

BNP Paribas Open

Wednesday, March 12, 2025

Belinda Bencic

Press Conference



B. BENCIC/C. Gauff

3-6, 6-3, 6-4

THE MODERATOR: Congratulations. Into the quarterfinals. How does it feel?

BELINDA BENCIC: Yeah, obviously very happy about it. I thought it was a really close match. Of course, very happy to be in the quarterfinal and also to be able to improve since my last match against her in Australia.

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

Q. Well done. In Australia I think you told me you weren't ready to beat Coco in three sets. You clearly were ready today. What has sort of happened to you, do you think, in the last, doing the math, about six weeks or something like that, that has gotten you ready and has made a big difference from then till now?

BELINDA BENCIC: Well, physically. Obviously tennis-wise, I still thought it was a great match in Australia. I just felt like she outplayed me in a way. You know, it was a very hot day, and I felt like in the end I was out of steam in Australia. Obviously she was playing very good.

I mean, what changed is that I just kept on working also on the physical side. I felt like in the last matches in tournaments, I kind of was able to play back to back, some three-set matches, and am fresher every time, you know, after the match, like, I'm not as tired or just the body is holding up much better, almost like it was before. So I'm really happy about that.

I guess that's what we were working on.

Q. You keep improving since you came back from your maternity leave. But we also get the impression that maybe you play more freely. Do you maybe give yourself less pressure mentally because you're happy with your family?

BELINDA BENCIC: Yeah, I think it's just obviously

changed after coming back a little bit. I obviously always, you know, put a lot of pressure on myself and just try to do it perfectly.

I think it's just because of the priorities, what tennis means to me changed. Obviously it means a lot, but it's just not my whole world anymore.

So I don't think about it when I'm on the match. I think that's just something that happened naturally and I wasn't expecting this to happen, but that's just how I feel.

Q. Is Bencic 2 better than Bencic 1?

BELINDA BENCIC: I don't think there is a Bencic 2.

Q. It's all Bencic 1?

BELINDA BENCIC: Yeah.

Q. Okay.

BELINDA BENCIC: So I don't think I'm better or not. It's just part of my life. I don't think that now everything's changed just because I have a baby. First of all, I didn't have a baby to improve my career. I had a baby because we felt like that's our purpose of life. That's what we want. That came in the right time of our lives.

It had nothing to do with my decision of tennis or not or if I'm going to be better than before or not. I don't think there is a Bencic 1, Bencic 2, Bencic 3. If you count how many times I came back, there should be a Bencic 7 (smiling).

I just feel the same, and I don't want to compare all the time if I'm better or not.

Q. I was really meaning not so much about having a baby but the fact that there was the break and the work that you have put in since the break, that your game could be at a different level or the same? That's what I was meaning more.

BELINDA BENCIC: Yeah, I mean, definitely. I didn't mean this at all in a bad way, because I just keep getting, like,



more questions like this. So I just want to clarify that, because sometimes I feel like people thought that, you know, I would take a break just it would improve my tennis. But no.

Obviously, like, the work I have put in, yes, for sure, like we were able to do a clean start. But obviously it's not easy after maternity leave, you know, to do all the work again. You know, you feel almost like physically you're doing stuff from zero, and yeah, it's just your body changing so much in a short period of time.

So I think it was really difficult, but I definitely feel like physically, I am there like before.

Q. It felt like you really turned that match in a crazy way with Coco serving 40-Love at 4-All. Can you talk about that? Also in the final game, I could be wrong, but I felt like you directed all the traffic to her forehand, whereas in most of the other games it was a lot of mix, putting the ball in different places. Was it your thoughts maybe just to lean on that side and see if it would crack in the final game?

BELINDA BENCIC: Yeah, that's true. Of course the game at 40-Love was very, like, turning point. I mean, I kind of won the first point, I thought it was a good point. The second point, I went for it on the return.

Then I felt like, okay, this is, it's possible to win this game. So I really, I mean, tried to be focused there and kind of hang in there. Obviously it was great, you know, to be able then to serve at the match for 5-4.

Yeah, I felt like she was more tense, so I felt like that was the right time to go for her forehand. Obviously, like, it's difficult to all the time go at one side, because I feel like if someone is not so confident on one side, the worse you can do is give them rhythm.

But, yeah, it was an instinctive choice, and definitely feel like also a tactical thing, and I hope that the score pressure would also kind of work into her mindset a little bit of not being so confident and being a little bit tight.

Q. What's been the hardest thing about making this comeback? You said you have come back six or seven times from various injuries, things like that. What's the hardest thing about this one and what has maybe been easier than you expected?

BELINDA BENCIC: Well, the hardest thing by far, the physical thing, I mean, obviously the first times you try to practice, you're like, oh, my God. Yeah, just crazy, of course, after having a very sporty body and then just a

huge belly and trying to come back and, like, all your muscle mass is gone and everything. So you really just start from zero. The first months were just hard. Obviously not easy.

Yeah, it was just painful, you know, when you're trying to work your cardio and everything up. So practices are not fun. But you feel improvement every day, which keeps you going and which keeps you motivated.

Then what's been easier is, for sure, probably like enjoying it more, separating kind of work with private life and just leaving bad days at the office kind of in the office (smiling).

Q. As you said, you keep improving physically obviously every day. How do you assess your game now in order to do what you like to achieve?

BELINDA BENCIC: I think I'm close to being my best. I think now I'm not even thinking about anymore that in Australia I said that I'm still testing it out and seeing how my body is reacting to this and that.

I definitely feel like now I'm kind of back where I was before, so obviously the work doesn't stop here. I'm still trying to improve various things in my game and also in my movement and everything.

I think there is not one player that says, oh, you know, I'm good, I'm not going to try to improve, so yeah.

Q. I was on the practice courts watching Samsonova, and when your name was announced in Stadium 1, she turned to her team and said, Bencic? Is there an advantage to players on the tour not knowing what to expect from you when they get on the court right now?

BELINDA BENCIC: You would have to ask them. I think maybe when I was in Australia, maybe people didn't know what to expect or where my level is going to be. I feel like now they probably see me play and maybe, yeah, I already played a few tournaments, so I'm sure they know by now that I'm just here playing (smiling).

But, yeah, maybe in Australia it was a little advantage that maybe they thought my movement or something would still let me down a little bit. But now I don't feel the way anymore that people don't know what to expect.

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