your match record, which is pretty close to perfect.

BARBORA STRYCOVA: Yes (smiling). I didn't want to see it yesterday, someone tweeted it, but I don't like to see the stats before the match, before the final, so I knew that we were winning, but it is incredible, I have to say.

But for me more incredible is that we are so consistent in our performances, which is really important for me.

The winning is a huge plus, but we are working on it and we work every single day with Su-Wei on court how to get



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better, and it's paying off.

Q. I just want to know what the impact was of all the Czech girls playing together during the lockdown. It seems to have paid off here with Karolina and Marketa playing as well today.

BARBORA STRYCOVA: Yeah, it was a great format, because we had some matches before going for tournament, and we played actually a lot of matches, singles, doubles.

We were changing just the surfaces because of the US Open. We didn't know if it's gonna happen. Then it happened. So we went back on hard court. Then before we were playing on clay.

I thought the Czech people, the organization did it very well, because to have such matches, even though it's exhibition, it help us to be in the rhythm of a match, you know. Not be playing for a long time like this, five months, you lose it very quickly. The matches help us to get into the rhythm earlier.

Q. Can you just talk a little bit about today's match and just the week with Hsieh Su-Wei. What was clicking so well today? You guys seemed to be in full control from the beginning, and you didn't drop a set all week.

BARBORA STRYCOVA: Yes. Today the key was to play our game. It's always a key to play our game. And then if it's not working, we have to come out with a plan B.

Today it was working right from the beginning. I thought like I was returning very well, and Su-Wei was reacting at the net, as always, very well.

And the semifinal -- no, the quarters against Katerina and Kudermetova, it was a tough match. We were not really on our best performance, so we had to fight through it. Sometimes when you have these matches and you have to fight and you don't play your best, it also helps you for your confidence and to know what to do better. So this match I thought help us to think a little bit about our mistakes and how we can get better, what we can do better together.

So there was everything during this whole week. Yeah, it

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was a positive week before the French Open.

I have to say it's not also easy being in a bubble. It's my first week being in the bubble. It takes a lot of mental strength to be able to kind of like take it how it is, you know. It's tough not to go out, it's tough not to do what you like or go for dinner or go just for a walk. It's not easy, but I'm happy that we can be playing (smiling).

Q. Before Su-Wei makes her entrance, what's it been like reuniting with her? After five months, did you have fun stories to share about your times, what you were doing? What's it been like getting to spend time with her again?

BARBORA STRYCOVA: It's so much stuff we are doing during the day or we talk about so much crazy things. Su-Wei gave me a present where, like, from her friend. She did it like me with my Wilson racquet and her lifting Wimbledon trophy. She brought it right from Taipei. It's beautiful. I wanted to post it, but I didn't want to do it during the...

Q. It's a picture she got you?

BARBORA STRYCOVA: No, it's not a picture. It's kind of like from modeling, like...

Q. Like a sculpture?

BARBORA STRYCOVA: Yeah. It's so awesome, and we are playing on a grass court. And everything is made by hand, so it is really nice. I will post it. It's awesome.

Be able to Su-Wei again and be with her, it's just, I felt like I saw her like a week ago. It was not feeling like we didn't see each other for five months.

But we were obviously in contact. We were calling. But it's great to have her, and it's great to also be with her because she's so nice, so different (smiling).

THE MODERATOR: We will say good-bye to Barbora and bring in Su-Wei.

Q. Welcome back to the tour. How would you summarize just being back this week in Rome? How excited are you to be on a team that seems like it cannot lose?

SU-WEI HSIEH: Cannot lose (smiling)? Yeah, after six months is quite difficult to get back, because I have really good time at home. At moment, Taiwan is one of most safest place in the world.

I did (indiscernible) in Taiwan and a lot of different class, a lot of stuff. I do a lot of sports without tennis.

So I come back to Paris one month before this tournament. I had a great preparation with my coach, my fitness coach, and it's amazing to see Barbora here. We played together since last year, and we do really good job for a lot of tournaments.

I'm quite excited. I hope next year I can have a gelato (smiling).

Q. What kind of gelato do you want?

SU-WEI HSIEH: Giolitti. You been already? This is the one of famous shop. After you buy the ice cream, you can go to the, you know, the waterfront and one of the famous place you can go visit just next door.

Q. What is it like seeing Barbora after five months away from each other? How is it to see Barbora again?

SU-WEI HSIEH: I feel stable, safe (smiling). When Barbora is on court, I'm safe.

Q. How different does it feel being at a tournament at this time? Does it feel on court like it does before? Does everything sort of feel different right now for you at these tournaments?

SU-WEI HSIEH: Yeah, it's quite different, because the clay court here is always different than other tournaments. I took a little bit time to get into the tournament.

Actually, I feel Barbora was doing really good job than me in the whole tournament, so I'm very happy, and thank you, Barbora, to carry me (smiling).

Q. When you walked out onto the court I think yesterday you were waving to the crowd that was not there. I'm wondering, what was the decision behind that?

SU-WEI HSIEH: Our team coach was waving, so I was, like, Okay, is nobody, but I'm still gonna wave.

Q. Another question about the partnership with Barbora. We keep saying you guys only lost one match this entire year. So how difficult or did you think it was going to be more difficult when you had the seven months away to then come to Rome and play together in doubles? It seemed like no time had passed. It seemed like your tennis was still there as a team.

SU-WEI HSIEH: I don't know. You know, I'm a little bit tricky player, so if I'm on, I'm on. If I'm off, can be pretty bad (smiling).

So I come in and I know I have doubles. At least I have a good plan there, so I'm not worried too much. And then she always support me a lot and we say anything can happen on the court, so we enjoy, we have fun. If we don't win, we go to ice cream.

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