

Western & Southern Open

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Cincinnati, Ohio, USA

Andy Murray

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. The last time we saw you on the regular tour was at Wimbledon. You were quite downbeat in that last press conference after a tough defeat by Shapovalov. Then you went to the Olympics. Seemed like you were more upbeat about things then. Then another setback. How are you feeling in general about your future prospects as you come into this American swing?

ANDY MURRAY: Yeah, again, obviously the Olympics was a great experience, but yeah, it was tough because, yeah, I obviously felt like I had built up some sort of momentum during Wimbledon. I was obviously very disappointed at how it ended, but then, yeah, like if I reflect on everything that went on in the buildup to Queen's and Wimbledon, you know, I couldn't really have expected much more than that.

I got back on the practice courts after a few days. Started preparing and, you know, got another good sort of 10, 12 days of practice in before the Olympics. Yeah, I had been having a little bit of pain in my quad during that period and decided when we were over in Tokyo to get it looked at, because it had kind of been persisting for a little while.

Then, yeah, I had a tear in my quad. I have never had any muscle injuries in my career, so I didn't really know what they felt like. So, yeah, it was like, yeah, it was a difficult one.

Then there was obviously a responsibility to Joe, as well. So, yeah, it was hard and frustrating again to have to miss, you know, the opportunity to play in another big event. Granted, I got the opportunity in doubles and were close to getting into the medal rounds.

Yeah, since then I have been back and practicing and building up. We were potentially going to go to Canada, but, you know, just felt like maybe needed to have a few more days of rehab to make sure the quad was really, you know, fine and recovered before starting to play again.

So got here nice and early on the Monday and have just been preparing since then. My future prospects are all

dependent really on how my body feels, to be honest. You know, I thought it was feeling pretty good during Wimbledon and in the buildup to the Olympics. Then obviously found a tear in my quad, so that slowed things down.

Again, here, yeah, I feel good again, but as I said earlier in the year, I can't say with any great certainty that I'm going to be feeling good for three, four months in a row.

Q. I'm just wondering what kind of goals are you able to set yourself for the end of year when you don't know week in, week out how your body is going to feel. What kind of goals can you set to say I want to keep going until the end of the year?

ANDY MURRAY: I think I need to set short-term goals, is what's really important just now, and, yeah, because, yeah, it's been very difficult to plan sort of medium and longer-term targets, because of, yeah, just various different issues that I have had this year.

So, yeah, I just try to focus on the short term. You know, I look at this week as a great opportunity for me to play on hard courts and conditions that I like against, you know, top players again. Yeah, when I look at this year, the matches that I have played kind of on the tour, you know, I have not played perfect but on the tournaments I played on the tour I lost to Rublev, Shapovalov, Berrettini, you know, and I lost to Gerasimov in Montpellier, but a few of the guys I've lost to have had top seasons, and I have just not been ready to win against them when I played against them.

Yeah, short-term goals is to be on the practice court with these guys as much as I can, hopefully get the chance to play matches, like I said, in these conditions, and, yeah, give all of my energy and efforts to the US Open and sort of reassess where my game and my body is at the end of that.

But I can't, yeah, I can't really look too far ahead right now. You know, I think like my team, you know, planning like my physical conditioning and my scheduling and everything, I think, you know, that can be their job to sort of plan those things out, but for me I just need to kind of like take things

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very much like each week at a time just now and give all my energy to each match and each event that I play and see where I'm at at the end of the US Open.

Q. I would like to ask you that Roger, Rafa, Novak are not playing in Cincinnati, if how does it change for you to playing a tournament without the big three? How does it change for the tour to not have them?

ANDY MURRAY: Yeah, I mean, look, I think for a lot of the players it gives -- well, it's a big opportunity for the players to win these sorts of events when those guys aren't playing. Quite a lot, feels like more recently there has been more events where, you know, at least a couple of them haven't been playing.

Again, it's a lot easier to win the tournament when only one of them is playing instead of all three of them. So it's an opportunity for a lot of those guys, you know, who are just behind in the rankings or, you know, haven't won these sorts of events before, gives them a bit more of an opportunity. Yeah, it's a different landscape, I think.

I mean, I have always pretty much always, it's felt anyway, when I come to these sorts of tournaments like Cincinnati and buildup to the US Open, for all of, almost all of my career those guys have been there and competing to win these events, so, yeah, things are changing unfortunately. My feeling is it's changing because guys are getting, their bodies are breaking down a little bit and getting injured rather than like the tennis sort of taking over them, which I think is naturally what has happened in the past.

Yeah, I'm hoping that, you know, all of them can get themselves physically fit, you know, and ready for the US Open, although by the sounds of things that's looking unlikely, and that's unfortunate because obviously Roger and Rafa also missed the US Open last year. Yeah, it would be a shame if they missed it again this year.

Q. Just wanted to get your thoughts on this tournament being back in Cincinnati after spending a year in New York, and also from the players' standpoint having fans back at the matches, what's the impact for the players?

ANDY MURRAY: Yeah, I mean, all the players I have spoken to have said that it's great. You know, last week there was, again, for most of the matches in Canada, you know, no one there, and that's come off the back of, like, playing the tournament in Washington, D.C., where, you know, there was crowds again.

Yeah, I think some of the players are finding that difficult, going from one week playing in a nice atmosphere with

people around and sort of having a relatively normal life and then going back to the bubbles and everything.

Selfishly, it's nice. This is like the first week where life kind of feels more normal again, but then in the back of your mind you're also looking at certain states and the cases and the situation in places like Florida, for example, which is, you know, a few hundred miles away from here where, you know, things are really not good for lots and lots of people.

Yeah, it's great to have fans back in the stands, had people watching my practice yesterday, for example, and that was nice, and it will be nice to play in front of big crowds and stuff. I'm really looking forward to that.

Then, yeah, the other side of it is that, you know, we are still in the middle of a pandemic and, you know, things are certainly not perfect in large parts of this country, as well. So it's a bit of a, yeah, odd feeling, I guess.

Q. You didn't gain direct entry to the US Open, but then you got in when Stan pulled out. I know it's minor, but was there any satisfaction of getting your own place again by right in a slam? Because it had been a while since that happened. Mats Wilander was saying last year he was quite critical of the wildcard thing.

ANDY MURRAY: Yeah, I mean, it was nice obviously to get in directly. Obviously that would be, yeah, it would be my goal to try and, you know, to try and be getting into all of these tournaments, you know, by right.

Then again, on the wildcards, each tournament has the opportunity to give wildcards to, you know, to whoever they choose to. This year I had wildcards into, well, I don't know if this is like the fourth or fifth tournament I had a wildcard into. I won two rounds at Wimbledon, won a round at Queen's, I won a round in Rotterdam. If I was getting blasted every single week and not winning matches at this level, you know, that to me is a different story, or if I'm showing up to tournaments where I'm injured or I'm not feeling good and I'm not able to compete properly, then, yeah, that's where I need to, you know, I would have to look at myself and go, Right, I shouldn't be doing that or taking that opportunity away from another player.

But, you know, if I think physically I'm in good health and the tournaments want to give me the opportunity and I'm still winning matches at this level, then, yeah, I mean, I don't have a problem taking the wildcards.

I have done a lot for a lot of these tournaments over the years. I feel I have played Cincinnati 10, 12 years. I think

in my career I have enjoyed playing here. It's a great event. Yeah, I'm very thankful they gave me the opportunity, but, yeah, hopefully, you know, I have done some good things for their event over the years, too.

But like I said, ultimately I would want to get into these tournaments on right, and that's why I want to be fit and healthy for a number of months in a row to give myself the opportunity to do that. Yeah.

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