

Roland Garros

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Diede De Groot

Press Conference



ROLAND-GARROS

D. De GROOT/Y. Kamiji

6-4, 6-3

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. How do you feel? You won against Yui again.

DIEDE DE GROOT: Yes, I'm very happy. It's always a difficult match against Yui. I'm very happy to win the title.

Q. How do you see the rivalry between you and Yui?

DIEDE DE GROOT: Well, we play almost in every major final, so there is a very big rivalry. I like it.

Q. Yui took the first two games in the first set. She was aggressive. Did you feel any difference from Yui?

DIEDE DE GROOT: No. I think she did that very well. Everything worked. Ball to that side, ball to that side. That was perfect of her. But it's very difficult to keep perfect. I think maybe she dropped down a little bit and I took advantage.

Q. You changed your tactics after she took two games because you took four consecutive games after that?

DIEDE DE GROOT: No.

Q. You didn't change any tactics?

DIEDE DE GROOT: No.

Q. So Yui did mistake, right?

DIEDE DE GROOT: A little bit maybe. I just stayed focused and tried to play my own.

Q. Your serve was very good. Your percentage first service is much higher than Yui. How did you improve your serve?

DIEDE DE GROOT: Train a lot. During COVID, there's not many tournaments, so there's a lot of time on the practice court. I can train a lot.

Q. How did you change your service? It's now stable.

DIEDE DE GROOT: No change. Just more practice.

Q. When you came to Japan two years ago, you said you changed wheelchair, right?

DIEDE DE GROOT: Yeah.

Q. The seat is a little bit higher than you expected.

DIEDE DE GROOT: Yeah.

Q. Did you change that again?

DIEDE DE GROOT: So from two years ago, it's lower, but it's the same since maybe one and a half year. It's the same.

Q. Why did you change the height of the seat?

DIEDE DE GROOT: Because it was too high. The gravity point of the wheelchair was too high. When I turned, the wheelchair wasn't turning. It's better now.

Q. How does it feel, now you have at least twice each Grand Slam? How different does it feel to win Roland Garros for the second time than the first time in 2019?

DIEDE DE GROOT: Yes, I'm very happy, especially after last year it was a little bit disappointing for me losing in the semifinals. I trained on the clay a lot. I think already since maybe February, just constantly, even though it was very cold outside in The Netherlands. I was very eager and motivated to win this.

Q. How comfortable do you feel playing on clay in conditions of this year compared to last year with heavier conditions? Do you think that affected that result in the semifinal?

DIEDE DE GROOT: A little bit. Last year was difficult for me because I was ill before the tournament, so I didn't have much time to relax, train, have normal training, then go here. So I didn't have a perfect preparation, so I didn't feel very comfortable in my skin, with how I was playing.

Now I just made sure that everything was going well.

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Q. Which score would you give to your performance during the whole tournament in terms of consistency? Are you happy or do you think you had ups and downs during the tournament?

DIEDE DE GROOT: Yeah, I think that has been the most good for me, like the consistency is very much there. Not too much like downhill in a match. It's just very stable, so I'm very happy with that.

Q. How is that rivalry with your opponent? How does it feel when you jump on court with someone you know so much and knows your weaknesses so much?

DIEDE DE GROOT: Yeah, I think for me, because I play against Yui so much, we both try to beat each other. We both train on things so that maybe the next time I can win, and she trains so the next time she can win.

It's always a different match. I like it a lot.

Q. How much of your training for a tournament like this, knowing she's your most tough opponent, how much of your training is mainly focusing on her?

DIEDE DE GROOT: That's a funny question because I don't specifically train on my opponents. I really just try and focus on my own game and try to improve that. I think that's been the main key.

Q. Second time in your career that you win the Australian Open and Roland Garros in the same year. How much is pressure there to win the other two in the same year?

DIEDE DE GROOT: Well, I remember 2019 very well. I put too much pressure on myself. Really now I'm just happy with everything I can win. Also next week, I think the day after tomorrow, Tuesday, we're going to be playing another very big tournament. Seeing as there's not a lot of tournaments during this time, every tournament that's there, it's important. You don't know when you're going to have the next chance to win points.

Yeah, I'm really just trying to focus on each tournament at the time.

Q. How hard is the transition going to be for the next surface?

DIEDE DE GROOT: It's most difficult because there really is only grass in England, and I think there's one preparation tournament, but it's in two weeks. There will be two weeks in between training at home with a different surface, then going back to Wimbledon.

I think for us it's very difficult because you can't really get

used to it because you're going to play at home anyway where there's no grass. That's going to be difficult. It will be difficult for all of us.

Q. This is your 10th Grand Slam title in singles. Do you keep in a special space any one above the others? Maybe the first one or the first of each?

DIEDE DE GROOT: I think the first one will always be special. I don't think I will ever forget that one. I think winning Roland Garros for the first time I completed the Grand Slam, maybe not in a year, but I did complete it, and that one was very special for me as well.

Q. Was it the toughest of your first Grand Slams? Was Roland Garros the toughest to win?

DIEDE DE GROOT: No. I think Australian Open this year was the toughest. Yui really gave very good balls back. It was a very long match. I think the toughest was this year Australian Open.

Q. What do you expect tomorrow for doubles?

DIEDE DE GROOT: Yeah, very happy to play in the doubles final. We're playing against very good opponents, Yui and Jordan, who are a very good team. They move very well on the court. Aniek and I, my doubles partner, we have to play well.

Q. Interesting year with Paralympics. How does it fit in your calendar? How important is it?

DIEDE DE GROOT: Very important. I think the Paralympics, they've been moved one year. We were all a bit disappointed because we worked so hard for it. Then to finally get the chance this year, I'm very happy with it.

Q. Any dream of conquering the Golden Grand Slam, as Steffi Graf? Is it something that keeps you awake at night or not?

DIEDE DE GROOT: Like I said, I really don't try to put a lot of pressure on one tournament. Getting the Grand Slam or the Golden Grand Slam is not really a goal specifically. I really have to just play week by week.

Q. 2019 you became the first wheelchair player to hold all four Grand Slams singles titles at the same time. Could you tell me what it would mean if you could achieve it this year.

DIEDE DE GROOT: Sorry?

Q. Maybe explain to me what your thoughts are in possibly achieving the Golden Slam this year.

DIEDE DE GROOT: Like I said, the Golden Slam or the

Grand Slam, they're not really like specific goals for me. I really don't have that in my mind, like that's what I want to get. I had that in 2019. It didn't really work for me. I put too much pressure on winning Wimbledon. Yeah, it just wasn't working.

Right now I'm just playing week by week.

Q. 2018 here against Yui, you won the first set, and didn't the last two. How do you think you've improved on clay since then?

DIEDE DE GROOT: Yeah, I don't know. I think I became much more consistent. I really tried to improve my game overall, not just one specific thing, but every aspect of my game. That worked very well.

Q. What does it mean to you to win today?

DIEDE DE GROOT: I think every slam that I win becomes more special because there's so much more pressure that comes with it every time. People are expecting you to win. You have to sort of fulfill that expectation, otherwise you failed. That's something that is difficult to sort of have that pressure.

At the same time I'm doing well in just handling it, just focusing on my own thing, yeah.

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