

Miami Open presented by Itaú

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Miami, Florida, USA

Ashleigh Barty

Press Conference



A. BARTY/V. Azarenka

6-1, 1-6, 6-2

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. What would you say was the key to winning today, and especially having to come back from dropping the middle set the way it turned out?

ASHLEIGH BARTY: Yeah, I think the first two sets probably had some pretty big momentum swings, but I think the third set was a real tussle. Particularly through that middle part I think from 1-All, 2-All, 3-2, those games in the third set turned out to be pivotal, but it was just about staying the course and over time trying to execute my game plan as best I can and try and kind of bring it back onto my racquet where I felt I was in control a little bit more in that third set and had a little bit better court position.

Q. Now that you've got a few matches under your belt in Miami, one which you saved a match point and now you have beaten a couple of Grand Slam champions, have you somewhat adapted to playing in Miami?

ASHLEIGH BARTY: It is a little bit different this year. The courts are playing a little bit differently. But, I mean, I was prepared to play and ready to play right from the first point of the tournament.

I'm just excited now that I get to be in another quarterfinal of a big event. We get an opportunity to play another tough match against whoever it may be. I think they are on the court at the moment, but we look forward to it. We look forward to continuing to try and refine our skills.

I still feel like there is a lot better tennis left out there for me. I still don't feel like I'm playing my very best just yet, but I'm fighting through and I'm finding ways to win, which is great.

Q. What were your emotions as the match progressed? It was like being on the roller coaster at Luna Park, turns and twists, wasn't it?

ASHLEIGH BARTY: Yeah, I don't like roller coasters, so I think roller coasters during a tennis match is enough for me. But I think, you know, playing against Vika you have to be ready right from the first point, and I felt like I did that well in the first set and she gave me a few cheap errors.

Then through the second she lifted her intensity. And, you know, I probably wasn't sharp enough in those first couple of games to be able to go with her, particularly with new balls. When Vika is ahead and she's a front runner, she's the very best in the world.

She shifted her court position. I don't think I won a single point on second serve in that second set, and that's just a testament to how good she is off that first strike off the return.

The third set was brilliant. I think it was a great tussle and a point either way probably decides that match.

Q. Was it an element of frustration for you? Because you also had breakpoints I think in the second set a couple of times, and then it was a bit of a struggle, even though you did consolidate the break, you really had to go all out to do that. So was there some element of frustration through this match?

ASHLEIGH BARTY: Of course there is, but frustration is not always a source that's going to deter me from trying to go about things the right way.

So I think, yeah, you have to be able to tip your hat to a champion when she can come up with some of the brilliant stuff that she did. You know, I have the utmost respect for Vika. I know she's going to fight for every single ball and keep bringing the heat regardless of what the score is. I think sometimes in those service games, trying to consolidate a break or trying to break back, whatever it may be, for her, it's just another point and it's just another battle within every single point.

Q. When you look back on the first match you played, being match point down and winning that, and then winning this one the way you did, which one would you say was a more satisfying and more relieved result for you?



ASHLEIGH BARTY: Neither. I think the description of those words, I think both very different matches against different opponents, different styles of tennis.

I know that any time you come back from match point it's always, you know, you're teetering on the edge, you're right on the brink. But today I felt like there were almost, in a sense, some mini match points, if that makes sense, in some really pivotal moments.

It's just about trying to play each point as best you can regardless of whether it's match point up or down or 30-All, whatever the score may be. It's about trying to stick to that process as best as possible.

Q. It really seems like you feel very comfortable in Miami. The conditions are not that easy here but you have done really well, obviously 2019 the breakthrough you had here and then here so far. Is there something about Miami or the conditions here that you think is favorable to you?

ASHLEIGH BARTY: I think the conditions itself are quite similar to Brisbane with the heat and the humidity. Without a doubt, it's tough. I was suffering through a few cramps in my first-round match, but I was able to get through those.

I think without a doubt it's an adjustment, but I was born and kind of bred in the hot, humid weather. Very much when we come here to Miami it feels like home in a sense where it's quite familiar. Doesn't make it any easier, but familiar.

So I think I enjoy the conditions. You know, I enjoy the courts and the balls. I know that when I bring my best I try and be extremely difficult to beat for all the girls.

Q. If my math is right, I think you have won 17 of your last 20 three-setters. In a strange way, do you enjoy going the distance? Why are you so comfortable, does it seem, in third sets?

