

Mubadala Citi DC Open

Saturday, July 27, 2024

Washington D.C.

Paula Badosa

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Paula, how are you feeling ahead of the hard court swing?

PAULA BADOSA: I'm excited to be here. It's my first time in D.C. I'm enjoying the city, the tournament, and really looking forward to start Monday.

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. I think we all saw at Wimbledon how much it meant to you to make a run there and how emotional it was for you. How are you feeling about where your game is at, where your health is at coming into this tournament?

PAULA BADOSA: I think the grass season, the two tournaments that I played, I felt pretty well there. I played really good matches. The last one was a pity, was a shame, because it was very close. I think I brought a good level there. So I think that gave me a lot of confidence, especially now for the hard court season.

This is a swing I always like. I like to come back to the U.S. after the Europe swing. I'm looking forward to it. I'm really excited.

Q. You mentioned it was your first time in D.C. How can you weigh coming here versus going to the Olympics?

PAULA BADOSA: Well, my decision was I said it right when the list came out that I was going to play here. I'm not going to change surface that quickly, like from grass to clay, then next Toronto hard court. For my back was not the best. I have to prioritize my health.

Also for the protected rankings I had to choose in that moment. My ranking wasn't great, so I had to choose that or the US Open. I prefer choosing on a tournament that gives me points. That was a little bit my decision.

Of course, it's a shame I cannot play Olympics. The conditions are what it was. So I have to prioritize my back in that case.

Q. Can you explain how a surface change feels on your back? What does it actually feel like to change a surface?

PAULA BADOSA: Look, my back is responding really well. If I keep changing from hard to clay and grass, at the end I can struggle. It can get inflamed more easily.

Of course, having these spasms and things in my back, it's not worth it for me, especially how I started the year. Sometimes mentally you're a little bit scared of that. I want to avoid that feeling.

When I have one surface for weeks, I think my body adapts better. I have to prevent it. I think that's the smartest decision.

Q. The momentum you built in the grass court season, can that carry over into the hard? Does enough time pass, it's different surfaces, conditions?

PAULA BADOSA: Look, I think the momentums come also with how are you mentally and the confidence. The confidence and mentally, it's there. I played matches. I played well. I'm feeling well.

Of course, it's a different surface. You have to change a little bit your game. But I think I'm adapting myself pretty well.

For me the most important is how I feel mentally and physically. In my career, it's always been like that.

Physically, I think it's responding pretty well. Mentally I'm looking forward to all the challenges I will have in this hard court swing. Let's see. I'm prepared for anything.

Q. Having missed all the time due to injury, when you come back to tour, how long does it take until you can feel that you're back to maybe where you were before?

PAULA BADOSA: Look, the thing that I was most surprised of myself that I didn't expect, an injury, you lose confidence. I thought, look, I left the tour, I come back,



everything will be okay.

When you feel that your body's not responding the way it was when you left, you're not that fast, your eyes don't read the game that fast, and you see the top players that have played for the year and you didn't, sometimes you're a little bit more lost. You lose a little bit of confidence. I didn't expect that because normally when you lose confidence is when you lose matches, not without playing. I felt in that moment my confidence went down. So for me was tough for me to build that again.

Also my physical wasn't the same. I was nine months in a couch, then I had to play high-level tennis. It took me some time to adapt to that rhythm and that competition level. That's the thing that I struggled the most at the beginning of the year.

Q. Sounds like you feel good now mentally and physically.

PAULA BADOSA: Yeah, I'm okay now (smiling).

Q. Are you somebody that checks, do you know who you're playing?

PAULA BADOSA: Yeah, of course I know. First round?

Q. Yes.

PAULA BADOSA: Yes.

Q. What do you make of that match? You've never played each other before.

PAULA BADOSA: Look, I can say since the beginning of the year, I've been having tough draws. I like them. It's a challenge. She's a great player. I never faced her.

At the beginning I don't really know what to expect. Only maybe a few games to adapt. That always happens when you face a player for the first time.

But she's a good player. It's going to be a tough match. I like these kind of challenges to play against these kind of players. I'm looking forward to it.

Q. Coming to D.C. specifically, how excited are you to be in America's capital? What have you heard about this tournament that you're most excited for?

PAULA BADOSA: Yeah, it's been really nice. Today is the first day that qualifying started. You see the fans, the crowd. I think they make a great energy here. It was really fun to have them.

I heard before the tournament was very cool from other players. They told me it was very humid also, but I like it. I'm adapting on that.

It's nice. I always like the tournaments in U.S. I really enjoy them. I think they bring a big energy. I think that's very important, especially for me as a player. I love it.

I'm looking forward to playing here in the capital for the first time.

Q. Do you see this specifically as an opportunity for you to springboard, get rolling more for yourself for the US Open?

PAULA BADOSA: Yeah, tournaments before the slam, especially these tournaments that are great, high-level tournaments, the field here is so high, so many top-10 players, so many good players here. I'm really looking forward to play as many matches as possible and get ready for the U.S. swing.

Q. How do you manage your emotions and mental health around social media? You have a major following. A lot of players have spoken about you're also putting yourself up to abuse and criticism.

PAULA BADOSA: How I manage social media?

Q. Yes.

PAULA BADOSA: Look, when I came to the tour at the beginning, I was younger and I couldn't understand that because I was, like, why all of a sudden people is judging me, why all this. I was taking it personally.

After now, it's been four years already with that. I know maybe I'm a case that something I do, people talk about it, all these kind of things. You have maybe more pressure, expectations.

But I learned how to deal with it. I just pay attention on the positive of it. My people around me is the most important. I care about their opinion.

Social media, it has to be there. It's part of our job. I don't pay much attention because if I paid, imagine. I have my professional life, but I also have the personal that they talk about. If I had to pay attention to that, I wouldn't sleep (smiling).

In my case, I just listen to my people, the people that I care, that I love, that know me and can judge me. The rest don't even know me, so it's not a problem for me.

Q. First time here at the tournament. You have business to tend to. Are you able to enjoy the city?

PAULA BADOSA: I did. I did a few days ago. I went to visit some monuments, the White House. For the first time I saw a little bit the city center. It's really nice. Really nice city. Very calm.

Yeah, it's nice sometimes to disconnect a bit. I'll try to do this today and tomorrow that I will have some time in the afternoon. Disconnect, then prepare for Monday.

Q. You were one star of the first season of Breakpoint, the Netflix show. It got canceled. What do you think of it not continuing? What do you think it could have done better?

PAULA BADOSA: Look, I experienced it as a main character there. I mean, I think they filmed entire year for us. Personally, they filmed me the entire year. They put like such a big things of just like me in a tennis match. In a tennis match everybody saw me already, so it's not even surprising.

I missed a bit that they didn't bring out the personal stuff or the things that I did so many cool stuff outside court, off court, that they could bring. I think it would be very inspiring for kid to see and everything.

Maybe that I missed it a bit. Maybe that's the reason that it didn't work out the way that they were expecting. At the end, when I saw the episodes, it was just like tennis matches and our voice talking through the match. I think that it's not very surprising, it's nothing new.

Maybe I think as players what we missed is that they could bring up more the off-court things, the things that you don't usually see from us.

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