

Miami Open presented by Itaú

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Miami, Florida, USA

Danielle Collins

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Danielle, can you share your thoughts about being here in Miami.

DANIELLE COLLINS: Yeah, excited to be playing in my home state, especially after taking the last month off. No better way to get started here in Miami at home.

Yeah, just looking forward to getting back out and competing again.

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. Could you talk about this last month, what exactly was the injury, how you're feeling now. A month off is a long time in tennis.

DANIELLE COLLINS: Yeah, I had a viral illness that I was fighting off. So I needed to give my body a little bit more time to recover, make sure that I was 100% before competing again.

Q. What is your mindset being back on court?

DANIELLE COLLINS: Yeah, I've been out for a month. In reality it's not that long. Just came off of a great result in the beginning of the year. Still feeling confident about my game, happy with how I've started the year.

Just trying to pluck away at these new goals. Just looking forward to trying to get that started and feeling better than I did than when I was in Dubai.

Q. (No microphone.)

DANIELLE COLLINS: I want to try to get into the top five this year. I think that's the shorter-term goal, something that can be achievable as long as I'm playing well and healthy. I want to give it my best shot.

Q. What was your reaction to the news about Ash?

DANIELLE COLLINS: Yeah, I mean, I think for someone to retire at 25, I think it really speaks to the way our sport empowers women. I think it's just incredible for her to have achieved what she's achieved on court, to now be able to

enjoy the rest of her life.

All of the hard work, she certainly was all of that, deserves happy retirement, and hopefully she can have a great life off the court.

I know she probably has many more goals she wants to fulfill. I'm sure that she's going to be able to do that with all the success that she's had.

Yeah, I think it's so cool being able to retire at 25. What other profession would you be able to do that in? There's not too many. I think it's incredible for our sport.

Q. Where were you when you heard it and what was your immediate reaction?

DANIELLE COLLINS: I was in bed.

Q. What was your reaction?

DANIELLE COLLINS: Yeah, I think, like I said, I thought it was really cool to be able to retire at 25 in this sport. All of the hard work and success that she's had, she's been at the top of her game for a long time.

A little bit surprising, but yeah, I think I'm really excited for Ash to see what she's going to achieve off the court and the next steps of her life.

Q. When you say 'empowers', do you mean empowers in sort of the financial comfort, the money available in the sport, or being able to make your own decisions and be independent?

DANIELLE COLLINS: Yeah, I think all of those things. I think this sport empowers us in a way financially that is really unique to other sports. We're the highest-paid women's sport in the world. I think everything else that we work hard for every day, what we're able to achieve on court, I think it leads to so many great things later down the road.

Yeah, I think all of what you said. I think the sport empowers us in ways that is so unique to other fields. Yeah, just to see somebody retire at 25 years old, this is



incredible. It's something to really celebrate and really acknowledge.

Q. You mentioned one of your goals is breaking into the top five. A few months ago you were talking about your goal being breaking into the top 20 and staying there. What kind of satisfaction do you take from that? Regarding the Billie Jean King Cup, what do you think it's going to be like playing against Ukraine?

DANIELLE COLLINS: We have a big task ahead. There's some really strong players on the Ukrainian team. After everything they've been dealing with over the last couple weeks, I think it's going to be an emotional battle for us as we really feel for them. Can't imagine what they're going through personally.

Looking forward to going out and representing my country, but also really acknowledging everything that the Ukrainian players have been dealing with over the last couple weeks. It's been heartbreaking to watch and hear about. My heart really goes out for all of them.

I can't imagine doing what they're doing right now, competing, also thinking about their families at home, having family members, brothers, husbands, fathers, that are probably having to go out and battle every day. Yeah, it's a really emotional subject.

Yeah, just going to try to embrace the competitive side as much as possible, but it's definitely going to be an emotional competition I think for all of us.

Q. About the goals?

DANIELLE COLLINS: Yeah, I try to create my goals and give myself little baby steps. I also have long-term goals, things that I would like to achieve. I try to just take it one step at a time.

I wanted to get into the top 20 last year. I fell a little bit short of that, which was fine. I broke into the top 20 this year. Even better I got into the top 10 for a hot second (laughter).

Yeah, I just try to make little baby steps along the way and work at it. It takes a lot. I mean, I think now to get into the top five I'm going to have to have some even better performances, even more consistent results. We'll see if I can make it happen.

Yeah, I have some really great opportunities moving forward before Wimbledon, so...

Q. Five years ago this venue was a football stadium.

Now it's a football stadium, tennis center, F1 track. What do you think of a setup like this? Does it have the amenities that players want?

DANIELLE COLLINS: I think the amenities are incredible. I think it offers everything that we need as tennis players. We have great locker rooms, great gym, amazing dining hall. It's just kind of everything that you would want.

It's very spacious. When you have this many people, especially the first couple days of a tournament, you don't feel really like on top of each other. There's plenty of room for everybody to share, which I think is important.

I think at a lot of the tournaments that are just tennis facilities, sometimes they're a bit smaller. Sometimes those first couple days feel a little bit overwhelming because there's so many people in such a small area. That's something I really like about this tournament.

I think it's really cool how they're combining all of these sports into one facility. A great way to market what they're doing here. I think it also brings spectators together in a way we don't often see. What a great opportunity for us to be playing in such an incredible stadium and arena.

I had the privilege a couple years ago to actually play inside the stadium which I thought was so cool to be able to say I played a tennis match inside a football stadium. Yeah, pretty unique experience.

I wish I could watch the F1 races, but I think I'm going to be somewhere else. I'll definitely be tuning in online and try to watch it.

Q. For the little girl that one time dream about tennis, how to feel to play in those big stadium with those big names, how to feel to be in the same stage with the same name?

DANIELLE COLLINS: Yeah, I think playing in facilities like this, playing at tournaments like this, is what we dream of as kids. With me being from Florida, I watched so much of the Miami Open as a kid.

I asked my dad if we could come and watch the Miami Open. He told me we were only going if I was playing. That gave me a lot of motivation. I wish I could have come to watch as a little one. I had to work a little bit harder to get into the facilities here because my dad wasn't having it (laughter).

No, yeah, it's incredible to think back about all of those moments when you're a kid dreaming of the things that you want to achieve, the places that you want to play in. To

finally do it, it feels surreal.

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