

Citi Open

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Washington D.C.

Mark Ein

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: This is Citi Open Chairman Mark Ein. How do you think this week has gone?

MARK EIN: It's been totally spectacular. I mean, we really view this as a multi-stakeholder, our success on a multi-stakeholder basis. We think about everyone, starting with the fans.

I mean, on Thursday was our 20th consecutive sold-out session dating back to 2019. There were a few tickets on Friday day and a few on Saturday, but basically the event, we probably sold 81,500 out of 82,500 tickets.

People are really excited and they are loving it and they are coming back. There is a massive line for people to renew their tickets.

I took over this with a fan's perspective coming here for many years and seeing all the things I wished were a certain way. We have worked really hard with an amazing team of people to try to make them that way.

We love the fan reaction. I love the player reaction. I have been watching players in press, and I think four or five of them have used words "we love the vibe of this tournament," totally independently.

I love that they love the vibe. I love that they love our city. That's really good. Our sponsors are really happy. Endless ones are coming back saying we want to lock in long-term deals with you. So that's really good.

You guys are really important, too. I know we have work to do on some of the infrastructure still, but we really appreciate the amount of coverage we are getting and the hard work you guys put in. So thank you.

And then the charity. This benefits WTF. They do a ton of good work, and we are giving them a lot of resources to continue to do good work.

From every metric that I think about or every constituency stakeholder, I think it's been fantastic. That said, we always look to do certain things better and different next

year, but in some, it's been awesome.

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

Q. You said that regarding the media that you had some things to do with regard to infrastructure. Can you expand on that, please.

MARK EIN: I have just gotten feedback. I mean, I think -- look, when we took this over, this is our third time running it. I think you have seen it's been a total revamp of the entire facility.

We spend -- we are getting two-and-a-half times on infrastructure this week what they used to spend. But we still uncovered things we need to. Like we need to create better infrastructure in the press box and the Charlie Brockman. I have heard that. I know maybe some credentialing on some of the places you guys work wasn't as tight as it needs to be.

Hopefully it didn't get in the way of you guys being able to do it. But I want it to be a first-class event, world-class event for every stakeholder, including you guys.

And if you have other ideas, I have heard a bunch and they are on the list, but if you have others, please let us know.

Q. You mentioned this being the 20th consecutive sellout. On the subject of tickets, around the weekend of Wimbledon, did you see an uptick once Nick was performing as well as he was? And as just a follow-up to that, obviously it's not Nadal, when Nadal was here, but can you put into terms just his presence here, what it has done?

MARK EIN: What Nick means, I mean, there was nothing really unusual different after this Wimbledon than any others. There is sort of a cadence to these things. A certain amount of people buy tickets for the whole tournament, and then we put individual tickets on sale and it goes at a certain pace. There was nothing really unusual.

This is now a coveted ticket. It's selling out. People are



getting them earlier. I'd say that I don't know what the impact of Nick is, because by the time he's getting this far in the tournament we are honestly pretty much sold out.

What I do notice is the resale markets. I look at the prices there. Wednesday night upper deck tickets were going for hundreds of dollars. That could be a real impact of Nick.

If we had a bigger facility, which maybe someday we will, we will actually be able to see. But at the moment with so much sold out, it's hard to see the impact that late, really.

Q. Does it speak to the fandom of area tennis fans and Washingtonians more so? Because even as you make your way through this tournament, you lose people like Venus Williams and Andy Murray in early rounds, yet people still continue to come regardless of if the person's got a number or a name you've heard next to them mainly for the tennis.

MARK EIN: Yeah, that's a great question.

So, look, we have an amazing tennis community in Washington. We have a long history. This event has been here 53 years since Donald Dell and John Harris and Arthur Ashe started it.

They have supported this event for a long time. I honestly think they wanted better, a few years ago, they wanted it, and everyone did, the players, the tours. I think we are really making a ton of progress and done that and the fans have responded accordingly.

So we have an incredible core tennis community here with a long legacy and long history. And one of the things we consciously did is before we got involved, they would really focus on bringing one big star, you'd see one big star, and then frankly, then two or three others. As soon as we got involved, I sort of asked the question, Why are we doing that? And if we didn't do that, what could we do? It's like, If you don't do that, you can do this.

To me, that just makes a much better event. So our poster, we struggled to figure out the 20 players we were going to put on that long lineup, truly. I forget who the cutoff is, but it's someone really good that's probably on a poster somewhere else.

And so what it means also -- so to me that's a much better event for everyone. It means that on Monday night you have great players. When you have one great player, especially on the men's side, they are starting on Wednesday. Monday night we had Andy and Venus, and Tuesday night we had Nick and Emma, which is extraordinary.

And then as players lose, there is just more coming and more coming. It's not like if you bet it all on one or two players and they lose, then you're left with nothing. Then you get strong fields all the way to the end.

That's really been intentional on our part.

Q. You spoke earlier about the growth of the tournament and the potential that you may need to move or change location at some point. Has there been any thought to that, considering the age of this stadium and the specific location we are at?

MARK EIN: So our first, second, third, fourth, fifth choice is not to move it. It's to find a way to keep it here, update it and modernize it.

Frankly, we are doing it but we are doing it through temporary facilities. We'd rather have them be more permanent. Obviously the facility is owned by the National Park Service, they own it, they maintain it. The City of Washington really covets this event too.

So we are all collectively trying to figure out how do we get this to the place we know it should be and needs to be. I think everyone's choice is for it to be here.

There is plenty of places and cities who would love to have this tournament, but that's not at all what we want. If we can find any way of keeping it here, this is a special, historic location that's accessible to everyone.

To me, that's the other big thing. You know, when I look around -- I watch very little tennis, even though I love tennis. When I look around, I just look at the grounds and the fans and the mix of the people, and it really represents the melting pot of our community.

There is a gazillion reasons for that, including the sport itself. One of them is this location is central for everyone, so everyone comes out. When we open the doors at the beginning of qualifying weekend, and people are streaming in, we sold out both qualifying days for the last two years. It's amazing that that would happen, but people just come and they love this sport, and ticket prices are a little bit lower then. When you look around, you see our community. I think the location is a big part of that.

Q. Do you have any sense of or even a guess at what kind of impact it might have on the popularity of tennis in this country if an American man were able to win another Grand Slam title?

MARK EIN: Look, it's a great question. To me, obviously I

have many reasons I'm passionate about helping pro tennis. One is because I believe if you want to grow the sport, you need to create opportunities like this where young people can see them in person and aspire to be them and be inspired to be them. That's what pro events do. It's what they do in all sports, and it's what uniquely these events do in the United States.

I do think we live in a world where players like Rafa and Nick can inspire kids of any nationality. I do believe that. I just think that's the nature of the -- it's a massively positive thing, where Emma Raducanu or Sloane Stephens, and/or Venus and Serena obviously were Americans, so sure, if Frances Tiafoe wins a Grand Slam, that's going to have a huge impact, because people see like he grew up in Maryland, in Washington, and he's now at the top.

It would be wonderful. I don't think it's required for the sport to thrive, but I do think it would be a real boost if and when it ultimately happens on the men's side. It's obviously been happening on the women's side for a long time.

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