



CHAMPION'S PRESS HIGHLIGHTS

Alison Riske
2019 Libéma Open

WTATENNIS.COM

'I CAN'T POSSIBLY BE BAGELED IN A FINAL': RISKE DOWNS BERTENS IN DRAMATIC DEN BOSCH FINALE

WTA
June 16, 2019



Alison Riske of the United States finished off a tremendous week by fighting off five championship points on her way to an upset of top seed and home favorite Kiki Bertens, 0-6, 7-6(3), 7-5, to win her second career WTA singles title at the Libéma Open on Sunday.

World No.61 Riske won her first title in her first final appearance at Tianjin in 2014, but had lost her next six singles finals since that point, including at Shenzhen earlier this year.

At last, the American added to her singles trophy tally with her two-hour and 19-minute comeback win over the No.1 seed.

By defeating the World No.4, Riske earned her second victory over a Top 5 player, with her previous victory over a member of that echelon coming in Shenzhen in 2017, when she defeated then-World No.3 Agnieszka Radwanska.

Riske had also pulled off an epic fightback in her semifinal win over Veronika Kudermetova, and she continued her steely ways on Sunday, withstanding not just the five match points, but also a barrage of 14 aces from big-serving Bertens, as well as a 30-minute rain delay in the decider.

"I'm just really proud of myself. I looked at the clock, and it was 6-0, 1-0 at 32 minutes in, and I thought, 'I can't possibly be bageled in a final,'" Riske said.

"I had faith that things would turn around at some point, I just wasn't sure when. I thought maybe it was too late, even when I broke back to make it 4-3, but I stayed in there and I fought for every point."

The American was more solid on second serve during the tilt, winning 65 percent of those points compared to Bertens's 47 percent effectiveness after that shot.



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Bertens also missed seven of her 12 break points -- which included the five championship points in the latter stages of the second set.

Bertens was commanding in the first set, although the Dutchwoman had to get through some tricky service games at the start of the encounter. A double fault in the first game gave Riske an early break point, but Bertens's stellar serving got her out of that jam, en route to an initial hold. The top seed then used a fierce forehand to force an error and earn a service break for 2-0.

Bertens once again stared down break point in her next service game, but Riske let a backhand fly long on that chance. The World No.4 again used her vaunted delivery to blast herself out of trouble, holding for a 3-0 lead with back-to-back aces at the end of that game.

Having survived those tests, the Dutchwoman took control of the set from there. After breaking Riske again, Bertens held at love for 5-0 with a screaming forehand passing winner down the line. In the next game, Bertens reached set point with another down-the-line passing winner, this time off the backhand, and converted for the one-set lead after a long volley by Riske.

She was 6-0, 1-4 down, she's saved five championship points...and now @riske4rewards is about to go into a second-set tiebreak with Kiki Bertens!#LibemaOpen

Despite a tense moment in the second game of the second set where Bertens took an immediate mid-game medical time-out after a slip and fall, the Dutchwoman seemed to be cruising to a straight-set victory, breaking Riske via another pinpoint forehand passing shot on break point to lead 3-1.

As the second set progressed, however, the American started to minimize her miscues, and her net-rushing tactics began to pay off. Bertens missed a backhand pass to drop serve for the first time, and Riske, back on serve at 4-3, was into the contest.

Still, Bertens had numerous chances to take a straight-set victory. The World No.4 had three match points at 5-4, but Riske came through with more clutch volleying to hold for 5-5.

Bertens then had two more match points at 6-5, but Riske saved the fourth with another winning volley, then smashed away a lob on the fifth, eventually holding for 6-6.

"I really respect Kiki and her coach, to be honest. I think they've done amazing things. When I was down the match points, I saved them all by winning volleys, and it was my only choice to come forward and try to finish it off," said Riske.

"If it didn't work out, it didn't work out, but I truly believed it was my only chance. I'm proud that I took that risk, and in the end, it worked to my advantage."

In the second-set tiebreak, Riske raced ahead 3-0, and Bertens was never able to pull back despite regaining her strong serving.

The American polished off a rally with one more volley winner to reach triple set point at 6-3, and after a wide Bertens backhand on the subsequent point, Riske had completed her second-set comeback from the brink of defeat.

Bertens regrouped to take an early lead in the decisive third set, using an error-forcing backhand dropshot to break the Riske serve at love and lead 2-1, but Riske pulled back level shortly thereafter, converting a break point to reach 3-3.

During that point, rain started to pour down, necessitating a rain delay of about half an hour.



"When I broke back to make it 3-3 in the third and the rain came, I felt like I had some momentum at that point," Riske said.

"I felt like I was in control of what I was trying to do, finally. I thought that if I stayed on it, I would probably be able to pull it out."

