

United Cup

Saturday, 28 December 2024
Sydney, New South Wales, Australia

Team Switzerland

Captain Sandra Naef

Belinda Bencic

Dominic Stricker

Press Conference

Switzerland - 2

France - 1

THE MODERATOR: Well done to Team Switzerland for winning the first tie of the United Cup. First let's hear from the captain, then from Dominic and Belinda, an important win because you're coming back from maternity leave and an injury as well.

We can hear from the captain first.

CAPTAIN SANDRA NAEF: It was very exciting to see for me these two players playing so close. It was amazing what they did. I'm very proud of them, how they handled it. Yeah, super cool.

DOMINIC STRICKER: Yeah, same for me. I think singles was tough. He really played well. But, yeah, was not easy in that 30 minutes you have between singles and doubles to get ready mentally. But of course with Belinda to go out there, yeah, was pretty easy.

We came out fire, then we had a great first set. We played well the whole match. We were just, yeah, lucky or whatever how you want to call it to win that tiebreak, to win the tie, yeah.

BELINDA BENCIC: Yeah, same for me. I'm really excited of course to be back. It was really nice to play singles, too. I felt, of course, a little bit of the rust in the start of the match, then I kind of was able to settle. I felt smooth throughout the first set and the second set.

Yes, also watching Dominic play in singles, really impressive how two lefties are serving against each other. It's like a dream.

Of course, in the mixed doubles as well, I thought it was super fun. We really came out firing. We played the first time together, but I really felt like the vibes were there, we were understanding each other on the court.



Yeah, it was fun to play. Of course, happy to get the win.

THE MODERATOR: Let's open it up to questions.

Q. Belinda, with the match both in singles and in mixed doubles, the lead-up with the ITFs you've played so far, where do you feel your level is? Is it where you expected it to be at this point? When you talk about the rust, where did you feel it the most?

BELINDA BENCIC: Well, I think my level is higher than I expected it to be because I didn't expect to be here yet. Definitely the whole comeback went much faster than I anticipated and expected. It's super great.

I didn't rush things. I was super careful with starting again. I didn't really want to put a time pressure on my comeback. I just wanted to see how it goes every day.

Yeah, I think I was ready. There's no point in practicing more. It's kind of boring, right? It's better to play competition matches.

Yeah, I feel good with every match. I think definitely it's the physical part that needs improvement. I think today in the match it was also a little bit, like, I didn't know my opponent at all. I was a little bit surprised with how she was playing. I needed some time to figure her out a little bit. I managed to do better later.

Of course, there's going to be some nerves. I didn't play for such a long time. I'm happy that I played some matches last season, so it's not totally like from zero to 100.

Q. How did you keep your focus in the mixed doubles as they raised their level in the second set?

DOMINIC STRICKER: Yeah, we knew that it's not going to continue like the first set. First set we played nearly everything perfect. Then second set we knew that they will change something, and they did. But we stayed calm, we did our things, we kept serving well. I think that was the key.

We had our break chances that we didn't use. Yeah, that's doubles. It's going so quick, then you're in the tiebreak. All of a sudden if they win the second, it's a champion. It can go so quick.

No, we kept calm. Yeah, we kept renewing our things.

Q. Looking ahead to the Italy tie, there's not a very long time between the two. How are you going to prepare for those matches?

BELINDA BENCIC: Yeah, I mean, I honestly prefer it this way. I prefer to play back to back because I feel like we're in the rhythm. It's going to be the first match for Italy, so I definitely feel like it could be an advantage for us. Don't like to have four days off between the second tie.

Yeah, I feel like we had good conditions today. It's going to be a different time. It's good for us to play again tomorrow.

Q. Belinda, how much were you paying attention at all to what was happening on the tour while you were away, results-wise, slams, who is No. 1, and if anything surprised you at all? Does it look or feel different in terms of the players at the top now?

BELINDA BENCIC: Well, I just look at the WTA Insider and I know everything, so...

But no, naturally of course I followed it. It's part of my life. It's a very natural thing to do. Also when you watch the TV, you want to look the Olympics or some Grand Slams.

I watched it, but it was a very different experience. It was very from a neutral point of view. I wasn't emotionally involved. I was able to enjoy the tennis more and kind of like in a neutral way see how everyone's playing more. It wasn't about, Oh, my God, if this player wins, she's going to pass me in the rankings, this is going to happen.

I was completely like a fan or a journalist watching the tennis.

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