

Mubadala Citi DC Open

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Washington D.C.

Ons Jabeur

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Questions.

Q. It's been a little while since you've been here in D.C., five years or so. What were some of the factors that prompted you to come back versus going to the Olympics?

ONS JABEUR: Well, I didn't play the Olympics because of the surface changes. Since I have, like, knee problems, honestly it would be very tough decision to take. It would probably make me not be able to play for the rest of the season. I'm managing my knee so much... Probably people don't know what's happening on the inside.

Yeah, it was probably very tough decision not to go to the Olympics. But very happy to be here. I haven't played a lot of matches this year. I basically skipped the beginning of the year.

So yeah, I didn't want to make the same kind of mistakes and go and not be 100%. If I didn't feel like going there and win the medal, why go in the first place?

But yeah, on the positive side I'm very happy to be back here in Washington. I enjoyed playing a couple of years ago. To my fans that are here waiting to see me, I hope I can be able to play 100% and perform really well.

Q. Can you explain a little bit more about why a surface change is tricky for your knee. What makes it problematic for you?

ONS JABEUR: Yeah, I mean, with my injury, I think I need more time to get ready for the clay. I mean, in general, just changing the surfaces, it's tougher to go from grass to clay. Since I already changed from hard to clay, clay to grass, grass to hard, it would add one more surface to me.

You can see the timing between the Olympics and Toronto is really, really tight. Honestly, I don't feel like the schedule of this year in general suits any professional tennis players.

I don't see I am the only one that took this decision. I know there are so many players that had different injuries, and

they chose not to risk it because of that.

You're playing clay, playing a big event like the Olympics, I think you need to be ready and perform at your best. I'm not very young any more, so I try to win as much time as I can and be able to stay as long as I can in this beautiful tour.

Q. You've been on tour for several years. Again, not a long history with the tournament here in Washington. Is this fresh? Does this energize you to see the grounds, be in an environment that you don't necessarily have a big history with?

ONS JABEUR: No, I mean, I played once here. It was a long, long time ago. I was a different player at the time.

But yeah, the thing I remember from Washington, it's really humid and hot. I played Iga here. It's such a great tournament. I'm glad that I'm back. It's a 500 right now. Excited with the evolution of this beautiful tournament.

Yeah, hopefully it's going to be a great week for me and for many players.

Q. Confident you could use it as a springboard into the rest of the hard court season as opposed to those that are overseas right now?

ONS JABEUR: Yeah, yeah, I think if I'm here, I want to really prepare great for the US Open. We'll make it our small Olympics here for the players that did not make it there (smiling).

The tennis sport is kind of tough, take decision where to play every time. I feel like the schedule is getting really hard over the years. I try to manage as much as I can and enjoy my time here in Washington as much as I can, as well.

Q. You were talking about enjoying your time in Washington. Obviously the capital of America. How cool is it coming to the city? Any chance to do anything off the tennis court?

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ONS JABEUR: I'm the worst tourist you can ever see in your life (smiling).

I don't know. I haven't decided to do anything yet. I know my team are really excited to go see the White House, I don't know.

I will let you know if I go around and enjoy Washington. If you have any recommendation, I will take it.

Q. This tournament is unique where fans can get close up to players, ask for autographs. Your fan base has grown a lot. How excited are you to interact with the fans here?

ONS JABEUR: Yeah, there is a cute little fans that I usually enjoy interacting with, the kids. I got a very nice card from a young little girl. That's really exciting.

Yeah, honestly I truly feel the love from the crowd here. Even the older ones, so they don't feel jealous (smiling). It's really great to see them here.

The excitement... Even my coach when I went out from the gym, they started screaming. I felt like he was a little bit jealous that they didn't scream his name (smiling).

Q. You talked about turning this into your own little Olympics here. Many players are overseas versus here. What do you make of the level of competition?

ONS JABEUR: I do think that this tournament is pretty strong. So many top athletes are here. So many are playing here.

Obviously not comparing the draw at the Olympics, but I do feel like there is a lot of players here. It's going to be a very tough draw. We'll take it one step at a time and see how it goes.

Q. I think you're known as being pretty comfortable on every surface in tennis. One Grand Slam final on hard courts at the US Open. How are you feeling as hard courts as a place for you to get big results? What is your comfort level on this surface for the rest of the season?

ONS JABEUR: It's a 50/50 feeling. I wasn't loving it, the hard court, at the beginning of the season because of my knee. I tried to get the confidence back on this surface.

I know I can play good here. I've been honestly working very hard. Since months ago, I didn't see the results that I wanted to. But I've learned to stay patient and see.

Maybe this part of the season will be the good one. Let's see. I tried to let go a little bit, not take control over the thinking, like I should do good here.

It's great to remember the memories from 2022, but also I'm a different person right now, a different player. I hope I can use this kind of player right now to go as far as I can.

Q. Angelique Kerber announced her retirement after the Olympics. Andy Murray as well. Are there any memories of them that you'd be willing to share?

ONS JABEUR: Well, Andy just a little bit of 'hi'. I think I remember asking him once, because I love to play Premier League Fantasy on my phone. I asked, Do you think this player? He advised me. I think I actually scored that really well. Thankful to Andy for his advice.

With Angie, I really admire her. She's a great player. She did a lot for our sport. I'm sad to see her leave. We spoke a lot during the rain break in Wimbledon. It was nice to catch up.

I'm friends with her little girl, so that's nice, too. I offered my service as a baby-sitter. I don't know if she likes it not.

Yeah, I wish her the best and I hope she will not disappear from the tennis world.

Q. Two players on their way out. A player on her way up: Robin Montgomery. She's here in Washington. Played her in Wimbledon. Anything stand out about her game?

ONS JABEUR: No, I think she's a great player. She plays really well. She has the game to become a top-10 player. She has like the personality on the court, as well, which sometimes that's what you need.

Sometimes when you're playing, you can play unbelievable, but in certain moments you need that character on the court. I feel like she has it.

I wish her all the best. I truly feel like she can be one of the greatest players.

Q. You were a junior Grand Slam champion, junior success. When you're transitioning, what is that transition like? What are some of the challenges at that stage?

ONS JABEUR: I feel like depends with the player. I obviously didn't have the best transition from juniors to professional. That's all depends with my game. Probably my game wasn't the most clear. I had too many options

that sometimes I didn't know which option I should take.
Yeah, it was very tough.

I think what I would advise so many players to do is, it's nice to play juniors, but maybe not to play too long and go professional right away if you like it.

Also so many didn't do good in juniors, and some didn't even play juniors, went to professional right away and they did really good.

Yeah, tennis path is different for everyone because we are different human beings, we have different characters, we have different games.

Whatever I think you feel in the heart that is great for you, I think you should follow it.

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