

Citi Open

Saturday, July 30, 2022

Washington D.C.

Mark Ein

Andy Murray

Press Conference



MARK EIN: First of all, welcome to everyone in the media to the Citi Open. Thrilled to have you. You're a super important part of this event. We really want to do everything to make you comfortable and productive. Anything you need, just let our team know.

I just wanted to kick this one off because I think all of us involved in the sport and sports more broadly were really inspired when Andy Murray at the beginning of the year said he would donate all of his prize money to UNICEF for the benefit of Ukrainian children.

It really inspired me and got me thinking - I think it was Miami where I saw you originally - that if Andy would come here, I felt that we would want to match his donation and whatever he makes here. So we're doing that. We're just announcing that whatever Andy makes here and donates to UNICEF, we're going to match it.

We're also going to create a fan portal called Match Ukraine, where fans can get involved. They can give by the match. They can be part of Andy's journey. In fact, we'll extend it through the year. People can be part of Andy's mission here to make a real difference in something in the world that's horrible and really deserves all of our support.

I want to say just how much I admire Andy as a leader and a guy who understands the power of his platform and what good he can do. This is just the latest in a long string of things. He was a UNICEF ambassador since many years ago. This is just a long string of the many great works that Andy has done and I know he'll do for the rest of his life.

With that I'll turn it over to Andy. Pleased to welcome him to Washington.

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. What does it mean to you, obviously the circumstances are not ideal, tragic situation, to have a tournament host and a city follow up with a pledge of

their own to match and to follow suit?

ANDY MURRAY: Yeah, I mean, look, it's brilliant. Thanks a lot to Mark and all the team here for supporting that. Yeah, I think it really helps. It sort of shows that I think as well when the players and the tournaments work together, that really good things can happen and come out of that. Yeah, once again, really appreciate the support from the tournament here on that.

Hopefully, yeah, I can have a good run and lots of the fans can get involved, too, raise a lot of money this week.

Q. On this front, there was a lot more sort of visibility back around Indian Wells time when the war first started, players wearing ribbons. Do you think there is more renewed effort that should be done, it could be reanimated in tennis a little bit, the energy behind it?

ANDY MURRAY: Yeah, I hope so. That's one of the things that I think, yeah, UNICEF have been talking to my team about. It's very difficult, yeah. It's not the main story on the news every day like it was back then.

You can't just forget about this. It's still going on. People are still getting killed, children are still having to flee their homes, and are in really, really tragic situations.

Yeah, I think it's important that the media continues to shine a light on it, keep talking about it. Yeah, hopefully like what the tournament is doing here can help a little bit with that.

Q. How much money has been raised? What is your target?

ANDY MURRAY: Well, I mean, I don't know the exact figure. I started donating my prize money from Indian Wells, I think I started. I don't know the exact figure, but it would be quite a few hundred thousand dollars.

Yeah, there's not a specific target as such. I just want to try and win as many matches as possible and raise as much money as I can. Yeah, it will be a significant amount hopefully by the end of the year. Hopefully, yeah, it makes



a difference.

Q. You've been on the forefront of discussing issues that a lot of athletes steer clear from over the years, whether it be international events or even equal pay for the ATP and WTA. Tell me what you think the role of an athlete should be in opining about injustices everywhere.

ANDY MURRAY: The role of...

Well, I think everyone's different, so I don't think that every athlete necessarily should have the same role or speak out about everything.

But there's been certain topics and subjects that have been important to me during my career, and I've felt personally, yeah, wanted to stand up for the women. That started really after I started working with Amelie Mauresmo. Before then it was not something, being perfectly honest, I thought about. I was just thinking about my own career and focusing on that and my tennis.

When I started working with Amelie, saw the way that she was treated, I then started to ask more questions to like my mum about it. She's been a tennis coach in a pretty sort of male-dominated sport for her whole life. I asked about some of the challenges and stuff that she faced. Obviously spoke to Amelie about it.

Obviously I was getting asked a lot of questions from media, which I hadn't been asked in the past with any of my other coaches. Then started to see there was maybe an issue there, and I needed to speak out about that.

I have always felt since then that the fact that the men and women compete together in the biggest events is unique in kind of a global sport, one of the biggest sports in the world. It's something that should be celebrated. I think it's a really positive thing. I think it's a great message. I think it's great for sponsors and television. I just see it as a really positive thing for the sport. I try to speak out about that when I can.

Yeah, if something I guess touches you personally and it's important to you, then I think it's important athletes speak out. But I don't think it's sort of a one-size-fits-all approach for everyone.

Q. On-court question. Kyle Edmund is coming back this week, his first tournament in singles in like 20 months. When you were a player on tour and missed that much time, when you're away for a lengthy amount of time like that, what's the challenge in coming back?

ANDY MURRAY: Yeah, so I think one of the hardest things is when you've been injured for a while is to push yourself hard enough in practice to test your body and to prepare your body to play matches because you don't want to injure yourself in practice. You sort of can go back into match play a little bit undercooked as well because you've just not been pushing your body hard enough in the practices.

It's very normal as an athlete, when you're fit, to feel pain in your body and have discomfort and niggles. That's very, very normal. But when you haven't competed for a very long time, those pains and those niggles play with your head a little bit, and because you're not competing, you don't know whether maybe is it an injury again, is it a niggle. It's tough to feel that.

Once you get back on the match court and start competing, those injuries and niggles start to feel like the norm again because that's what happens when you compete and play.

So I think there's a psychological element to a big comeback again, just trusting your body again, remembering and understanding what it feels like to be a professional athlete. So that for me certainly was difficult.

Yeah, the other thing is just time and patience really. You can't expect to be out for 20 months and come back and play at the level that you were at, but your mind still remembers you playing at that level. When you lose in a challenger, like Kyle lost last week, that's frustrating when he's used to being in like the semifinals of a major. You're starting from a very low level again. You need time and patience to build all of those things back up.

Yeah, it's not easy, but it's a worthwhile journey to go through. You learn a lot on it, that's for sure.

Q. Playing for this cause, has it given you any sort of energy or motivation? I'm thinking of Naomi Osaka at the US Open in 2020 wearing the masks. She wound up making seven masks, playing seven matches and winning them all. Are you at all inspired by the effort she was doing? What do you make of that for an athlete as a potential source of power?

ANDY MURRAY: Yeah, you definitely do feel it a bit. You still need to go and do all the training and all the work and everything that goes into performing.

But certainly I've always felt like when I'm playing for something more than just yourself as being motivational or inspirational, whether that's playing for your country like in the Olympics or Davis Cup and stuff. I've always really,



really enjoyed that.

Yeah, like when you're playing to try and help people that are in a horrific situation, that can certainly help, yeah.

Q. My question is kind of wonky, tennis specific. Am I correct in thinking you changed racquets this season? If so, was it a tactical advantage you were seeking? Could you share a little bit about the acclimation process to that? I hope you did change racquets or that question is pointless.

ANDY MURRAY: Well, yes and no. I did change racquets until the end of March, and then I went back to my old racquet.

Q. So sorry.

ANDY MURRAY: No, that's all right.

Basically, like, at the end of last season I had been throughout last year testing a lot of racquets during the year, but it was in between events. I wasn't competing with them.

I decided to make the change in the off-season, so I spent probably four or five weeks practicing with the same new frame, essentially to try and help give me a little bit more power, make the game hopefully a little bit easier for me.

Yeah, I played with it for the first three months of the year. It was a good racquet, but I lost a little bit of control and felt like some of the issues that I was trying to solve with changing the racquets was not because of the racquet; that I could make those technical changes that would allow me to create more power on my serve, for example, or on my groundstrokes. It would be better to actually address what the problem was from a technical perspective rather than just to go, Oh, I'm going to get a racquet, a new racquet, and that's going to solve my issues.

Yeah, I went back to my old racquet. My team kind of pushed me in that direction I think. But, yeah, I did try to make a change because I've been using the same racquet since 2003 (laughter). You would hope that racquet technology has improved since then, but I'm a little bit stubborn. I gave it a go, but couldn't quite do it.

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