Upon resumption, Riske won the first five points, although Bertens stayed with the American en route to a 5-5 tie. But Riske was zoning on serve at this juncture, holding at love for 6-5 after a forehand dropshot winner.

At long last, the American got her shot to clutch another WTA singles trophy, as a winning volley in that game brought her to double championship point. On the first, a wide forehand error by Bertens sent Riske into the winner's circle for the first time in five years.

"Not only to have won that type of a match, but that it was a title match, I think that's really awesome," Riske said.

"I've been in a few finals since the last one that I won, and I wasn't able to pull it out. To do that today in such a fashion, was extra special."



RISKE SAVES FIVE CHAMPIONSHIP POINTS AGAINST BERTENS TO CLAIM LIBEMA

Tennis.com - Ashley Ndebele
June 16, 2019

On Sunday, 61st-ranked Alison Riske mounted a courageous comeback against top-seeded Kiki Bertens to claim her second career WTA title. The American was down 6-0, 4-1 before clawing her way back to upset Bertens, 0-6, 7-6 (3), 7-5, on home soil in 's-Hertogenbosch.

"I'm just really proud of myself. I looked at the clock, and it was 6-0, 1-0 at 32 minutes in, and I thought, 'I can't possibly be bageled in a final,'" Riske said. "I had faith that things would turn around at some point, I just wasn't sure when. I thought maybe it was too late, even when I broke back to make it 4-3, but I stayed in there and I fought for every point."





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Bertens was aiming to win her third title of the season, having captured St. Petersburg and Madrid. In May, the Dutchwoman had to retire from her French Open second-round match due to illness. Five games into her match against Viktoria Kuzmova, Bertens told doctors on court she was shaking and had no energy.

Riske was coming off a win at the ITF \$100,000 event in Surbiton last week, a grass-court tournament. The world No. 61, who reached a career-high ranking of No. 36 in 2015, had not won a title since claiming her maiden trophy in Tianjin five years ago.

In the championship match, Bertens overwhelmed the American with her big serves and ground strokes, claiming the opening bagel set. With a break in the second, things were looking good for the Dutchwoman before the match took a turn as Riske, who had lost to the world No. 4 in all three of their previous encounters, began to assert herself. The top seed regrouped in the decider, breaking the American at love in the third game. Her fortune didn't last long, however, as Riske made yet another comeback, clinching the match with a break in the 12th game.

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REUTERS

AMERICAN RISKE STUNS HOME FAVORITE BERTENS TO LIFT TITLE IN ROSMALEN

Reuters – Shubham Kalia
June 16, 2019

American Alison Riske recovered from an opening set bagel and saved five championship points as she stunned home favorite Kiki Bertens 0-6 7-6(3) 7-5 to lift the Libema Open title in Rosmalen on Sunday.

Bertens had three match points at 5-4 in the second set, but her American opponent came through with a string of volleys at the net to hold for 5-5.

The Dutch top seed then had two more match points in the 12th game, but Riske saved one of them with a volley, and then produced a sublime lob shot to force a tiebreak. Riske raced ahead 3-0 in the tiebreak and eventually won it 7-3.

Both players exchanged early breaks in the decider before rain interrupted play at 3-3.

Riske returned stronger to break her Dutch opponent in the final game to clinch her first title, five years after her first in Tianjin.

The defeat comes as a blow for world number four Bertens, who was chasing her third title of the season following victories in St Petersburg and Madrid earlier this season.



RISKE SAVES FIVE CHAMPIONSHIP POINTS TO STUN BERTENS

Sports Max
June 16, 2019

Alison Riske saved five championship points in the second set before beating home hope Kiki Bertens to take the Rosmalen Grass Court Championships title in the Netherlands on Sunday.

American world number 61 Riske was a set and a break down but scrambled for a 0-6 7-6 (7-3) 7-5 victory over Dutch top seed and world number four Bertens.

Victory from the brink of defeat for Riske gave her a first WTA Tour title since October 2014, when she beat Belinda Bencic in the Tianjin Open final, and a maiden grass-court triumph.



It also meant she snapped a run of six successive final losses and handed Bertens defeat in her first championship match on the surface.

Riske said in an on-court speech: "I'm just so grateful for an awesome week and I look forward to being back again next year."

Riske had lost her three previous matches against

Bertens and looked destined to suffer the same fate in Den Bosch before the momentum turned dramatically.

Bertens had taken a fall early in the second set, requiring treatment, but there was no immediate impact on her performance at that stage.

Riske got over the line after a 30-minute rain delay, teeing up two match points with a volleyed winner and seeing the first converted when Bertens fired a forehand wide.

★EUROSPORT

RISKE STUNS HOME FAVOURITE BERTENS TO LIFT TITLE IN ROSMALEN

Eurosport
June 16, 2019

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