

# Billie Jean King Cup: USA vs Belgium

Saturday, April 13, 2024

Orlando, Florida, USA

USTA National Campus

## Team Belgium

## Hanne Vandewinkel

### Press Conference

J. PEGULA/H. Vandewinkel

6-2, 6-0

USA - 3

Belgium - 0

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

**Q. Tough weekend for you. A Billie Jean King Cup debut. What are your thoughts after a tough match last night and turning around to come back today?**

HANNE VANDEWINKEL: Yeah, it was a tough weekend. But I enjoyed it a lot. I really like it yesterday. It was a really good match. Yeah, to be able to play in such a big match when it's so tight and it's so close, I love to play those kind of matches.

It's tough we didn't get the win. As well, Sofia played a really good match. Also lost in three sets. That hurts a bit.

Today I think she was just, yeah, too good. Of course, it was a tough match yesterday. It was late. Was the first time for me to play this late and to be this late in bed, to play the next day again. I don't think it would have changed the outcome a lot. She was just too good today.

**Q. You come in here kind of smiling. Even though the results didn't go your way, do you feel this was a win in different ways?**

HANNE VANDEWINKEL: Yeah, I think, like I said, I just enjoyed it so much playing here. I can only be happy that I got this opportunity and I took it.

But yeah, I think it will definitely help me for the rest of the season. It was the first time to play even a top 100.



Yesterday was top 20 or 21. To be able to play three sets in this level, to play for such a long time, is I think a first time for me.

I think that's a win and I can really try to build on this.

**Q. You said you didn't think being physically or mentally tired was a factor today.**

HANNE VANDEWINKEL: No, yeah, maybe it would have changed my game a little bit. I think she was just too good. I didn't have the feeling that I could really play my game. She just played so much quality. Yeah, I couldn't play my game on her shots. There were so many shots 10 centimeters before the baseline. I didn't know how to react on those kind of shots.

I don't think if I would have been full fit and super fresh it would have changed the outcome of the match.

**Q. I think you won a lot of fans, especially last night. What is next for you for the season?**

HANNE VANDEWINKEL: Yeah, well, change to clay again and play some 35Ks and try to, yeah, build up my ranking to be able to play on these kind of stages again. We'll see how that goes.

**Q. Yesterday we spoke to Lindsay Davenport and asked if she was surprised by how well you played. She said in 2000 she and Jennifer Capriati came up against a very young Belgian team that had Kim Clijsters and Justine Henin. Look what happened to them. She said you and Sofia showed great promise. Could you talk about all the positives you take away from this weekend.**

HANNE VANDEWINKEL: Yeah, I definitely take a lot of positive things away from this weekend. Like I said, it's my first time against a top 100, especially against top 20 then. I think I showed that on some moments can I play with these kind of girls, yeah, I can compete with them. Sometimes they're just still too good. We saw that today.

Yesterday I showed when I'm on the top of my game, I can compete with these girls. I think that's something I didn't know. Maybe now that I realize it's possible, I have to



improve for sure, but if I keep continue what I'm doing now, that I might have a chance to be there one day.

**Q. Can you talk a little bit more about med school. Are you currently enrolled? Where are you in that process?**

HANNE VANDEWINKEL: Yes, I am planning to finish my first year this year. In Belgium it's six years. When you're 18, you start. Now I'm 19 and I'm finishing my first year. I try to divide one year in two years so I can also play tennis, because otherwise it's almost impossible.

Yeah, I've been doing it now two years. This year I will finish my first year. Next year I'll start half of the second year.

**Q. Do you have homework to do on the road?**

HANNE VANDEWINKEL: This week I try to enjoy the week. I didn't study at all. So next week I'll have to study a little bit more.

Yeah, for me, I like to do it. I don't always like to study, but I like the fact that I have something else to focus on and to do something else when tennis is not going my way or I'm a bit injured and I cannot play. It's something else for me to, yeah, have the success feeling, to try and put my mind to.

For now it's going well. I have to see year by year how it's going, if I keep doing it this way or maybe I try next year to go only tennis. Yeah, we'll see how it goes.

**Q. Do you have to be in person very often?**

HANNE VANDEWINKEL: Sometimes there are some practical things where I have to go. Next week, for example, I have to go. I have to be there, otherwise I cannot pass the exam. Sometimes I have to be there. But all the classes I can watch online. For those kind of things I don't have to go to the university. For the exams and practical stuff, I have to go.

**Q. Do you know what you want to specialize in?**

HANNE VANDEWINKEL: No, not really. When I was a kid, I always said I wanted to become a sports doctor. Maybe that. I don't know if that's like - how you say - exciting enough for me. We'll see. In the last year of medicine you can try everything. Then I will see how everything is in real life and I will see what I like the most.

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