

Miami Open presented by Itaú

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Miami, Florida, USA

Ashleigh Barty

Press Conference



A. BARTY/B. Andreescu

6-3, 4-0 [Ret.]

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. Congratulations on the week, on a title. Not the end that you were expecting. How would you say you felt for Bianca today after being forced to retire?

ASHLEIGH BARTY: Yeah, it's never the way you ever want to finish a match, particularly in a final. I really do feel for Bianca. I think she's had such a rough trot with injuries in the past.

I think that's going to be one of the first of many battles for us. I just hope from now on they are healthy and we can both stay out on the court and fight for everything that we can give.

Obviously I feel for her having to pull out today.

Q. What were your thoughts exactly on how she played? I know it's the first time you played each other. Just your general look on her.

ASHLEIGH BARTY: Yeah, it was pretty tricky conditions today, really blustery on court. It's hard to get a true indication of kind of both of our games, I think. Like you said, first time we played, first time we have hit together.

Of course there is a period where you're trying to work out what you want to try and do, but the conditions were brutal today. It was nice just to try and find my way through it a little bit in the end.

Q. Congratulations. You have been No. 1 in the rankings for a long time now, and even for a long time you were not traveling with the tour. The tour was stopped, things like that. Do you feel like leaving Australia for the first time in a long time, coming here to Miami and winning a title of this caliber, do you feel like you proved anything to yourself or to anyone else about what you're still capable of and where your game is still at in terms of being a No. 1?

ASHLEIGH BARTY: Yeah, I never have to prove anything to anyone. I know all the work that I do with my team behind the scene. I know there has been a lot of talk about the ranking, but I didn't play at all last year and I didn't improve any of my points whatsoever.

Yes, I didn't drop but I didn't improve any. I didn't play any at all. There were girls who had the chance to improve theirs, so I felt like I thoroughly deserve my spot at the top of the rankings. The year we had in 2019 was incredible, incredible for us, and, you know, to be able to build on that now since the restart for us has been great, but certainly in my eyes we come out here and do the best that we can regardless of what anyone is saying. So I never feel like I have to prove anything to anyone.

Q. Was that always easy for you when you were hearing things like Barty is not No. 1 because she's not playing and Osaka has won two slams in a row and where is Barty? Does that ever get to you at any point in the last year?

ASHLEIGH BARTY: No, I mean, everyone is entitled to their own opinion. That's absolutely fine. I can't control what anyone else thinks or what anyone else says. For me I just keep trying to do what we do.

Yeah, I mean, I feel like we deserve to be top of the rankings. We have had such a fantastic season. Also, I think everyone needs to understand that it's a pandemic. It's probably a once-in-a-lifetime thing for a lot of us to go through, so it's a bit of a difficult situation.

But, yeah, no, it doesn't ever really get to me. I mean, it's just what people say and I can't change their opinion, so it doesn't stress me out at all.

Q. Congratulations on the two titles. What do you feel like as a competitor when you see your opponent kind of crouched down on the other side and making that difficult decision that she's going to stop? How do you feel as the person across the court from her?

ASHLEIGH BARTY: Yeah, no, it's heartbreaking. It is. Any time you see someone kind of crippled with injury, it's

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never nice. I think as athletes we all know what it feels like, and unfortunately for Bianca she knows that feeling all too well.

I think for her it's -- you know, I just hope this injury doesn't hinder her season because she's an exceptional player. She's proved time and time again that she belongs at the very top. She belongs to play the very best in the world. And she's always there in big events, so I think for her it's a matter of getting healthy and I just hope that she can recover quickly, recover well, and that it doesn't hinder her season.

Q. Congratulations. I just wanted to know if you could provide some perspective for us looking back on your 44-, 50-hour trip to get here? How does it feel having that on the back burner to be holding the trophy here and having the championship?

ASHLEIGH BARTY: Yeah, it feels like a long time ago. It felt like a long trip. I did say to my coach when we finally got here, Well, it can only get better from here.

The fact now we have had a really successful couple of weeks I felt like with each match I have been playing better and better, which is ultimately what we are after, and to be able to have the title at the end is a bonus, and to be able to defend my title the first time in my career I've been able to do that is really, really special too.

Q. Congrats on the win. Your serve was really effective today as it has been the entire tournament. What makes your serve so great? You're not among the tallest players on the tour. You don't have that advantage naturally. But it's still probably one of the best serves in the world if not "the" best. What do you think is the key factor to your serve being so successful?

ASHLEIGH BARTY: I love to practice my serve. You know, it's the one shot in tennis that you have full control over as kind of as yourself. It's the only shot where you really have the time to think where you want to place a serve and then get up and try and execute. We practice it a lot, and I have always wanted to make my serve a weapon.

Not all the time is it a weapon, but I felt like today, particularly with the conditions, I was able to serve in smart positions to then put the ball where I wanted it to come back.

