

Australian Open

Sunday, 28 January 2024

Melbourne, Victoria, Australia

Hsieh Su-Wei

Elise Mertens

Press Conference

SUWEI-MERTENS/Kichenok-Ostapenko

6-1, 7-5

THE MODERATOR: Congratulations, ladies. Australian Open title. Just talk about your emotions right now and how great it also feels to team back up together for the start of this year.

ELISE MERTENS: I feel like we started off really strong. I mean, it was actually a tough match in the second set. I think first set we really dominated. I think in the second set the other girls played better, they came into the match a little bit more, which made it a bit more difficult, of course. They gave us, like, almost no free points.

But yeah, we kept on fighting. I think we did that really well. On 5-All I think we kind of made a difference a little bit. Felt like we were the ones dominating a bit more.

Yeah, very happy to be back on Su-Wei's side. It's amazing to play with her, so much experience and still so much motivation too. I feel like we really are a team.

THE MODERATOR: Su-Wei? Do you have any comments?

HSIEH SU-WEI: She's saying very good.

ELISE MERTENS: You have to say some nice things about me. (Laughter.)

HSIEH SU-WEI: She's doing very good job to stay there the whole match. It helps a lot. (Laughter.)

THE MODERATOR: Questions in English.

Q. For both of you, obviously facing a team that has Ostapenko on it can create certain difficulties, given how big she can hit the ball. So I'm curious, just from a tactical doubles perspective, how do you manage playing against somebody who can hit so big from the baseline?

ELISE MERTENS: I mean, we definitely, like, we knew she was going to hit big. We knew, like, that crosscourt



she has, especially the backhand crosscourt, is her weapon. The net player can come in, play a volley, put a lot of pressure on us.

I think first set they kind of missed maybe a little bit those shots. That's what made the difference.

But I think in the second set she kind of really upgraded her game, putting us under pressure the whole time. There was a lot of 40-All on our serving games. I think we managed that pretty well to get that down the line sometimes a little bit and taking that crosscourt off her wings.

Definitely first serve was very important to get this advantage, have good neutral position.

Q. Su-Wei, facing Ostapenko from the baseline, what is the secret for you to kind of play against that power?

HSIEH SU-WEI: For me is no problem, because even in the mixed doubles I'm not really the person afraid of a guy or even a woman. So is not a big deal for me.

Most important thing is I need to control my partner on the court, to go to somewhere I want her to move to make me feel comfortable.

Q. When you saw Su-Wei was coming back to tennis last year, how eager were you to partner up?

ELISE MERTENS: I mean, of course I separated with Storm, and I was, like, yeah, I'm just going to text her and see if she's available. You know, had such a great success in the past, so I feel like she's someone with a lot of experience.

Yeah, with her game, I mean, she has amazing volleys, amazing reflexes. I feel like me in the back I can hold a ball or two too.

Yeah, I was very happy that she said yes.

HSIEH SU-WEI: You was asking very early so it was good. Because there was some girl asking me, I say, Oh, sorry, I already answer Elise.

You need to ask early. But I was thinking, okay, if you



ask early and then we would team up before and we have a really good feeling. I say, Oh, we play together.

Most important is you have a girl, you know them, you have fun on the court. For me most important is to having some fun, sometime you can laugh, even you losing 0-5 on the court, is not big deal. It's always teamwork. We need to carry all this stuff. It doesn't matter we win or lose.

Q. Has your phone been blowing up? Everyone wants you? Your phone is always constantly...

HSIEH SU-WEI: No, I don't know. Don't do this. My team, they answer the stuff. So they will say, Oh, there's someone ask you. Elise is asking.

So I would say always go to Elise, yeah, it's great. When other people keep coming, we say, Oh, sorry.

Q. You have won, including mixed, four different slams in the last eight months with four different partners.

HSIEH SU-WEI: Yeah.

Q. Are you doing the same thing every time? Are you adjusting to the partners, or...

HSIEH SU-WEI: You know this is the first time I do this, right? It's not expecting. I was just coming back to do the retire tournament with Barbora, because you know I was at home, and when Barbora coming back, I try to answer some other girl to start few tournaments earlier, but I get all answers is refused. So it was not going really well at the beginning when come back.

Many people think I come back great, winning all the tournaments. But no, no, all the girl was refusing me. Until one day I play with Barbora and Wang Xinyu for the Roland Garros, and then the situation become better.

