

# Mubadala Citi DC Open

Sunday, July 30, 2023

Washington D.C.

## Andy Murray

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: First of all, Andy, welcome back to D.C. This is your first tournament after Wimbledon. How do you feel about your preparation so far?

ANDY MURRAY: Yeah, I mean, I got here pretty early. We arrived on Tuesday night, so, yeah, try and get used to the humidity. Obviously had quite a lot of issues last year during American summer with like cramping and stuff like that. Wanted to make sure I got here early to give myself enough time to adjust to that. It's been good.

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

**Q. You mentioned the cramping, the weather, the heat and the humidity that we see a lot here in D.C. and in New York at the US Open. Could you tell us a little bit about what sort of extra preparation or different methods of preparation maybe that you use or that are required to deal with those conditions? And you have been playing at the Open since your junior days. Have you noticed any difference in what those conditions are like, those two weeks in New York?**

ANDY MURRAY: Yeah, so like in preparation before I left to come here, I was doing a lot of bike sessions, you know, basically I can do it at home, but I have a room where I can basically use like heaters and I have like a steam room next to it. It wasn't put in there for that purpose, but, you know, I put the bike in there and we can, like, open the steam room a little bit to increase the humidity, obviously the heaters to get the heat in the room up.

Set it to like 35 degrees Celsius and, like, 70% humidity, and then I would do my bike sessions in there. We'd also spend 20 to 30 minutes in the sauna, as well. So just to try and help with the heat adaptation.

Then, yeah, just getting here early enough to give your body time to get used to it, really. Obviously, stay on top of all of the hydration and all those sorts of things as well. Yeah, definitely made sure I did enough preparation before getting here.

**Q. You have obviously been in a lot of Grand Slam**

**finals yourself and you were in the stands, I think, for the Wimbledon men's final this year with Laura Robson next to you. Curious, what was that like experiencing that occasion from that different vantage point? Did you sort of process it differently than you have all the many times you've been one of the two guys on court in that moment?**

ANDY MURRAY: Yeah, I mean, so I wasn't planning on going to watch the match. I had to do something, and at Wimbledon that day, and then after I finished it was about an hour and a half before the start of the match, and I was, like, I feel like I should stay for this one. I thought it was going to be, well, a good match to watch.

Yeah, so I stayed behind and I bumped into Neal Skupski who had won the day before, he was staying to watch the final as well. Yeah, went in with him and I really enjoyed it.

I learned a lot from watching, and I think, yeah, probably something like looking back, wish I had maybe done a little bit more of. It's not always that easy to do and sit in the stands and watch matches, because, well, most of the people in there are tennis fans and it can be distracting.

But in, yeah, in the final, like in the times where, you know, I got to just sit and watch the match and wasn't so chatty and everything, like, yeah, I felt like, yeah, I learned a lot from watching those two.

The end of the match, last couple of sets, I thought some of the tennis was brilliant. It was really hard conditions that day. It was very blustery, and, you know, so the start maybe wasn't as clean, but that was more because of the conditions.

Then, yeah, obviously as the match went on I thought they both played better and better. You could also sort of see Alcaraz learning, like, as the match was going on, as well.

It could have gone either way, to be honest. It was so tight. Yeah, I'm glad I stayed for it.

**Q. What did you learn? You said you learned. What did you learn?**



ANDY MURRAY: Well, you know, I ended up like taking videos and stuff of the guys and just focusing a little bit more on one side of the net. You know, looking at their like return positions and, you know, their movement, you know, between shots.

You know, also looking at the, you know, the times when particularly Alcaraz looking to play, you know, aggressive and offensive tennis and how he was going about doing that.

Yeah, the thing that's interesting I think as well is like, you know, when I was sitting there like I was also looking like a little bit at the teams and looking at seeing the players and their reactions between the points.

You know, although, you know, both of them may be sometimes on the TV it can appear like they're calm, you can actually see there was stress and frustration and all those things. When you're just watching on the TV they often cut, not all of the time, but a lot of the time, it's people in the crowd or the guy that's just won the point and you don't see those immediate reactions as well.

So I think seeing the frustration was there, but then also, you know, how they were responding to that as well was interesting.

Yeah, it was good. I'm really glad I stayed to watch it. You know, will probably try and do that a little bit more, try and watch a little bit more from the side of the court and watching live rather than just doing it on the TV.

**Q. This is a first combined ATP/WTA 500 event. Big deal for this tournament, lots of expansion. They are billing it as like an equanimity that each, the men and women get 470 points. However, in prize money, you, the winner from the men's side, gets 353,000 and the women's side gets 120,000. So I'd wonder if you, I mean, they are billing it as equanimity, but it's not. Do you have a comment on that?**

ANDY MURRAY: Yeah, so, I'm totally behind equal prize money, and I think that it is brilliant that a lot of the tournaments on the tour that we have that, and I think that's really, really positive.

I think it is difficult for it ever to become truly equal until the ATP and the WTA sort of actually combine and work together. That's my feeling, because I don't know what the, you know, like what the threshold for tournaments is, like to become a 500 on the ATP Tour, if the ATP will have their set of rules as to what levels they need to reach from a prize money perspective, and I'm sure the WTA have

their own.

