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K. CLIJSTERS/S. Kuznetsova

6-4, 4-6, 6-2

An interview with:

KIM CLIJSTERS

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. What was your thought in going through this match today?

KIM CLIJSTERS: Again, I think my mindset was really good. I think I started well, although in the first set I think my first serve percentage wasn't -- was the worst I think so far that it's been out of any singles match.

But I really felt like in the rallies that I was dominating the points. Then 3-Love, when I was up 3-Love in the second set, I really felt she was taking risks and going for shots more, kind of going for it no matter what was going to happen.

It worked. A lot of credit to her. She started just hitting a lot of winners and hitting the ball deep and powerful, and some really good serves where I felt pressure straightaway in the beginning of rallies.

After the break, it was nice to, yeah, just kind of go inside and change the socks, get some dry socks on and kind of refresh the feet a little bit. It was really hot out there today. So, yeah, just tried to really stay positive and aggressive from the beginning of the rally, like she was doing.

Just try to take over that a little bit and try to step up in the beginning of the rallies when she had a few second serves. I really tried to step it up there.

Q. How did you feel physically and mentally going to three sets for the first time since you've been back?

KIM CLIJSTERS: Yeah, I have to say I feel really good after this match. It's not that I feel tired or drained or anything. Just a few little aches and pains from getting back into playing matches.

I think the combination of emotions and playing matches, you know, these intense matches, it has a different impact on your body than when -- even if you have really tough work-outs or running sessions where you would expect to be more sore.

I think because the mental aspect plays a big role I think in the way you feel and the way that your body adjusts, I think, as well. It's aches and pains, but nothing's obviously holding me back from playing well and doing what I want to do.

Q. Is it as satisfying to beat her in three sets as it would have been to win a match like this in two sets?

KIM CLIJSTERS: Yeah, to be honest with you, I knew that I wasn't gonna -- I worked really hard on my fitness, and I knew that wasn't gonna be a key out there for me today. It was obviously the level, and my tennis felt like was the biggest key.

Physically, I know that I don't have to worry about that unless there's some injuries. Obviously that's when you have to be a little bit more careful out there.

But physically-wise, I felt like I've been training harder than ever. I didn't doubt myself.

Q. But mentally because she's a step up?

KIM CLIJSTERS: Of course. That's the other thing. The experience that she's had over the last few years, winning a Slam this year and beating some good players and hard hitters.

Again, that's something where I think she took over. That experience came up in the second set when she was down, and she really started stepping up her game.

Like I said, I was glad she didn't step it up another notch in the third set.

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Q. You could face the world No. 1, Dinara Safina next. Have you put any thought into your next match and what it might be like to face her?

KIM CLIJSTERS: Dinara, like I said a few days ago in I think my first press conference here, I think she's had the biggest impact on me when I was off, when I was not playing. I think I saw her obviously a few years ago, and I played her a couple times, I think.

She was also a girl who could hit the ball really well and had a good serve, but wasn't the best mover out there and wasn't the fittest girl. To look at her now, you can tell she's in really good shape and that she's worked on a lot of things, and also mentally I think she's improved a lot.

Those were, I think -- she was the biggest -- to me, she had -- yeah, I noticed her change the most out of any other player out there. It's going to be tough. I mean, she's had very consistent results.

And, yeah, I think she was always a girl who could hit the ball really deep and mix it up a little bit, good serve, comes in, good volleys. The movement was lacking, and now that she's fitter and has lost some weight, I think that has helped her a lot, I think, on this part that was missing in the past.

Q. At what stage in your comeback or second career does the situation come where you start expecting to win and looking ahead?

KIM CLIJSTERS: I don't know. You know, I always -- I mean, when I'm out there I always want to win. Every shot that you play is, you know, with the best interest that you want to do well.

Once in a while it's, yeah, you lose the ball a little bit. I think that's something that I noticed in the last few matches. I start losing the ball a little bit sometimes. I think that's something that I have to get used to sometimes. It's the eyesight and also playing the different type of players.

I think in the match it feels good, but once in a while when I play different players, I really feel like the eyesight and following the ball, that's where I felt like that's something that I have to just get used to a little bit more.

You know, there's patches where my level is really good, and also there's a few dips. I'm not saying I didn't have that in the past, but that's something that I would definitely try to stay a little more consistent out there.

Q. Do you consider it a second career?

KIM CLIJSTERS: Yes. Definitely. You know, so many things have changed. My comeback, if you talk about a comeback, I think I already had my comeback after I had my wrist surgery. That felt more like a comeback than what this is now.

This is, to me, totally different. Yeah, that's the feeling I have. Yeah. Totally different this time.

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