

National Bank Open

Saturday, August 10, 2024

Toronto, Ontario, Canada

Gabriela Dabrowski

Erin Routliffe

Press Conference



DABROWSKI-ROUTLIFFE/Arseneault-Kupres

3-6, 6-3, 10-4

THE MODERATOR: Who has the first question?

Q. Two gritty wins to start off the tournament. How are you two feeling, first hard-court tournament together since spring, so how are you feeling with how it's going so far?

ERIN ROUTLIFFE: Yeah, I think, yeah, it is our first one in a while, so it's hard always playing on a different surface, and we've had a lot of changes lately going from grass, to clay for Olympics, and then to hard court. I think we're still finding our game, you know. I think it's kind of weird when you play, it's a different kind of vibe I think when you play everybody kind of ranked lower, it doesn't really matter, but they have all got nothing to lose, so they're always going to bring their best tennis. I think that's something that we're still managing, playing at home, half home here.

Yeah, but we've been sticking together in the tough moments, and I think that in the big points that we're showing who we are, and so I think every match we play we're going to try and do that a little bit more.

Q. We just had Mia and Ariana in here, and they were speaking about you as a role model. What advice would you give to two young Canadian up and coming players?

GABRIELA DABROWSKI: Oh, wow, that's really nice. Advice? Well, I think keep trusting the process, whatever the process may be, it's different a little bit for everyone. Yeah, I think they're great players, and they have a really bright future ahead of them, for sure, so keep doing what you're doing, and, yeah, keep being coachable and listening to the people around you, but also trust yourself. There's a balance between the two, because sometimes you can be almost too coachable, so I feel like there's a

balance between ... what? You can be.

ERIN ROUTLIFFE: Yeah, you can be. No, I can never be, but you can be (laughing.)

GABRIELA DABROWSKI: I'm not, but (laughing) I try to find the balance between keeping my ears open for feedback, but then also trusting what I know and my experience, so just, yeah, I'm sure they will be just fine.

ERIN ROUTLIFFE: That's really nice.

Q. Were there any adjustments y'all made after the first set, obviously losing that and then making a comeback, or did you feel like it was more just, we're down a set, we've really got to focus, and that focus kind of raised your level?

GABRIELA DABROWSKI: I think we made more returns, probably.

ERIN ROUTLIFFE: Yeah.

GABRIELA DABROWSKI: I'm not sure if there was anything specific, a little bit mindset maybe, like wanting the ball at the net. I feel like the intentionality pushed us to play better as the second set went on, and into the breaker, but there was nothing major except maybe a little bit of a shift in energy and intentionality.

ERIN ROUTLIFFE: Maybe like with the return thing, like a little bit more of a plan sometimes when returning.

GABRIELA DABROWSKI: Yeah.

ERIN ROUTLIFFE: Because we weren't, I feel like yesterday we were breaking pretty well, we were having more trouble holding today, kind of opposite.

Then in the second set we figured out the returns a little bit more, just definitely we made more, I think maybe because we had just a little bit more of a plan. Nothing really other than that.

Q. Gaby, in her press conference was talking about the origins of your partnership. Gaby was talking about something in terms of, like, she was looking for

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a partner who maybe was committed also in singles, but maybe would be over committed to singles and wouldn't really be able to play doubles, but I'm curious on your side what made her the ideal partner for you, and what were some of those early conversations that you had about the expectations and the commitment that you would have together as a team?

ERIN ROUTLIFFE: That's a good question. You know, to be honest, being, obviously playing for New Zealand, but I'm also Canadian, I've also looked up to Gaby being a predominant doubles player, she's made history in a lot of things.

When I was playing and I was ranked lower, I always kind of, you know, I had my eye on her as a partner, like when you think of, like, dream partners, so she was definitely one of them. Then I slid in when she had a breakup (laughing), and so the timing of it ended up pretty good, and then it ended up good for both of us.

Yeah, so, and I think I saw her game style and I thought it would match well with my game style, or like the game style that I kind of wanted to have. I was always looking for somebody that kind of had similar goals as me, and I never really felt like anyone fit that, they were always in different kind of periods of their career, which we also are, but we have much more similar goals. What was the last part of your question?

Q. It was kind of also about the game styles as well, because you guys seem to really complement each other. How would you describe your own game style, and how have you worked together as a team?

ERIN ROUTLIFFE: Yeah, I think the cool thing about us is we're kind of changing all the time, but I would say that Gaby's amazing at the net, and she's really comfortable at the net. I think that I'm probably more comfortable at the baseline, but I'm trying to be more comfortable at the net. I think together we kind of try and bully players, you know, bully teams, just with our court positioning.

I've always said, practicing with Gaby, my net game has gotten so much better really quickly, because I'm watching her all the time, and I hope she's also improving watching me a little bit. Yeah, I think that was a big part of it was just our games, I thought they would match.

Then a lot of it is just your energy and your vibe together and bringing out the best in each other in really tough moments, because with this scoring it's always about those crunch moments, those game-time points, and I think that we do a pretty good job of, when it comes down to it, supporting each other in those times, and, yeah, that's

probably it.

Q. Last night Gaby, and correct me if I'm wrong on this, I got the sense that you're maybe, I don't know if it's physically or emotionally, but maybe a little bit tired. You mentioned obviously you just got off the Olympics, you went deep, winning a medal, and then you mentioned also Erin's played almost like every week or every week since April or something. How do you manage that and go about being intentional with your scheduling, do y'all do that as a team or individually, answer it, I guess, however you would like.

GABRIELA DABROWSKI: Yeah, in an Olympics year it's really tough, for sure. Sometimes you can't manage the schedule. So we kind of aren't managing the schedule, to be honest. We're both sick, we're both tired, we're both drained, but obviously we want to come to this tournament and show up as the best that we can no matter what. We've tried to do that, and definitely run into a few challenges as we've been here.

Also, like I think a little bit of increased attention with world No. 1, with the bronze medal and stuff like that, things that we're actually not used to, is kind of new territory I think for both of us, especially because doubles just tends to fly under the radar so much. Obviously it's been wonderful to be recognized for our achievements and it feels very validating for all the hard work we've put in for many, many years, but it's definitely been a lot.

Yeah, you can hear in my voice, I'm not totally myself. I've been walking around with a mask today just trying to protect other people. Unfortunately, I don't know if I got Erin sick or what, but we're both kind of in that, in the boat of trying to heal, but it's not easy when we have these matches.

Even though the scoring format is a lot shorter than a slam, it's still takes a lot out of you. Yeah, we're doing the best that we can, but we're certainly not at peak form, but we're pushing through, and that's all we can ask.

Q. Gaby, as someone who has made so much history for Canada, I think it's remarkable that we're going to have at least a Canadian team in the women's doubles in the final, because now you guys are playing the Fernandez sisters, which I think is remarkable, so I'm just curious what your, I guess, impression of that is, and what are your thoughts on the fact that we have reached this point where you can have Canadians also competing in doubles as well as in the singles of these events.

GABRIELA DABROWSKI: Yeah, it's really nice that doubles is getting some recognition in that sense, for sure. I also think today we played girls who play in college, so it's really nice that they got a wildcard. I feel like many years ago that wouldn't have been the choice of the federation to give college girls a wildcard into doubles, so I'm really glad that they made that decision. I think it kind of sets a precedent for the future, that having a college career can mean that you have a lot of success during and afterwards in singles or in doubles, so I think that's interesting and positive.

Leylah plays great doubles, she plays often, Bianca is in college as well, so I think that, yeah, it really just sets the tone that having a college career is definitely a beautiful stepping stone to having a professional one.

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