Q. The other women who have won consecutive Miami titles are named Graf, Seles, Sanchez Vicario, Williams and Williams. What's your reaction to joining that

group?

ASHLEIGH BARTY: I feel like I shouldn't belong with that group. I feel like I haven't earned the right to be in a list of names with those champions. They are genuine champions of our sport, legends of our sport. I feel very privileged to be mentioned in that sentence, and it's very cool and something I was unaware of.

But, yeah, I think it's extremely humbling to be mentioned in the same sentence as those champions, but I feel like I've got a long, long way to go yet before I can be in discussion with those names.

Q. Clay season is coming. Do you know which tournaments will you play?

ASHLEIGH BARTY: We'll start in Charleston next week, which I'm excited to get on the green clay in Charleston. We'll look forward to getting over to Europe and get on some red clay in Stuttgart, Madrid, Rome. That's the plan for us. Looking forward to it.

Stuttgart is a new tournament for me. Madrid, I love playing there, and obviously Rome is a beautiful city before we go into Paris. Hopefully, touch wood, all the cities can stay safe and we can play environments where we are safe and can go out there and do what we love doing.

Q. You're going into clay season for the first time as a French Open sort of reigning champion, since you last got there. How different do you think your attitude is towards clay this time just knowing what you have done on that surface, what you can do maybe than it was the start of your 2019 clay swing?

ASHLEIGH BARTY: Yeah, don't get me wrong, I'm still counting down the days to the grass season, without a doubt, but, yeah, it's going to be an interesting time of year. I think probably in 2019, throughout each week that I played, I felt like I got better and better on the clay and obviously grew in confidence and grew in experience.

I think, you know, it doesn't always end up with positive results, but I think the lessons that I learnt throughout the 2019 season will definitely hold me in good stead going into this year. If it turns out we have a great clay court season, that's fantastic, and if we don't, then it's not the end of the world.

Yeah, I think our attitude doesn't really change much. I think it's more we just go out there, do what we can, and use the experience that we gained in 2019 without a doubt.

Q. Congratulations. I am from Argentina, and I ask

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you, what do you win Miami Open for you?

ASHLEIGH BARTY: It's a very, very special place, particularly here at Hard Rock Stadium. Obviously very good memories for me here. I love the climate here. It's very similar to that of Brisbane where I grew up. I feel very comfortable in this environment. Without a doubt I enjoy the conditions here. It's a beautiful place to play tennis.

Q. Congratulations, Ash, on the victory today and the title. Can you share with us what you said to Bianca at the net when you consoled her? It looks like you managed to make her smile. I welcome hearing from you on that.

ASHLEIGH BARTY: Yeah, I just said obviously I feel for her. I feel like she's been through the ringer a bit with some of her injuries. I just said I hope she gets healthy quickly, I hope she heals well, and I'm sure this will be the very first of many matches for us.

She's a great player, and it was really nice to be able to share the court with her today in such a big match. Obviously it's disappointing with the way that it ended, but without a doubt, that will be the first of many for us, and hopefully they are in big matches and big moments where it matters.

Q. Congratulations on the win today. I had a question about how you spent the time in lockdown. Something that got me through quarantine was a little show coming out of Australia called Married at First Sight. Wondering, as an Aussie, if you had any perspective, or if there are any cheesy shows you watched while you were in quarantine?

ASHLEIGH BARTY: No, I'm not a massive TV person, like for shows. I have been watching The Office a little bit just as a little bit in the background, but I love to read. I read a couple of books this week.

Obviously in the afternoons here in Miami, Australia is just waking up, so most afternoons I'm able to chat to my family which is great. But, no. Then when we're in the States, they've got the Golf Channel, so I've got the Golf Channel on a lot of the time. There have been a few big tournaments in the past and a very exciting one coming up next week.

Yeah, a lot of time I'm reading my book, chatting to my family, or watching the golf typically.

Q. Congratulations. Over the past few years we have seen quite a few first-time slam champions at US Open, Australian Open, Roland Garros, but not

necessarily at Wimbledon. We haven't had a first Grand Slam champion there since 2013. Curious why you think that is, if you have any possible theories.

ASHLEIGH BARTY: No, I think obviously grass court tennis is very unique, very different. A lot of the times players aren't playing on grass until kind of that lead-up to Wimbledon. It's only a month out of the year we are actually on grass courts.

You see a lot of the time it almost takes time to get used to the courts, particularly at Wimbledon, they are a little bit different.

But having two slams on a hard court probably, even if they are different conditions, it's similar. But hopefully, you know, for Wimbledon, I mean, it's just an incredible place and I think there is so much history there. I think sometimes experience prevails a lot of the time, and it's just a very unique place and I think probably a tough one to adjust to the conditions as quickly as maybe some of the other slams.

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