

Roland Garros

Tuesday, 6 October 2020

Paris, France

Timea Babos

Kristina Mladenovic

Press Conference

BABOS-MLADENOVIC/Kostyuk-Sasnovich

6-2, 7-5

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. In general, how does it feel to be back in the semifinals?

TIMEA BABOS: Yeah, I mean, obviously it's an amazing feeling. This doesn't happen often that you're a defending champion on a Grand Slam for like 18 months basically. So it's pretty cool.

And, yeah, I'm very happy with the way we're competing and with the way we are playing on this tournament.

I mean, it's really not easy after what happened, for example, at US Open, as we all know. But, you know, we are here to win, and we enjoy to play together again. I'm happy with the level we can manage each match.

Q. There was only one match in preparation with Rome. How impressed are you that you clicked into this level and you played some great matches coming into the semifinals now?

TIMEA BABOS: Yeah, it's very funny. Basically we played one match at US Open, but we are mostly relying on our Australian Open victory and the feelings we have in general on court.

I mean, the connection we have, we were still in this time off we were speaking and talking a lot together. I mean, we are basically family, so that helps a lot.

And then the tennis just clicks after. But I think our main success and why we are playing really good together is the connection and the feelings we have towards each other. And, yeah, I mean, of course the game has to be there.

But overall we can say we had zero preparation coming into Roland Garros. I mean, Kiki couldn't come to Rome, so I played but it was not really good for me also. It just shows that when we are playing together we are just



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strong and we can pick up our best game from the beginning.

Q. You mentioned Australia as well and that you are defending champions here. Do you feel like on the Grand Slam stage you two have an aura together? When your opponents step on court they know what they're facing, the slam champions?

TIMEA BABOS: I really hope that it's on every tournament. We don't play a lot, but when we play, yeah, we really go far.

I mean, also for the WTA Finals we are two-time defending champion. I am three-time with a separate partner. Then all the Grand Slams. I mean, last year our worst result was like semifinal, so I think it's going well.

And the format also maybe is matching us a little bit better because on normal tournaments with the no-ad super-tiebreak system sometimes it can be also about a little bit with luck, and here there is no luck. We play a normal match, a full match. Like our second round we didn't play our best tennis but we were able to pull it out in three sets.

So yeah, I think in general the players, we are the ones that they want to beat. You have a few teams like this, and you have some players also like they are the ones you just want to go on court and beat them.

So I think it's, in a way, pressure but also a privilege. So far we could use it for like to have like this as a benefit. So I think it's a good thing to have.

Q. Just wondered the overriding emotions reaching the semifinals again here.

KRISTINA MLADENOVIC: Yeah, thank you. Yes, of course it's great results. I think we played a great match once again today. It was solid.

You know, it's always let's call it an adventure when you start a new campaign like this every Grand Slam. Especially we are defending champions so it's a great feeling of course to be on court and to get a couple wins and now being focused and looking forward to the semifinals.

Q. Timea was saying about how the lack of preparation doesn't matter because you're so good in the slams together. What's kind of impressed you

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here on your way to here and all the matches, what's really stood out?

KRISTINA MLADENOVIC: Well, if the boss said that no matter the preparation, we gotta win, I'll follow that (smiling).

No, I mean, yeah, on my side, yeah, really had a tricky preparation. It's not the way I wanted to train and to be prepared and have absolutely zero matches, especially on clay.

Then I join her on her opinion about our doubles. I think we know each other so good and our games match so good and we have so much, like, both so much experience behind us that it for sure helps. It's a big weapon, like a big confidence when we step on court, even though we don't have much of a play.

But then, you know, it's work. We went through different matches, different scenarios, and I think that's how we will build up this week. So far it's going great.

It's always great to kind of push and get the wins.

Q. How tough was it to dust yourself down from the singles, tough loss there, and you obviously have spoke about that great success with Timea? What's the kind of thinking there?

KRISTINA MLADENOVIC: Yeah, like I said, it was a disappointment for me of course about my singles result, but in other way I knew it was like the trickiest ever period for me was like I did everything possible to try to be as ready as possible. I didn't come here with like good preparation. I knew that fact, and I tried to deal with it and to be composed and go for every match, singles and doubles.

Unfortunately singles, it didn't go my way, obviously. I just tried to turn the page and say that, you know, it was a very unlucky period as well for me. So I really tried to just look for the positive things, that it was anyways a weird year. I don't even think I can consider it a season, so I really tried to move on.

Like I said, I'm always so happy to go back on court with my best friend. After a couple days, yeah, just mentally relax. Then it's always such fresh air and new start to be next to her on court. I enjoy so much.

And just took it like it's so little tennis left we have for this season, so trying to enjoy and making the most out of it and the best ways with her on court.

I'm really happy we have lots of hours on court together so far, and hopefully two more matches.

Q. So you're saying how it's been a strange year, as

it has been with everyone. You started it with the Australian doubles and you could bookend it with the French doubles.

KRISTINA MLADENOVIC: That would be amazing, yeah. That would kind of then, you know, how to say -- yeah, the year started beautifully. I think no one of us expected 2020 would have turned to be this way (smiling).

But like I said, after my singles I just try to move on and say to myself that whatever, it's been tricky year for everyone. Doesn't make much sense for some of us unlucky, but then I motivated myself. Like I said, it's a pleasure to be with Timea on the court, and then the goal was to get myself pumped with her to try to finish the year the way it started.

So that would be very big if we get that accomplishment.

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