

# Mubadala Citi DC Open

Saturday, July 27, 2024

Washington D.C.

## Emma Raducanu

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

**Q. First off, how is your health? How have you been feeling about your form kind of entering the tournament?**

EMMA RADUCANU: I feel good physically. I have no problems really. No niggles. I'm just very happy and excited to be in Washington.

I played this tournament two years ago, and it's one of my favorites on the calendar. Unfortunately I had to miss last year. But I'm just happy to have the opportunity to be playing this year.

**Q. You mentioned you've been to this tournament before. What were some of the factors you considered in coming here versus going to the Olympics?**

EMMA RADUCANU: Yeah, I would say for me, staying on one surface is important. The change of surface isn't the best thing for me right now. In the future, maybe it would have been.

At this moment in time, I think switching to clay straight after grass, it's such a big contrast, then back onto the hard courts, I didn't want to risk anything. For me this option was just a lot better.

Of course, there are elements of FOMO, missing out. Watching the Olympic ceremony, everybody in the team kits, a part of you obviously wants to be there and representing your country.

I think when I think big picture, long-term, it's the right call.

**Q. This is a big difference for you compared to a year ago when you weren't able to compete in D.C. when you were out with injury. You had a relatively good grass court season. How do you feel as far as where you're at now, the difference that it is compared to what you were going through 12 months ago?**

EMMA RADUCANU: Yeah, I think I made some pretty

good strides in my game over the last few months. I started the grass season ranked outside of 200 and finished it in the top 100. For me that was relatively successful. It guaranteed me a spot hopefully in the main draw of the U.S. That was a big thing for me. I wanted to make sure I got into the slams.

I think, compared to a year ago, this time a year ago I hadn't been touching tennis balls. I was in China actually, which was great. I got to see my family for a good month. Yeah, I didn't touch a tennis ball until late November really.

I had, like, one week hitting sponge balls in August, then stopped because I had setbacks. Didn't pick another one up till late November, December.

Yeah, I'm very pleased to be in the place that I am, competing, healthy, just enjoying my tennis.

**Q. When you do return to tour after so much time away due to injury, what are those first few tournaments like and how long can it maybe take until you do feel that you're back to where you were and where you want to be? Like Reilly Opelka came back...**

EMMA RADUCANU: Yeah, I mean, I guess not many of us come back like Reilly after two years. He did so well in his first tournament back. That was really, really impressive.

I think the most important thing is getting your game up to a good speed. I don't think that necessarily comes just from matches. I think improving your level is the biggest part of it.

The match practice, for me I'd say it didn't take that long in terms of match sharpness, match awareness to click into it. It was more just about raising my level up.

**Q. Is the decision to not play in Paris and come here as simple as this helps you get ready for the US Open, or is it more complicated than that?**

EMMA RADUCANU: No, I mean, had the Olympics been on a different surface, then I don't know. It's obviously



something that every athlete wants to be a part of. I had to think longer term. Hopefully I'll have more Olympics in my career.

I think coming here was 100% the right option. For immediate gratification, playing the Olympics would have been nice. But long-term perspective, long-term health, coming here... Also I love this tournament.

Had it been a tournament maybe somewhere else that wasn't as appealing to me, I probably could have reconsidered. But I love D.C. Coming here was very, yeah, enticing.

**Q. What is it about D.C. and this tournament that you love so much?**

EMMA RADUCANU: Yeah, I think everyone is super friendly here. There's an amazing energy with the tournament, everyone who is helping out.

Also I love D.C. because some parts of it remind of me of England, I'd say, with the forest right behind. I really like green. For me it feels really comforting.

Also just it's a cool city with great restaurants, great things to do, see. I'm looking forward to hopefully having the opportunity, when I have some time, to do that.

**Q. I heard you said you had FOMO about missing the Olympics. Sounds like you'll be watching. What are you interested in watching?**

EMMA RADUCANU: I don't think I'll be watching, to be honest, that much of the tennis. I think I'll watch the other sports.

I mean, I think it's a great opportunity for all the athletes. I think we're fortunate in tennis that we have the Grand Slams. A lot of the other sports, they train four years for the Olympics, it's their one opportunity, whereas I think for tennis, it depends. Everyone prioritizes different things, targets different things.

For me at this point in time I'm prioritizing my health but also just, yeah, long-term longevity I'd say.

**Q. Regarding your game and the success you did experience on the grass court season, it gives you the confidence to carry over now into the hard court season, starting this week?**

EMMA RADUCANU: Yeah, I think my level has been increasing in the past few months. More so I think it's obviously amazing confirmation to get some match wins.

I don't necessarily derive my confidence just from matches or winning. I think I take a lot from practice, improving my level that way.

I feel like I still have a long way to go in many areas of my game. I think I'm not fully in a place right now where I'm like, Okay, I have full confidence in everything that I'm doing, that I can produce the level that I want to all the time. I think there are still gaps.

But it's kind of nice to always have something to work on. I don't necessarily, yeah, take confidence just from match wins. That's why probably my schedule looks a little bit different than a lot of other players who play a lot more.

I think for me, I like to take those weeks to train and practice. Especially at this stage, I'm only 21. Developing my game, although it might mean I climb the rankings slower to start with, I think the upside is a lot higher.

**Q. You mentioned you still have some things in your game that you're developing. Can you expand on that? What do you feel in your game can still get better and fill in the gaps?**

EMMA RADUCANU: I'm not going to give away my secrets (smiling). But you'll see in time. You can watch on the tennis court.

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