Yeah, like I always felt like when we're competing at the same event on the same courts, you know, that we should be playing for, you know, for the same prize money. But I think for it ever to become like truly equal, the WTA and the ATP are actually going to have to come together and work as one before that's the case, because I don't think it's that straightforward just now, you know, that both tours have different sponsors, different TV deals, and all of that stuff too.

There is a few things that still need to change, but I feel like things are going in the right direction, like with the move to, you know, to this event becoming a 500 for both. Yeah, can obviously still get better.

**Q. I wonder if you could talk about your hip surgery and what the trajectory was in coming back and getting into form from that. I don't know if you recall, there is a hockey player in town here who went through it, Nicklas Backstrom, who said he spoke to you for advice. You may not remember the conversation. If you do recall it, I wonder what you...**

ANDY MURRAY: Which player?

**Q. His name is Nicklas Backstrom, he's a Swedish...**

ANDY MURRAY: Yeah, no, because I have spoken to a couple of different players about it, and yeah, I have spoken to him on the phone, I believe.

And, yes, look, it has been really, really hard. I think probably I have found it difficult like my expectations are one thing like I have played right at the very top of the game for a long time, so my expectations are I want to get there, but then also trying to be like kind enough to myself that what I'm doing is from a physical perspective is really, really difficult, and, you know, trying to sort of weigh those two things up has been tough for me.

But yeah, all of the athletes that I have spoken to about the surgery and everything, like yeah, like I said, there is no reason why you cannot get back to playing like at the highest level of your sport, that's my experience. It's not exactly the same. It's never 100%, like your body is different after having an operation like that, but yeah, providing you do all the rehab properly and, you know, work hard and are strong in your mind, yeah, that you will be able to get back to competing at the highest level.

I'm not sure if he is yet or not, but yeah, it's tough. It took me, and it took me a lot of time before I was feeling good again, and I was having niggles in different parts of my

body because of the changes and how my hips and everything were moving and biomechanics and all that stuff. There's a lot of stress on different areas of my body there wasn't before, but physically I feel really good just now.

But it's hard.

**Q. Similar to that, you may have just touched on it a little bit, two players, Kei Nishikori is working his way back after two years away. Jennifer Brady on the women's tour, two years away. When you're away from tour that long from high-end competition, what are the first few weeks like? What are they going to experience this summer as they try their best to regain the form that they once had?**

ANDY MURRAY: Well, I think it definitely takes time like for the body to get used to playing like multiple matches again at the highest level. There will definitely be some aches and pains. That can sometimes be hard to, yeah, quite hard to deal with mentally, because you forget what it is like to play like the highest level of sport isn't easy.

You don't play a match and wake up next day and feel perfect, but when you've been out a long time with an injury, understanding what that pain means, like if you wake up the day after playing a match and your back is sore, is that pain because of an injury? Like do I need to back off here? Should I be playing today? Or is it just part of playing like, you know, and your body getting used to playing, you know, the matches again and competing.

You know, that's difficult. Obviously, like playing in front of, you know, big crowds again when you have been away from it for a long time, that is different. There is a different pressure and a different intensity to that.

Yeah, just being in like in difficult moments and difficult situations on the court when there is that pressure on it.

Like in practice, you don't experience that. There is no consequence to making errors and missing and making mistakes. So when you go back into competition again and you have not felt that for a while, that can play a little bit with your, well, with your thought process and your decision-making in those moments.

So there is a lot of things that takes a bit of time to get back, but yeah, they're obviously both top players, and I would imagine they will get back to playing a high-level of tennis. It probably will take a bit of time.

**Q. You just mentioned talking to different athletes about the hip surgery. I imagine you're talking to a lot**

**of those players kind of when they are at low points in their career or health and something like that. What is that like for you? Does everyone have kind of the same type of questions? Is it like, Can I actually get back to the athlete I once was? I imagine that's weird mentally a little.**

ANDY MURRAY: Yeah, it is. Yeah, obviously I was there, so I was in that place, and most of the athletes that I would speak to that are thinking about having this operation are in a pretty bad place, like physically and probably have been in a lot of pain for quite a long time.

So yeah, like, I obviously, I spoke to Bob Bryan quite a lot about it, which was helpful, but yeah, probably wish I had had the opportunity to speak to, you know, to more athletes about it and what that process was like and what the operation, the rehab and everything was going to be like, and yeah, like I feel like I'm able to give like a bit of positivity to those athletes in that situation now that, like I said, like it is possible to get back to competing and doing the sport that, you know, the sport that you love after having this surgery, because there was a lot of people, mainly sort of, well, doctors, people in the medical profession that were telling me like, no, your hip's done and you won't be able to play again. It's quite hard to be told that.

I think, yeah, when I speak to them, I feel like I'm able to give a little bit more of like a positive outlook for them and whether or not it's helped them, I have no idea. Yeah, I try to as much as I can when, you know, some of the athletes have reached out to chat to them and yeah, I would always be there if any of them wanted to speak, because I know, yeah, I know how difficult a position most of them are in.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports

