

Roland Garros

Sunday, 5 June 2022

Paris, France

Caroline Garcia

Kristina Mladenovic

Press Conference



ROLAND-GARROS

GARCIA-MLADENOVIC/Gauff-Pegula

2-6, 6-3, 6-2

THE MODERATOR: Congratulations. Do you want to talk about the final today?

CAROLINE GARCIA: Yeah, it was a great match. It was definitely a challenge to play against Coco and Jessica. First set was really tough for us, we couldn't do what we wanted. I think we reacted very well at the end of the changeover.

We change our tactics and really believed in it and really went all the way for it.

The energy change completely. The fans were really cheering for us, and I think it was big help. We kept our line until the end, and I think we just improved through the match.

THE MODERATOR: Questions in English.

Q. Congratulations, ladies. Kiki, could you just kind of talk through the tactical changes that you guys discussed and what you think really flipped that match completely around for you?

KRISTINA MLADENOVIC: Yeah, you know, it's not easy. They have been playing a lot of doubles very successful, and they have amazing singles skills obviously and doubles, because they know each other well. They definitely played way more than us together this year.

At the beginning of the first set we felt they were not missing much. They were very aggressive in their crosscourt rallies, you know, serving good, returning, putting us under pressure and not much mistake.

I don't feel like we did something wrong, but we were just like maybe not as good in this kind of play.

Yeah, at the end of the first set we discussed together, and we were like, Okay, we just gotta be more aggressive and maybe instead of going crosscourt just

go down the line, challenge them more at the net, because we felt like they were not playing enough volleys.

So we really went, you know, up to them, challenging them at the net. Actually, this is where the momentum switched completely. I felt like we stepped in there, we were more aggressive from the returns. We had amazing winners for couple games. This is how we managed to lead 4-0, if I'm not wrong.

Then again, they adjust, so it was again like a bit closer, but that was definitely the key to kind of come back in the match. It's a tough 6-2, because, you know, their style of play is just like fire and if you don't wake up, you may lose the final very quickly in two sets.

So we are very proud we actually found that adjustment, and just kept going. Then started solid this third set. I think it was very important to keep the momentum.

Overall, very challenging match, like Caro said, because it's about details, as you can see. Yeah, very happy.

Q. Just for both of you, I know you said this is completely different than 2016 and a different story, different places in your careers, all that. So I guess for each of you, Kiki and Caro, if you could both answer, what does this title mean to you individually? What do you see that it can have in terms of impact on your career, whether it is in doubles or singles going forward?

CAROLINE GARCIA: I think it's completely different, because, I mean, I can't speak about Kristina, but for myself I was not really expecting myself to be in the final of doubles.

KRISTINA MLADENOVIC: Me neither (smiling). We needed actually a wildcard to be here.

CAROLINE GARCIA: Yeah, we didn't play doubles together since Australian Open.

On my side I was just in time to get ready for Roland Garros. When we saw the draw and we saw like Alexandrova-Siegemund, it's like, It's tough first round, it's not easy. I think we were not expecting it at all.

We just focused one match at a time and see what we could improve every time when we were losing the first



set or down and everything.

So it's definitely a big surprise, because in 2016, we were like in different situation. We were both I think in top 10 in doubles. We were like a big team so people were expecting us. It was not the case this year. I think neither do we.

It's different feeling, you know, like you take one day at a time, just really focus on the present and really enjoyed it. It's just, of course it's a lot of positive energy, positive vibe for the next week in singles, next week in doubles.

In tennis you have to take everything you can, a title in WTA, it's something very big. In slams, it's even bigger. You never know when you are going to come back, and you really have to enjoy it and take all the positive you can.

KRISTINA MLADENOVIC: Yeah. That's a very nice résumé. But like Caro said, we had some issues, both of us, like with injuries. Yeah, Caro was really last-minute ready. I have been dealing with also an issue for quite some time.

I'm kind of getting again in the groove, in the rhythm. We had tough opponents in singles, you know. We wanted to go further. But once it was done, we kind of regroup and we were like, Okay, we are here together, let's work our way together through matches, to just improve ourselves, our game through doubles, but it's going to help for singles.

Like Caro said, it was really unexpected. We both didn't play much doubles the last couple months, years, so we actually needed a wildcard to get here.

Yeah, we just worked together match by match. Yeah, I'm just very happy. What can I say? You know, a Grand Slam title, it's very, very unique, and I have been in couple finals already, but you always enjoy it and go, you know, on the court, give your absolute best because that's such an amazing stage, that you don't know if you're going to be there again.

So you're like trying to soak in all the positive things about it, the energy. Speaking of energy and unique moment, I mean, to win this title again with Caro -- I mean, I won another two with Timea, but with Caro, we are both French so today on court it felt like it's Fed Cup, it's like France against USA.

From what I remember, the crowd this year today was absolutely amazing. It was even more than in '16. We were really impressed that the stadium was absolutely kind of full, I have to say. So it's an amazing moment for us to share. We will keep that in our memory. It's absolutely amazing.

