

Miami Open presented by Itaú

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Miami, Florida, USA

Ashleigh Barty

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. If I'm not mistaken, this is probably the first time you left Australia since all of this started. I'm wondering, how was the process like for you? Any anxieties getting on the plane? How are you feeling being in Miami at the moment?

ASHLEIGH BARTY: Yeah, I think we're extremely excited to be back playing and have the opportunity to come out here and feel like we're in a very safe environment, to be able to play and enjoy what we do.

It was certainly bizarre leaving Australia. We had quite a lengthy trip over here, had a couple flight cancellations. It turned out to be a near 50-hour trip to get here. Certainly not the easiest one getting over here.

Nice to be back competing, doing what we love. Obviously a tournament we have so many good memories. This week for me a couple years was one of the best of my career where I played consistent tennis throughout the whole week.

Looking forward to challenging myself once again to try to bring that tennis.

Q. I don't know how far ahead you're looking in terms of scheduling. When you left Australia, how long are you mentally preparing yourself to be away from home? Given all of the circumstances, it might be a long stretch for you.

ASHLEIGH BARTY: Yeah, it's an adventure for us. It's a new experience. It's something that we haven't done before, Tyz and I. When leaving Australia, it was quite hard to leave and quite emotional to me. But I think we're excited to have the opportunity to play the whole season. So I think we're looking at staying away the whole season.

Touch wood, everything goes well with the rest of the world, where we'll be traveling to and playing tournaments, we'll be able to play safely and feel really comfortable. I think we can't plan too far ahead. As we know, everything can still change so rapidly.

But we're planning as best as we can and just preparing for some changes. We had to be fluid with some of our decisions, but we're looking forward to it.

Q. Did you say 50 hours to get here as in 5-0? If so, can you tell us the itinerary.

ASHLEIGH BARTY: It was a long one. It was about 48 hours, 45 hours door-to-door, for us. What should have been quite a simple Brisbane-Sydney, Sydney to L.A., L.A. on to Miami is usually quite an easy trip. We had a flight cancellation leaving Australia, another flight cancellation when we got to L.A. It was quite a wriggle around.

Now we're here. Tough playing tennis after traveling again. Quite a while since I've done that. I'm looking forward to feeling good in another day's time and we'll be ready to go.

Q. Being the defending champion here, even though it's been two years, how did it feel for you coming back to the grounds? Did it all come back to you?

ASHLEIGH BARTY: Yeah, it's an incredible site here. Obviously in 2019 it was the first time the tournament had moved here. It was new for everyone. The center court was extraordinary. Even though we're without it this year, the site still feels extremely welcoming. Certainly some really good memories.

As I said earlier, this week a couple years ago was one of the best of my career. I'm looking forward to hopefully bringing some of my best tennis again and giving myself a chance to play a few matches and really get stuck into the tournament.

Q. I know you're a big golfer, have been competing in golf. What makes you love golf so much? How does it differ in the competition when you're in a tournament compared to tennis?

ASHLEIGH BARTY: I do love my golf. My family was more of a golfing family than anything else. My dad was a very good golfer back in the day. Obviously my partner is a golfer, as well. For me, it's something I've always kind of



been around, been involved in.

I love that you can slow down playing golf. You can spend four and a half, five hours walking around in nature, kind of feet on the grass, really slowing down, whereas tennis can be quite a quick pace, quick decision making. It's a little bit of the opposite. It's something very different but something I enjoy as a hobby.

Q. The current depth in women's tennis, the WTA, does it surprise you at all that through the first 13 tournaments there's only been one repeat champion so far this season?

ASHLEIGH BARTY: Yeah, I feel like we've had this conversation over a number of years now, where it was almost a surprise to a lot of people that the depth was so good in the WTA. But to all of the players and certainly everyone that I speak to, it's a testament to everyone who's out here working their backside off, trying to be the best that they can be.

It's amazing to think there is so much depth. It makes for a really healthy competition knowing every single match you have to be near your best level to compete. That brings out the best in everyone. It pushing everyone to continue to drive to be better.

But, yeah, I've been asked this question quite a number of times over the last three or four years. To me it's quite surprising that everyone is still surprised, if that makes sense. I feel like the tour has an exceptional depth now. It's really exciting for everyone moving forward.

Q. I'm writing a story about Naomi's latest run. What do you think about her after watching her matches, especially since return from the break? What ways do you think she's matured as a player? How do you think she's gotten so strong as of late?

ASHLEIGH BARTY: Which break are you referring to?

Q. Since the return from the shutdown.

ASHLEIGH BARTY: Well, I mean, it's hard for me to comment purely because I don't watch a lot of tennis. I've probably seen all of 30 or 40 minutes of tennis over the last 12 or 13 months. It's not something that I ever flick on and watch.

Having not played Naomi, either, it's hard for me to really comment.

She's certainly on an exceptional run. She knows she can bring her best to the biggest tournaments. That's what we

all strive to do. She's doing it the best at the moment I think.

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