

United Cup

Saturday, 30 December 2023

Perth, Western Australia, Australia

Australia

Ajla Tomljanovic

Press Conference

K. BOULTER/A. Tomljanovic

6-2, 6-4

Team Great Britain - 2

Team Australia - 0

THE MODERATOR: Ajla, if you could give us your thoughts on the match today.

AJLA TOMLJANOVIC: Yeah, obviously losing is never fun, but I thought Katie played lights out, and obviously I didn't. Got it going in the second and had some chances, but had no looks on those breakpoints.

She served really well. Yeah, just played so aggressive that I never felt like I could be the first one to do the first strike. And the points I did, I think they went well for me. But, yeah, she just kind of had the upper hand the whole match. Very hard to kind of get through when someone is playing that aggressive and not missing much.

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. Did you feel any additional pressure coming into the match being down Love-1?

AJLA TOMLJANOVIC: Not really. I mean, I guess when Alex lost and then I'm down a set and a break, obviously you know it's not -- like, you've got to win here. But I wouldn't say going into it initially I thought about it much.

Yeah, it would have been nicer if now it was 1-All, but hey, it's not over till it's over. Yeah, didn't play a huge part.

Q. Was there any sort of element of surprise at the way Katie played? Yes, she's had a great season, hovering top 50, but did it still come as any sort of surprise with, as you're saying, lights-out tennis from her?

AJLA TOMLJANOVIC: Yeah, it did. I feel like I had to ask questions after with my team and people on the team, Am I seeing this right or did she just play really,



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really well today? Because I do feel maybe my judgment is a little off not having played a lot, but I was surprised, because I've played her in the past, and she can play big tennis but it's never, like, that consistent over two sets where you're playing that low percentage sometimes. Not low percentage but just so aggressive, and it's not stopping.

I could have maybe pushed more playing a higher level, but it's just, yeah, it wasn't easy to do that from my side. So if I could have snagged some earlier games in that second set, not get broken right away, maybe scoreboard pressure would have changed and she would have backed off a little bit and not been so aggressive the whole time. But I was, she definitely didn't play like 50 in the world today, that's for sure.

Q. How do you now sort of recover in a couple of days' time to take on another quality player in Pegula?

AJLA TOMLJANOVIC: Well, just get back on the court and practice. Look, I lost, and it sucks, but I am still seeing a lot of positives. I'm healthy. Physically I felt good. The fact is I think there is so much to improve on and get better at. The summer is long, so I'm going to not get too down on myself, because that's just going to hurt me. I think realistically there are good things I can focus on and take away from tonight.

Q. From what I could research before coming in here, you haven't played Jess in 12 years, it looks like.

AJLA TOMLJANOVIC: Oh, really? I played her 12 years ago?

Q. I think about then, yeah. It was about 2012 or something like that. You're undefeated against her, too. 2-0. How does that affect anything, or do you remember any of that? Can you take any of that into playing or is it just too long ago?

AJLA TOMLJANOVIC: I think the last time we played Jess was a very different player. She's been pretty much at the top of the game for the last what, five years now? She's a very tough player. And I think playing someone that high of a quality in two days is just going to help me kind of get there quicker, I think, because you're forced. It's, like, your back is against the wall when you play against quality players like that. There's no room for kind of error.



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I think it's good for me. I'm excited.

Q. You said you asked your team just about the match tonight. What was their feedback? Did they give you some reassuring words?

AJLA TOMLJANOVIC: Yeah, there was a bit of back-and-forth (smiling). They definitely all agreed that that was very high quality from her. Yeah, I needed a bit of clarity, because I know sometimes after a match it can be emotional and not think clearly and think I did everything wrong.

But, yeah, I just think we all agreed that in order for me to have won today it just needed to be what I did probably for the last eight games done from the beginning, and that's where I can be, like, mad at myself and just take it for the next match to start right away with the right intent. But yeah.

Q. In terms of physically how you're feeling out there, were you feeling pretty good?

AJLA TOMLJANOVIC: Yeah, good. Like, nothing is hurting. I feel like there is, this makes me a little bit excited in a way, because I feel like I can really improve physically. I don't feel quick from the corners. That's okay, because where I'm at, I kind of have to keep reminding myself that it's still a process of getting back where I feel like I can still be, and even though I'm pain-free, I could move a lot better.

That gives me confidence, because in a way I wasn't far off today. But yeah, I feel like there is a lot of upside.

Q. When you were saying you were speaking to the others in the team, I saw you standing with Alex. Was he saying something about the way Katie played tonight? The other thing is, we have spoken in the past about those periods when you were really getting down on yourself. You said you don't want to get down on yourself after tonight. How much of that has been a result also of being away for essentially a year, that you have given yourself that time to develop mentally?

AJLA TOMLJANOVIC: Yeah, Alex just pretty much confirmed watching from the TV that Katie did play really big tonight and great. I mean, you know, if she can do this consistently, she's going to do really well this year. You can see that she's confident. So, you know, he agreed with that.

But your second question, look, I had my 20 minutes of a meltdown after the match where I felt like I'm horrible and everything's bad. But I need to get that out of my system, because if I just suppress that emotional part of me, it's going to linger. So now is when I kind of can

rationality be like, Okay, this was good, this was good, this needs to improve.

Even during the match I had to remind myself when I was getting really down on myself and just putting pressure to win is, like, last year I would have done anything just to be on the court and have a chance to battle, no matter how it went.

I remember thinking that and thinking to myself how silly was I so many years where I'm, like, nervous about the outcome when, really, now I can't even have the chance to play.

So I think I thought that maybe at Love-2 in the second and it really relaxed me, because that perspective goes away when you're in the heat of battle, because it's just winning, winning, winning. So unfortunately, even with time away, I still have to, like, have sticky notes in my bag and remind myself that I have to be very positive with where I'm at now.

Q. From a team perspective now, unfortunately 2-0 down, we don't know what's going to happen with the mixed doubles, but it puts you behind the eight ball for a quarterfinal berth. How do you, as a team, try and regroup? Are you still confident that with a win over Team USA and hopefully winning the mixed doubles you still can make that quarterfinal and continue on?

AJLA TOMLJANOVIC: Yeah, I think we're not, like, thinking too much about, you know, what we have to do to qualify. There is nothing changing for our preparation when we're facing Team USA. I know from whoever is going to be playing we are going to give our best and battle like we're in the final.

It's sport. I mean, I remember last year someone was the second-best, I don't even know the rules, but hey, maybe we can be that. Obviously we're not going to be the first, so yeah, I think if we just do our best, we might get rewarded. You never know.

But it's definitely not over in our team.

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