THE MODERATOR: Questions in French.

Q. Could you explain how you compensated the lack of experience in doubles before starting this week at Roland Garros? Is this title going to continue playing together for the end of the season and the next months?

CAROLINE GARCIA: We were humble at the beginning of the tournament. We really focused on what we were able to do. Maybe we didn't have all our bearings in doubles at the beginning, but we really took one match at a time.

If in the beginning we're not crossing well and we are solid when we are shot at, it's good. If we do a good serve, good return, we took everything one thing at a time. Then the level was going up. We had to do more things. It was more challenging.

We have played a lot of years together and played big matches, so we know each other. We know what the other does well and likes to do. Gradually with the matches, we sort of saw that the automatic reactions came back individually and as a team. And it was done naturally.

We started well by saying, Okay, if we do something simple, it's good. Let's not do things too complicated.

For the rest of the season, it was already a deal between us. We knew that we wanted to play from Australian Open and other tournaments, but we had both injuries, and so we didn't reconvene. But we were ready for Roland Garros, and the objective is to continue.

Q. Congratulations for this new title. Last time was in 2016, almost a different life. How important is this new title together?

KRISTINA MLADENOVIC: In 2016 it was a dream. We were six years younger, and we were on our first final, if I'm not mistaken, first Grand Slam final, individually and as a team. We were both French in the women's doubles, so it was a dream.

A lot of things happened in between. We both traveled a lot. We have our beautiful experience behind us. Other things happened with Fed Cup, the victory in Fed Cup. Then we played a final at the US Open. Being in strange circumstances, we didn't have any doubles ranking. We hadn't played in doubles for a long time. So we needed a wildcard.

We had small injuries, and we were almost not ready. But we were there. We started playing together. We put every effort playing match after match, so it was really about that.

The focus on the day's opponents, we won, and we advanced in the draw. So we had the energy and confidence that were building up. It was very impressive to be in a Grand Slam final. You don't want to lose a Grand Slam final.

Today this atmosphere, these are memories that we will never forget. It's as special or even more special than before.

I have my experience in finals, I have played, it's always unique, because you never know if you are going to live that moment again. Living that together with Caro, we had the impression that it was France against the U.S. It was like a Fed Cup match and atmosphere. It was amazing to see this crowd present for a final today. A lot of shivers and emotions.

Q. Regarding the audience, how much did it push you forward? There was a massive entry of audience with the band. Did it support you?

CAROLINE GARCIA: They were there at the beginning, the band playing music. There were a lot of people right from the start, and then people came in more and more at second and third set.

In 2016 we had a great support. There was a beautiful atmosphere. But on a Sunday at 11:30 a.m., you never know if the audience will be there, but we knew that our box was ready and they were ready to shout.

But it's incredible chance to have a Grand Slam at home, to play with a partner who has the same nationality. Then you have your crowd 100% cheering you.

So it's a great chance we had. They of course helped us when we were able to change the energy and come back in the second set, we realized that they were supporting us more and more.

Q. Caro, earlier you said there is no more beautiful title than here to win in doubles. Why do you say that? Why is it the place? In English you say you take everything you can, whatever the place. But what does it represent more to be here?

KRISTINA MLADENOVIC: Well, we are French. We play at Roland Garros, which is like at home. We have an incredible chance of having a local Grand Slam. There are just four countries in the world, and players from four countries who have this chance and privilege of feeling that.

When you are on the court and you have a stadium which is full of compatriots, people who are supporting us, cheering us, it's just fabulous.

I agree with Caro, you are two French players. It's very

special.

CAROLINE GARCIA: You have the friends who wake up early in the morning who come to share this moment with you and they encourage you. After the title, you can go and see them, you create memories with your relatives.

This you can only do it in France. You can't do that in Melbourne or in the U.S. It's more complicated. So of course you have your plan, your close relatives who help you on a daily basis.

But having your friends with whom you spend time sometime and then they cheer you up when you have difficult situation. I have friends from Lyon who left Lyon 4:30 a.m. and they are here for you. It's very precious and you create moments together that you will share as memories for your entire life.

Q. You led in three matches and you turned around the situation in those three matches. How did you have the mental strength to turn the situation around?

CAROLINE GARCIA: It's part of the game. We would have liked winning the first sets all the time, but the strength we had is that we were both humble and clear enough to play good points when it was not going well, and have a clear guideline to change the situation.

And also trying to be emotionally stable. We really believed in the changes we wanted to make. We made them. And each time it paid. We are very lucid to analyze the situation and change our plans.

KRISTINA MLADENOVIC: We have a good mental strength. We don't want to pity ourselves, but we want to stay positive, try to progress, find a solution, and go for the victory, despite the scores that were very difficult, I think it was in the third match.

So beautiful attitude personally and also as a team to continue moving forward and believe in what we were doing.

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