

Billie Jean King Cup

Saturday, 16 November 2024

Team Japan

Ena Shibahara

Press Conference



E. SHIBAHARA/E. Cocciaretto

3-6, 6-4, 6-4

Team Japan - 1

Team Italy - 0

THE MODERATOR: Questions in English.

Q. Ena, congratulations again. How was that, having to stomach all those breakpoint opportunities, especially in that first set? How were you feeling during those, and how did you manage to end up converting more in the second half of the match?

ENA SHIBAHARA: Yeah, it was really frustrating not being able to convert those breakpoints in the beginning. I think sometimes, like, I kind of let my emotions get ahead of me a little bit, and I think that kind of caused me some games on my serves, as well.

During the first-set break, I was trying to just stay positive and kind of turn it into a positive mindset of I have chances. That means I can come back. And that's exactly what I did.

You know, there was a lot of breakpoints still not being able to convert, but I was able to do the best that I can, and I think I was able to break a couple times because of it, yeah.

Q. Sugiyama was in here the other day and she said she thinks you have maybe top-20 potential in singles. What's it like to hear that from your captain? How much confidence does that give you?

ENA SHIBAHARA: Yeah, that's really nice to hear. It does give me a lot of confidence, like, even more because she's such a legend. You know, that gives me a lot to look forward to, and I'm so excited, like, for what's to come for me.

Q. I was wondering if you could talk about her as a

captain, as well. She said that when she played team events as a player, she sometimes put too much pressure on herself. Has she created an environment where you can all thrive without that pressure maybe? It seems like a really great atmosphere in the team.

ENA SHIBAHARA: Yeah, I think she's created such an amazing team. You know, it's not too serious. It's very, like, relaxing to be around everyone.

You know, she's just such a great captain, such an amazing role model. I learn so much from her. And even during the match, you know, I kind of get in my head too much, but she just gives me such good advice to kind of like focus on, and I think that really helped for today's match.

Q. No matter what happens now, hopefully there will be more matches for you, but how much confidence do you think you'll take from these two -- I think they're your best singles wins by ranking -- how much confidence can you take and transfer this to the tour, looking ahead to next year?

ENA SHIBAHARA: Yeah, I'm really happy with the way I'm playing right now, and I even found more things to work on. You know, these wins actually give me a lot of confidence moving forward, and I plan to play more WTA events in singles next year, and that really gives me a lot of hope.

Yeah, I just am looking forward to it (smiling).

Q. What are some of those things that you're looking to work on in your singles game?

ENA SHIBAHARA: Yeah, I really want to be a little bit more aggressive. I am an aggressive player. I just, you know, I do want to look to come to net a little bit more, use my volleys as much as I can. I'm just kind of working towards that right now.

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