

Billie Jean King Cup

Friday, 15 April 2022

Team USA

Alison Riske

Press Conference

A. RISKE/D. Yastremska

7-6, 7-5

USA - 1

Ukraine - 0

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

Q. Fed Cup, King Cup has been around a long time. 18-16. How was that to navigate for you? How was the experience of that breaker?

ALISON RISKE: Honestly, I don't even know what happened. It was so bizarre and amazing at the same time (laughter).

I felt like every time I got a set point, she would come up with something, a great serve or a great return, that would put me on offense. I had a couple second serves throughout that time that I was a little nervous on and didn't quite execute, so those were unfortunate.

I was just really proud that I was able to keep my head in there and overcome that. There's a lot of emotions going on. I want to win for my team. I want to win for my country. I'm honestly just very proud that I was able to do that today.

Q. The experience of playing her, because she has so much talent and power, you're not sure what you're going to get. What is the mental struggle with a player like that?

ALISON RISKE: Yeah, she's a very tough opponent. She's capable of a lot. She has a big ball, but yet she can also take pace off and play a little finesse at times, too. She had a couple drop volleys, a couple things that you wouldn't necessarily think that would be in her repertoire, but they are.

She has a tricky serve, as well. She can do different things with it. She also fought the entire time, which I think is just

BILLIE JEAN KING CUP

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synonymous with a competitor that she has been. I believe top 20. She's just a really good player, so...

It was a battle, for sure.

Q. Back to the tiebreak. How much does a team environment help you in a situation like that?

ALISON RISKE: Yeah, honestly I didn't want to look to them too often because if I had the set point, I didn't execute, I felt like I was letting everybody down (laughter). It might not have actually worked to my advantage in that situation.

Yeah, I think anytime you're part of the team atmosphere, though, especially this team in particular... Like I said on court, I've known all these girls except Des since I was 12 years old, if not a little younger. It's really special to share this experience with them, have their support and belief behind me.

Q. The second set got a little complicated. What was going through your head as she was making that run?

ALISON RISKE: Yeah, well, I think I played a pretty clean second set to get me to 5-1. I felt my energy drop there a little bit. It gave her a little bit of momentum. She started swinging a little bit more freely, then it was very complicated.

I'm just happy that, again, I was able to have my wits about me and get through it.

Q. You have such good success on grass. We're in the middle of clay season. Is it nice to get on a little faster surface here?

ALISON RISKE: It's so funny. It definitely is. Yeah, obviously it's maybe not ideal for my clay court preparation, but I wouldn't miss playing for the USA under any circumstances.

I'll have about a week, hoping I move into Madrid main draw, I'm still in quallies right now. It could be quite a turnaround.

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Again, I wouldn't miss this, so I'm up for the challenge (smiling).

Q. Second longest tiebreak in BJK Cup history. Does another tiebreak come to mind...

ALISON RISKE: No, this takes the cake by at least 15 points (laughter).

Q. Your first tie was in 2014. Even though you haven't played in many ties, you're pretty much the veteran on this team. What advice have you been able to give to especially Asia and Des, but also Shelby and Jess, who haven't played much?

ALISON RISKE: Yeah, to be fair, I actually haven't played. Like you mentioned, this might be the third or fourth tie, fourth time I actually played in a tie.

We haven't talked to Des and Asia too much about being the rookies. If I was going to give any information, it would be just to enjoy it. I think when you are part of a team like this, just a great group of girls off the court in particular, it makes for the best experience.

Whether you win or lose, you do it together. You have so many memories off the court, as well. Just the camaraderie. It really doesn't get better. That's the reason why I would never miss representing America.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you.

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