

Mubadala Citi DC Open

Tuesday, July 30, 2024

Washington D.C.

Victoria Azarenka

Press Conference



V. AZARENKA/H. Baptiste

7-6, 7-6

THE MODERATOR: Vika, thoughts on the match tonight...

VICTORIA AZARENKA: Pretty tricky match, I will say. I think it was hard for me to expect kind of a high level of tennis today after having a break and kind of coming off from injury, not really having too much time on the practice court.

But I feel like I fought really hard today. I think that actually in the tiebreaks, in the important moments, I really executed well and did what I wanted to do. I'm very happy with that aspect, that when it did count, I really was able to step up my level.

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. As far as that being your first match after having opted out of Wimbledon, you weren't eased into things. What is it like for that type of match to be the first one after recovering from injury?

VICTORIA AZARENKA: Yeah, for sure. Especially Haley had already two matches here, so she was kind of a little bit more used to the conditions, I would say.

I think what I'm happy about is that my mindset was not coming into the match and playing a perfect match. I knew it was going to be some ups and downs, I would have to adjust in some moments. I also know she's a very talented player.

She served really well. She's able to generate pace and speed quite quickly with, like, a (indiscernible) power, I would say. She didn't give me much of the rhythm today, as well.

But yeah, I think that my mindset was the key today for the victory.

Q. You said something right after the match about

how usually you try to get your own towel, but today you had to let the ball boy get it. How tiring was today's match?

VICTORIA AZARENKA: How tiring?

Q. Yes.

VICTORIA AZARENKA: Pretty tiring, for sure. As I said, I didn't have too much time even in practice on the court. I've been trying to pace myself after the injury. I wasn't sure if I'm going to be ready at all. Like middle of last week I was, How in the world am I going to play in Washington? I have no idea.

This was my first time actually playing two sets. Even in practice I still wasn't able to pick up that much tennis. Definitely it was kind of getting back into that match swing. I've practiced a lot, hours of fitness and stuff. But the matches are different.

It was good for me to kind of also test myself, test my shoulder today. It went well, so I'm pretty happy with that.

Q. Was there a point during the match where you felt comfortable and back in the flow of things?

VICTORIA AZARENKA: No. I wish I would say yes, but no (smiling).

Q. What do you feel that lets you know you're not 100% comfortable?

VICTORIA AZARENKA: Yeah, I mean, I think after a break, you have those hesitations, you have some of those doubts. Sometimes the quicker decision making is not as natural after not playing for a while. I think combination of those things.

I felt like I knew what I wanted to do, and execution was a little bit on and off. It's something that I need to clean up a little bit. The more matches I play, the better I believe it's going to be.

Q. How does a match like this maybe set you up



potentially for a good week? And on a lighter note, I understand you have a celebration. It's your birthday.

VICTORIA AZARENKA: Yeah.

Q. How will you take advantage of that?

VICTORIA AZARENKA: Well, I don't know if this match is going to set me up. I feel like nothing is really guaranteed.

I would say it's a good start. I feel like if I can manage to elevate my game in the important moments, those are the things that are important, those are the things that turn matches. With that I'm happy.

But I feel like this week I want to get as many matches as I can, as much practice as I can, and to execute the things I've been working on the practice court in match play.

For my birthday, I don't know how I'm going to celebrate. I don't think too much about it actually.

Q. This part of the year is often some of your best tennis over the course of your whole career. How are you balancing those expectations for yourself and your fans and also dealing with the injury issue?

VICTORIA AZARENKA: Yeah, I think the injury kind of was a very tough thing for me to go through. I would say it was tough. Like right away when I made the decision, which I did the right decision not to play, I could have make it a lot worse, but then I felt like I tried to switch on. Okay, what I'm going to do to prepare for hard court season? How I'm going to be productive?

I felt like I kind of didn't let those emotions observe. I was really excited about Wimbledon, I was playing really well. I think it kind of hit me really hard like about 10 days ago where I felt really sad that I didn't play. Like the postpone emotions came out.

I feel like I'm trying to find my way through that where I had big expectation for Wimbledon, and then it was unfortunate where I had to withdraw. I think that could be a lesson that I can learn moving forward probably this part of the year and stuff.

Yeah, it's a discovering process for me right now, which is not comfortable or easy. I think it's a right path to understand expectations are always going to be there. I'm a perfectionist. I've achieved a lot in this sport. I always will expect the highest level from myself.

How I'm able to still have that desire, motivation and passion, not to overwhelm myself with the result, is not

easy. I think we all as players are battling. Some are better than others. I've done it throughout my career.

But I feel like I'm very conscious in this process right now. I hope it will benefit as some point.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports