

Miami Open presented by Itaú

Thursday, March 31, 2022

Miami, Florida, USA

Belinda Bencic

Mixed Zone Interview



N. OSAKA/B. Bencic

4-6, 6-3, 6-4

Q. What happened there after the first set? Seemed like Naomi picked up her serve a lot. Can you talk about changes you noticed from her in that match?

BELINDA BENCIC: Yeah, the momentum definitely shifted a little bit. I felt like it started off to be a little bit windy. The wind was kind of swirling around.

For sure, yeah, she started to serve better a little bit, and I felt like I couldn't, also maybe with the wind a little bit, but I didn't go through my balls so much. You know, they had just a little bit less on it.

Yeah, definitely she played great. I don't think I have to be like too hard on myself, because, I mean, even in the third set I had some break chances for 3-1, and she really pulled out some great serves. Definitely, you know, credits to her.

Yeah, I mean, it was a tough match. I fell one break short. I can definitely be happy with how I played this tournament and with how I got back, so definitely disappointed but in a positive way.

Q. What were the things you thought were working for you? She was talking about how good your returns were. Do you feel like you were reading her serve well early on?

BELINDA BENCIC: Well, first of all, I think she served exceptionally well today. I definitely think that I can read her serves good. I'm returning good against her. But I think that's just a strength of my game.

Definitely all credits to her. She was very good today, exceptionally on serve. Just as I said, I have nothing to be hard on myself too much, because, you know, I had some good chances. I pushed her under pressure and today she pulled it off.

Maybe next time she will, you know, I will pull it off under these circumstances, but it's a key to always push your

opponent until the maximum. Obviously now when it's tight and when the pressure is on, then it either goes this way or this way. Today it went her way, and she did very well.

Q. What were the things she was doing best in those big moments?

BELINDA BENCIC: Serve.

Q. When you're going into the match, can you talk about how you prepare for her? Was there old footage you watched of her? If so, how much has she changed since the last couple of meetings you guys have had?

BELINDA BENCIC: I think I prepare on these matches just for my game. I don't look at her too much, because I feel like my instincts are prepared and they are just there, you know, so I don't have to think too much.

I think that's the biggest part, you know, of my anticipation. I feel like it's very instinctive and it's there. I just try to not basically, try to, how you say, interfere with my instincts, so I don't try to prepare too much.

I think, you know, it went well today, as well. I think it was a great match, and I think it was the same kind of buildup like the last three matches. I just think this time it went on her side in pressure moments, and, I mean, that's fair enough. She's a great champion so she deserves it, and yeah, she pulled it off today.

Q. Your matches with her, you guys, they are very good matches in terms of entertainment and everything that goes into it. What stands out to the overall battles you guys have back and forth?

BELINDA BENCIC: I mean, you know, she has a very different game than mine. Probably I think that's very interesting to watch. I mean, I don't see myself play against her, so you have to say.

But for sure, you know, I can see why it's interesting. She serves big and has big shots. For me it's a little bit different. My game doesn't seem that spectacular. But then I can anticipate a lot and just my instincts kick in, and I can redirect and take the ball early.

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So I think it's a very good, yeah, matchup to watch, as well.
So I'm always looking forward to these matches. I think all four of them always are very interesting.

Q. How much confidence do you take out of this run this week going forward into clay?

BELINDA BENCIC: Yeah, definitely a lot of confidence. I'm happy I managed to make a good tournament here. I'm happy I kind of came out of my troubles a little bit.

I started playing better, feeling better on the court, breathing better. Yeah, looking forward to the clay. I mean, it's not my best surface, but at least I had some good week for the confidence. Hopefully I can continue like that, and for sure I feel like I'm back.

Q. What do you think about the setup here with the football stadium, tennis facility and F1 course, and God only knows what they're going to build next. Did you get a chance to see much of it? What do you think of what they are doing here? It's very unusual.

BELINDA BENCIC: Yeah, I mean, I definitely appreciate all the initiative and the work. I mean, it's definitely not easy to put a tennis tournament like this together.

If I'm completely honest, I definitely liked it more in Key Biscayne. I definitely felt like that was more of a tennis tournament. Sometimes when you practice it feels like you're stranded in the parking lot a little bit.

I mean, it's very nice, like don't get me wrong. It was nice to play on the center court, and, I mean, everything what they put together, it's great, but, you know, sometimes I prefer kind of the tennis tournaments (smiling).

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