

Roland Garros

Sunday, 5 June 2022

Paris, France

Diede De Groot

Aniek Van Koot

Press Conference

DE GROOT-VAN KOOT/Kamiji-Montjane

7-6, 1-6, 10-8

THE MODERATOR: Congratulations. What a great way to finish the tournament with a champions trophy. Can you talk about your feelings and how happy you are for accomplishing this.

DIEDE DE GROOT: Super happy, I think. Yes, it was very hard-fought, and we really had to work for it. And then the rain delay, and it all made it a little bit of a strange match. But I think, yeah, we did well to in the end find the right game, I think.

ANIEK VAN KOOT: Yeah, like Diede said, it was a different match than usual with the rain delay. It was a bit of a roller coaster. Exciting moments for both parties, I think. I think a night of good sleep did us good, but yeah, really happy to have ended in this way.

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. Congratulations. Five in a row here. Why is Paris so special to you guys? Well, Roland Garros, as well?

ANIEK VAN KOOT: Yeah, why not? I mean, the atmosphere is quite amazing, and we get a really nice stage to play our best doubles. Nowhere in the world that there are better clay courts than Roland Garros.

Yeah, it's very special to play here.

Q. Congratulations, ladies. This is your fifth Roland Garros title, but one of your toughest, I think, today. What did you need to adjust after losing that second set 6-1?

DIEDE DE GROOT: I think for me personally I was really tired. I had the finals in the morning, and then very short in between the matches, and I had also a lot of press and things to do before I played that match.

So for me I felt a little bit tired and a little bit down in my energy. I think we sort of changed the way that we were



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playing, which was absolutely not necessary, because we were doing well.

But then I think the rain delay in some way sort of helped us to just, Okay, you know what? We are not going to do this anymore. We are just going to do this, and we are going to see where it ends. I think we did well to just sort of find our way back.

ANIEK VAN KOOT: Yeah, I think we went back to the drawing board what we needed to do (smiling). I think that really helped.

Like Diede said, maybe she was a bit lower on energy and I was too high on energy. Therefore, I wasn't functioning at all, so...

It was good to, yeah, get our minds and our heads straight again into the same direction, yeah.

Q. You were so dominant as a team in 2021. Do you think you could do the calendar slam as a doubles team this year?

ANIEK VAN KOOT: We are going to try our very best. I can say that, yeah.

Q. What do you need to get that final step?

ANIEK VAN KOOT: Well, we need to have some more training, I think, and maybe also sometimes look at matches of our opponents a bit more, learn from that. But also learn from the previous matches, talk with our coaches, make new strategies. Yeah, keep moving forward, at least.

Q. Having won the five titles here together now, have you allowed yourself to think forward to Paris 2024 and what it could be like to win a medal here in two years' time?

DIEDE DE GROOT: I think, like, I don't know if that's the same for Aniek but because there are so many Grand Slams between now and Paris, I don't really have Paris in my head yet. I don't know if that's a little bit different for you...

ANIEK VAN KOOT: I'm still recovering from Tokyo.

DIEDE DE GROOT: Yeah, that's what it feels like a little bit. Yeah, we are not really thinking about that at the

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moment. I think we are just really still trying to get through every match, and I think Wimbledon will be the first one that we are also going to have to put our focus on, because last year I think we didn't really adjust to grass tennis.

So that's what we are going to do now, and I think that's just what we are going to focus on, one tournament at a time.

ANIEK VAN KOOT: Yeah.

Q. Aniek, you won doubles here I think first in 2010. Wondered how you feel your game has evolved and also how the sport of wheelchair tennis has evolved during that time?

ANIEK VAN KOOT: Well, wheelchair tennis in general really evolved. We get more attention from the Grand Slams obviously, but also the level of tennis is so much higher. Of course I have been playing tennis for a long time, but our current No. 1, Diede, her level is much higher than, for example, 20 years ago.

The tennis, I think the top players make each other better. They want to do better, as well. Yeah, it's getting more professional and, yeah, people do a lot more to be at the top. I think the Grand Slams are helping us getting better as well.

Q. You have such a successful partnership. What do you think is the secret to your success and that chemistry that you have on the court?

DIEDE DE GROOT: I think it's funny that we can be very strong, like we can be so convincing, but we also have times where we are not very convincing. Like we are also a little bit down or maybe we are just completely lost and were doing very well, like we'd be up 5-Love and then we'd be 5-5.

I think what always helps us is just like trust in each other, we help each other, we try to help each other as much as we can, and just trust that we can do the jobs that we have in the doubles, do our very best that we can at the moment and just keep fighting, I think.

ANIEK VAN KOOT: Yeah, and I also think not very similar playing styles. We have different tasks in the doubles, but they complement each other. I'm not going to tell what the tasks are. Maybe opponents will listen.

Yeah, it works. And we have the advantage that we can train with each other in Holland. Holland is not that big. It's good.

Q. Niels just won his first Grand Slam singles. Could you comment both on how impressive he is at 19, World No. 1, slam winner?

ANIEK VAN KOOT: Yeah, I always call him Little Puppy, because little puppies chase the tennis ball wherever they go. He is so keen on playing, and I think it's a delight to see and is really nice, well, in the footsteps of Dylan Alcott. He's a great player.

DIEDE DE GROOT: Yeah, very happy for him. It's his first one. I think it's the first one of many. We are going to hear a lot from him in the future, I think.

ANIEK VAN KOOT: Yes.

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