Q. How proud are you of what you have done over the last year?

HSIEH SU-WEI: Last year?

Q. How proud are you of your year?

HSIEH SU-WEI: Yeah, it's incredible, because I was not expecting anything, and I just try to come back to enjoy.

So for the first two Grand Slam, like Roland Garros or Wimbledon, I was not even nervous on the court in the finals. So I know this is gonna get into the head of the girls, because I was a little bit smiling on the court. I don't know. Maybe the opponent won't be happy. (Laughter.)

Q. Elise, you'll be back to No. 1 on Monday, doubles. Congratulations.

ELISE MERTENS: Thank you.

Q. But in terms of obviously for you also being a singles player, managing the schedule, managing the physicality, you've done it so well obviously throughout your career, but as you two, I assume, continue forward, how are you going to kind of, yeah, balance the doubles and the singles?

ELISE MERTENS: I mean, playing the bigger tournaments, and I think, like, a Grand Slam, you only got four a year. You try to win every match you play. I think singles or doubles, I think it's just very important. I think these are the big stage of tennis so you don't let the doubles go to play a singles the week after.

I will have my flight in a couple hours to Linz. So we'll see. This makes it all good, to win today, makes it a bit easier to go to Linz.

As I said, these are the stages you want to win. As long as we still enjoy it and still get that motivation and everything, I think it's just very important.

Yeah, she said, enjoying today, too, of course it's a bit nerve-racking. You know, these matches are what you play for.

Q. Su-Wei, I'm just kind of curious, schedule-wise will we be seeing you at 1000s and slams with Elise, or how are you going to manage your doubles schedule? What is that situation?

HSIEH SU-WEI: I'm waiting for Elise call. Anywhere she need to be, she give me a call, I am more than 50% will make it.

ELISE MERTENS: 50%.

HSIEH SU-WEI: Grand Slam 100%. Other I will think about it. I save my energy for the Grand Slam, big tournament.

ELISE MERTENS: That's good. I like that.

HSIEH SU-WEI: I go home, I do gym.

ELISE MERTENS: Perfect.

HSIEH SU-WEI: I cannot do like you. Every match she finish a match, she go to the gym. She say, I'm going to the gym. I'm like, What are you doing, quarterfinals, semifinals? What are you doing?

ELISE MERTENS: Then you stretch and put your leg in your neck almost.

HSIEH SU-WEI: Be careful this girl, she working so hard.

ELISE MERTENS: Go to the gym.

HSIEH SU-WEI: No, not me.

Q. Are you able to stay more relaxed, now that this is your last singles tournament, is this going to be a more relaxed chapter of your tennis career even if you are still winning Grand Slams?

HSIEH SU-WEI: In doubles I'm always relaxed. Mostly, like, as I say, I always try to find the fun and try to find a partner, we're helping each other.

So in singles of course is a different world. You need to stay very focused and serious a little bit otherwise you lost your concentration. Not only for singles, but in doubles if I lose my concentration, I have my partner. I say, You, go. You, go.

I can make a song for you. Go, go, go (singing).
(Laughter.)

Q. What is it like spending these two weeks with her?

ELISE MERTENS: It's amazing. We have so much fun, honestly. Off court, on court. I mean, it's very fun to play with Su-Wei.

Yeah, I don't know. I don't know what she's doing sometimes, but... (Laughter.) But, you know, on the big stages, when we play quarterfinals, semifinals, finals, we don't throw points away if we have fun. We just trying to have fun like we did when it went 5-3 in the third in the semifinal, and you were like (demonstrating).

So that's nice. You get the focus is there of course in the first point but you kind of have this, okay, 5-3, and then we go again.

That's very nice about her.

Q. Semifinal, such a good match. What was that like? Might have been the best match of the tournament in any draw.

ELISE MERTENS: The semifinal.

Q. What was the semifinal win for you?

ELISE MERTENS: Of course I played with Storm last year and it was No. 1 spot on the line too, I guess. I did not know at the time, or not really. I just try to play match by match and see what we can do.

But yeah, I think that was a crazy match. That was more than two-and-a-half hours. A lot of 40-Alls. Especially in Grand Slam you get that 40-All so you can really come back sometimes, which actually makes it more interesting, but that was kind of the match that we really had to focus throughout the whole time, yeah.

Q. Are you dancing more like that since, Su-Wei?

HSIEH SU-WEI: I don't know what I'm gonna do any match or any time, so be ready. (Laughter.)

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