

Billie Jean King Cup

Sunday, 17 November 2024

Team Canada

Captain Heidi El Tabakh

Leylah Fernandez

Press Conference

K. BOULTER/L. Fernandez

6-2, 6-4

Team Canada - 0

Team Great Britain - 2

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. First of all, Leylah, tough result tonight. I just wonder, have you had time to reflect on it? What do you think proved the difference in the match?

LEYLAH FERNANDEZ: Yes, I did have time to reflect on it. I'm very hard on myself, so a lot of, like, the mistakes were on my racquet, but, you know, Katie and the team, Great Britain, played a great tie, great match. You know, I think they did what they had to do, and unfortunately I didn't do what I needed to do to get the win.

Yeah, that's kind of how it went (smiling).

Q. Leylah, you were down pretty big in the second set, but you still made it really contentious. When you're facing a big deficit like that, how do you find that motivation just to keep fighting?

LEYLAH FERNANDEZ: Well, actually from the first point all the way to the last I always try to keep fighting. I don't try to give up on any occasion.

You know, in the beginning of the match, I was doing well to keep it close, but it's just a few important points where Katie found a way to hit a winner or force a mistake from my end.

Then in the second set it was kind of the same story in the beginning. I think near the end of the second set, near the end of the match, I started putting more balls in, and that kind of helped, but it was a little too late for us.



Q. You didn't get a chance to practice on the match court before today. How was it trying to learn the court on the fly as you were playing?

LEYLAH FERNANDEZ: No, yeah, it's a little hard, but at the same time, it's not an excuse. You know, we arrived a little bit later. We didn't have the chance to practice on Wednesday due to weather. So it is what it is.

We just have to figure things out on the fly, and I think it was a good learning process for myself to see what I can do and what I need to improve in the offseason and preseason.

Q. Heidi, your thoughts on the performance today and the fight the girls showed.

CAPTAIN HEIDI EL TABAKH: Yeah, look, I'm always proud of my girls. I know they went out there to win, and I know they played their hearts out. You know what? We can't win them all, and I think credit to Team Great Britain, because I think both girls played complete matches today.

They were a very tough team to win, especially Katie coming out and, you know, I didn't think she could play any better, and then as the match went, she started playing even better, which I didn't think was possible.

Yeah, I think it's a tough first round. I think they came in with a match under their belt on that court, had a bit of momentum. But, look, they were the better team today. I think, you know, we will take the lessons from this week and keep improving and, you know, come back next year stronger.

But overall, I'm always, always proud of my girls and the effort they put out there and couldn't ask for a better team really.

Q. Heidi, you had two players with very good end of the season, Rebecca and Marina. What made the difference today by choosing Rebecca?

CAPTAIN HEIDI EL TABAKH: Yeah, look, there is no wrong selection there. It was a very close decision. You



know, a lot of times decisions are made last minute, you know.

I think both girls have been playing exceptionally well, you know, winning their first WTA 125 tournaments I think weeks from each other.

Yeah, I mean, you've got to choose a player, and we went with Rebecca this time. But yeah.

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