ASHLEIGH BARTY: That's a cool stat. I hope you're right. They are good stats to have.

No, I think it's just about staying in the fight. It's about not relenting, not giving up, regardless of whether you lose a set or you're down a break, whatever it might be. I think it's just about trying to hang around.

I have worked my backside off off the courts to make sure that I feel like I'm in a good physical condition to play tennis and I'm ready to play matches, but it's just about competing. Competing over a long period is something

that I find really fun and really enjoyable.

Q. You talked in an earlier interview of planning possibly being away from Australia for a lot of months now. You talked about setting up some sort of base somewhere you can go back to between tournaments, because it's a long stretch and you'll have some time off presumably whether that's in Florida or somewhere in Europe or somewhere like that. What might you do if there is such a base to make that base feel more like home? Would you possibly have any family or friends travel up from Australia to be there with you for stretches, or what do you try to do to be a northern hemisphere resident for this long stretch here?

ASHLEIGH BARTY: Yeah, it is different without a doubt. I think at the moment it's difficult to plan. I mean, not quite knowing exactly what our schedule looks like, I mean, things can change so rapidly.

We also have to have some flexibility, but for the moment, we don't have a base as such. I'm sure I will make a few phone calls and call up some mates and see if we can crash at their place wherever they may be in the world. We are fortunate to have friends all around the world that played tennis previously or we know from kind of a personal side.

But we'll just kind of go with the flow a little bit and try and work it as best that we can to what suits.

Q. Looking ahead, you've got either Vondrousova or Sabalenka, they're on court right now, very different types of opponents. Can you just talk through the challenges of playing each?

ASHLEIGH BARTY: Yeah, very different. Obviously played Marketa a few times, on all surfaces we have played, as well. And, you know, she can do a lot with a tennis ball. She can maneuver the ball all around the court and has a real knack of putting you in an uncomfortable position.

I think that's a matchup that we look forward to. It's a different challenge to what Aryna can bring. And obviously she's exceptionally powerful and loves to take that first strike on and move you off the baseline as quickly as she can and get in control.

I think very different matchups but matchups that I enjoy, both of them genuinely, and regardless of who it is, I feel like I will really need to be able to play my best to be able to compete and really stay in it.

Q. I'm noticing your hat there with the initials. I've

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®

seen a lot more, especially WTA players, have their own initial-based logos. Wondering if that's something you're at all trying to make sort of merch for your fans? Tennis fans over the years wish there was a way like to buy the jersey or the kit or whatever swag from their favorite players and be able to show up to an event and look like they are repping their fav. Is that something you're working on? Do you see it as a larger trend with other players in the locker room, having their own monograms at this point?

ASHLEIGH BARTY: Yeah, it was really cool. We took a lot of time to design it. I know it looks quite simple and sleek, but I think I like that. I feel like it suits me.

It was really cool to do the launch of kind of our logo, and particularly with the LOE, we did it in a way where we were able to give away a few T-shirts to some young girls playing tennis and at clubs. That was a really exciting way for me to launch it, and Fila helped us out with that.

It's something that we're excited to start, but these ones were just a demo. Hopefully there is a little bit more coming soon.

Q. More coming to shelves for people to buy them?

ASHLEIGH BARTY: We'll see. I haven't thought that far ahead yet, but this one fits my head all right, so hopefully we can make a few more.

Q. The other day when I was talking to you about being away for so long and you were saying right through to the end of the year, I was going to ask, is the other half going to meet you anywhere? Are your parents going to meet you at Wimbledon or the French, knowing full well that the vaccines or anything like that it's going to be difficult, and then quarantining once they get back to Australia? Have you thought that through, any plans on that?

ASHLEIGH BARTY: We have. It's probably difficult for my parents to travel. Obviously they will be getting the vaccine once they are kind of rolled out in Australia for the three different phases, and obviously they have to stick to their phase.

They will do what they can to get the vaccine, but they will stay at home with my sister and nieces and nephews and kind of hold down the fort there.

At some stage Garry will come over. We're not quite sure when yet but much the same. He'll try and get the vaccine before he comes, but if it doesn't work, it doesn't work. If it does, I'd love to have him over here. We'll just kind of see

again. We don't really have a lot more information than we did just a couple of weeks ago. We will see how we go and try and get it done if we can.

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