

Roland Garros

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Paris, France

Tim Puetz

Miyu Kato

Press Conference



ROLAND-GARROS

PUETZ-KATO/Motos-Stefani

7-6, 6-2

THE MODERATOR: Congratulations on your win today, guys. What were you most pleased about? It was a tough match, very close today as well.

TIM PUETZ: Well, I think most importantly we played a great match against great opponents that won the Australian Open together. Yeah, we played a great match.

I think we keep having fun on court even with what happened yesterday. I think it was very important for both of us to come back there. Maybe also for Miyu to go back to Court 14 and just have some good memories.

THE MODERATOR: Any comments on the match, Miyu, today, today's match? Questions in English, please.

Q. I can obviously see you're really upset. Can you maybe just say how difficult it was to go back out on court today and what your emotions were?

THE MODERATOR: Do you want to answer or take a break?

(Players exit.)

THE MODERATOR: We'll do some Japanese. Then we will attempt some in English.

(National language.)

THE MODERATOR: Questions in English.

Q. Just looking back at what happened yesterday, what are your feelings now because a lot of people have said that they don't think that you should have been defaulted and that you didn't really do anything wrong?

THE MODERATOR: Do you want to try in English to answer?

MIYU KATO: I understand, but I cannot explain in English.

TIM PUETZ: Is there a translator?

Q. Can you say anything in English about what happened yesterday?

TIM PUETZ: I think we just spoke outside now. I'll try to help a little bit. We spoke outside, and I think it's very hard for her to speak English now. Correct me if I say something that you don't want.

I think, first and foremost, we're all, including Miyu, are happy that the ball girl is okay because obviously she got hit. It's a little girl on Court 14. For them they're very excited to be there. I think you saw she was distraught. Firstly, everybody was happy that the ball girl is okay.

Besides that, I'm sure Miyu feels terrible about what happened. This was just very unfortunate for everyone, especially for her and the girl.

Other than that, yeah, I think she put out a statement on social media. I think it said a lot of things. To be honest, I didn't see it so I don't know what she said there, but hopefully there are some things in there that will answer that question.

Q. What did you think, Tim? Did you think it should have been a default?

TIM PUETZ: Good question. No, I don't think so, but I wasn't in that situation on the court like the supervisors were in. Apparently in the rule book we don't have a mechanism where we can look at pictures after or in that moment.

I understand she hit the ball girl. It was not intentional. I don't think it was in anger. I think everybody saw the pictures. It wasn't anything malicious that she did. Nevertheless, it hit the ball girl.

Then two supervisors have to come on court, possibly didn't even see it. All they see is a crying ball girl who got hit with a ball. In that moment to make that decision is very difficult.

While I don't necessarily agree with it, I think I can understand how you would get to that decision. It's much easier now looking at the pictures and then comparing to

some other instances in the past years. Yeah, I think it's very easy to say, No, she should not have been defaulted. I disagree. Yeah, she shouldn't have been defaulted for that.

In that moment to not have the pictures, to not have the option to look at the pictures I think possibly might be something we can add in today's day and age where everything is possible to review kind of, especially on big courts like that.

Yeah, I think it's just overall really unfortunate, especially for the girl who got hit, who probably didn't have a great day yesterday, and also for Miyu, of course, and her partner. A terrible situation.

Q. Tim, actually just wondering what emotional support you've provided when you sort of reached out after the incident, and was there any concern that you might not be able to play today because of the emotional state?

TIM PUETZ: Yeah. To be honest, I wasn't too concerned about the mixed, to be perfectly honest. With what happened yesterday, it was so bad. It wasn't just me. If what happened was going on in the men's locker room, everybody was saying, Oh, impossible to default her. Then immediately you feel so bad for the person.

Now it's Miyu, who happens to be my mixed partner, but I would have felt bad for her if she wasn't my mixed partner. Honestly, I didn't really think about the mixed or not at that point.

I don't know. You try to come up with any solutions to help, but there's not really anything you can do.

So I was happy yesterday when we got the call that we will be allowed to play mixed. Honestly, I was happy, but not so much for the mixed. Not because I care too much about the mixed. It's just because hopefully she can, I don't know, kind of move on.

It would have been really bad if we had just been out of the tournament where then most people would agree that it wasn't the greatest disqualification of all time. You know, maybe not really merited.

Anyways, impossible to go back on that. It happened, and then I'm happy that we can still play a couple of matches here and just hopefully add some good memories to kind of get over it as well instead of just leaving Paris with that really crappy feeling with what happened yesterday.

Q. If Miyu says it in Japanese, you can translate in English. If Miyu could just express her feelings about what happened yesterday and any thoughts she wants to say on the incident. Just her general

feelings basically.

MIYU KATO: (Translated by journalist in room.) She said that when she came to the site today, many players came over to her saying, Put your face ahead, and we are all support you, following you. That is good for her.

And, of course, she is here to play tennis, so for today's match she just walked on the court to play tennis, her best tennis.

TIM PUETZ: She did.

Q. Can I ask a quick question to Tim in English? Personal question: Miyu told us that you are really nice. You speak, of course, German and French and English. The reason that you can speak French is your wife is a French-Belgian; is that correct?

TIM PUETZ: Yeah, her mom and my wife was also born there, so at home they speak French. My wife grew up in French.

I learned it in school, so I had a bit of a head start. Yeah, ever since we're together I speak more French at home, also. Yeah, I'm not perfect. I make mistakes, but I'm very comfortable in French.

Also, it's not difficult for me to speak French, which helps a lot in the tournaments here.

Q. And originally you were supposed to play mixed doubles with Ena; is that right?

TIM PUETZ: With who?

Q. Ena Shibahara.

TIM PUETZ: I don't think so, no.

Q. Sorry.

TIM PUETZ: Maybe she had a plan, but I don't know of it. (Laughing.)

Q. My misunderstanding. I heard that you guys decided to play mixed doubles really last-minute.

TIM PUETZ: Yes. Miyu and I, yes.

Q. Can you talk about how it happened?

TIM PUETZ: Well, I don't play much mixed normally. I never played a whole lot. I played now two tournaments with a girl from Belgium. Her name is Kim Zimmermann. She's the girlfriend of a friend of mine, a German tennis player, a former tennis player.

So I played with her two times, and we wanted to play

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here as well, but we couldn't get in. Then it was, yeah, one minute before the sign-in. I was standing there. I saw, okay, with Kimberly I don't get in.

Miyu was standing there signing with -- I think with Sander Gille. I think so. Also weren't getting in.

It was actually Sander, who was very nice who said, Tim, if you want to play, if you want to be in the main draw, you can play with Miyu because he is not getting in with Miyu anyway, I'm not getting in with Kim.

He said, Okay, this is -- Hi, this is Miyu. I went to her and said, Miyu, Hi, do you want to play? (Laughing.)

Miyu said: Maybe. What is your ranking?

That was the first thing she said. (Laughing.) I said it was 23. I think she was very happy, and I was happy that we were able to get in. That was that.

We exchanged numbers, thought that made sense in that moment. Yeah, then saw her on court for the first time for the first round. Very good from the start. Best mixed partner I ever had. (Laughing.)

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