

# BNP Paribas Open

Friday, March 11, 2022

## Alison Riske

Press Conference



A. RISKE/G. Muguruza

0-6, 6-3, 6-1

THE MODERATOR: Obviously incredible comeback win. Can you talk us through when you were down 0-6, how you powered through that.

ALISON RISKE: Yeah, oh, gosh, honestly so many things were going through my mind. I was absolutely mortified with my performance. I was, People actually paid to come and watch this (laughter).

It was 20 minutes in, I'm nine games down deep. I'm like, I'm ready to leave this court (laughter).

In all fairness, I have beaten her the last couple times. I did feel, despite how poorly I was playing, if I could just scrap through a couple game, get myself on the board, I was actually going to have a chance.

That's actually how it unfolded. She double-faulted for me to break her serve to go 3-2. I really had a good feeling about that afterwards.

I do pride myself on always fighting regardless of what the situation is. I think today was just a prime example of that.

Honestly, I'm really proud for that alone, just to be able to pull through. So, yeah, kind of just tried to get myself going, tried to bring some energy, just get myself on the board.

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

**Q. Have you ever been in such a situation before, at any level of tennis?**

ALISON RISKE: That's a great question.

I honestly don't think I have. Not only with the scoreline, but I think about the scoreline along with actually how I was playing. It was just a terrible combination. You're in a big stadium playing a Grand Slam champion, and you literally can't put the ball in the court.

Honestly, I don't think I have. I don't think I've ever been down that much. I've been down match points, but obviously you're a little closer at that point. You've been performing well up until that point.

I would have to say no (laughter).

**Q. How proud does it make you feel that you were able to turn that around the way you did?**

ALISON RISKE: Yeah, yeah, honestly, that was actually one of the things my coach and husband was saying afterwards. This was a much more rewarding win in the fashion that I did it over had it been an easy two-setter. I could have easily checked out and been out of there in 30 minutes really.

So I am very proud of that fact. Like I said, I do pride myself on that. I kind of always have throughout my career. It's never over till it's over (smiling).

**Q. First top-10 win since Wuhan 2019.**

ALISON RISKE: Oh, Wuhan (laughter).

**Q. You're also into the third round here I think for the first time.**

ALISON RISKE: Yeah.

**Q. Two kind of milestones there. What makes you the most proud between those two, being able to get the win, being able to break the wall you had here at Indian Wells?**

ALISON RISKE: Honestly, I'm 31 years old. I've been playing out here for a long time. I played this tournament so many times. Hopefully we're not ending here, but my best result thus far is coming when I'm 31 years old. I'm very proud about that.

I think I've evolved as a player quite a lot. I'm extremely proud about that fact. I don't think the best days are behind me either, which I think is really exciting.



I'm just very proud.

**Q. Kind of as a general catch-up, how do you feel as the season begins, as we're slowly starting to come out of COVID protocols on tour, super strictness, which obviously impacted everybody. Things are slowly becoming a little bit more normalized. Do you feel that at all? Do you feel that has any impact on the vibe kind of going about this business of coming out here and winning tennis matches?**

ALISON RISKE: I wouldn't say there's a correlation there for me in particular. Obviously it adds to the experience to have the fans cheering, a little bit more normalcy, I would say, surrounding the tournaments like we were used to prior to COVID.

But honestly I was getting used to things being the way that they started to become, as well. I think we all adjusted, made it as good as we could.

Obviously we would much prefer having it this way. Even just to sign autographs, it's something that you take for granted. Now, you know, we're able to go over to the fans, you know, be around them, which I think that's what the sport's about. We're here because of the fans. I think to be able to have that interaction again is essential.

**Q. Then looking ahead to what your thoughts were surrounding the season, goals, what would be a successful season for Ali Riske? I don't know if it's the philosophy of how you look at the season, benchmarks you're shooting for.**

ALISON RISKE: Well, I think today was kind of a prime example of my main goals of the year. I've kind of taken away, I haven't set necessarily numeric goals like maybe I did when I was younger. I think now, more than anything, it's what's my mentality? How many weeks can I have the right mentality? How many good weeks can I string together because of that?

I think that's first and foremost what my goal is and will continue to be until I decide to retire. Yeah, actually I played very poorly in the Middle East. I had two very bad weeks. I think something a younger Ali would have done after that is taken it into this week, as well. It would have spiraled.

I think even though I'm 31 and it may have come late, I'm still grateful that I've gotten to the point where I can bounce back and produce a good level regardless of a previous week result.

**Q. You mentioned being 31 a few times there. Is career mortality something that's on your mind more?**

ALISON RISKE: Yeah, it definitely is. I actually think I think about it a lot because I feel like I've finally come to grasp in the last few years what I've been striving for for so many years.

Yeah, it definitely is. I definitely have so much respect for players, like a Kaia Kanepi, even Vera Zvonareva, older players that continue to have success. I look to them more than ever before.

**Q. From the point of playing Gabby, do you feel, as good a player as she is, the achievements she's had, if she gets into a bit of a crunch situation, there's a couple of loose points from her, she gets nervous and you can pounce and things turn around?**

ALISON RISKE: I think that's a tough question. I personally have confidence when I play her just because I have beaten her before. That is a tough question.

I don't want to go too much into it and give away my secrets regarding Garbine Muguruza (laughter). You're leaving me speechless.

I'll just say I do feel comfortable when I play her. I know if I can back myself, back my mentality, be there on every point, I think a good result will be waiting for me.

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