

Western & Southern Open

Sunday, August 15, 2021

Cincinnati, Ohio, USA

Victoria Azarenka

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. How are you feeling as the tournament begins? Have you been able to start hitting on the courts, get used to the conditions?

VICTORIA AZARENKA: Well, I just actually came off the court. It was my first hit today here. Yeah, it was honestly a bit strange to have a bit of a chilly weather. Cincinnati usually it's really hot from what I remember. Yeah, it's been really hot and humid. Today I think it's the first time I wore the long sleeve to practice here.

I mean, I looked at the weather today and I was surprised. I had to make sure I'm in the right location checking the app.

Q. A few other players have said they thought the courts were playing slower than Montreal. Was that your experience?

VICTORIA AZARENKA: Than in Montreal? I think so. I think they're a bit more grippy, yeah, a bit slower. But I do feel like the ball is going through quite fast. Maybe the court does slow it down a bit.

Q. Coming out of Montreal, what did you take away from that week there?

VICTORIA AZARENKA: I felt that I played really competitive. I liked the way I was approaching my matches. After a break, to have a couple of pretty high-quality matches were important for me coming into the rest of the US Open swing.

A lot of positive things to take, a lot of things that I can still improve and work on, so a little bit of both. Overall it was a pretty good week that I definitely can learn from.

Q. At different points of the season there were moments of maybe frustration with where your body and game were at. Do you feel now you're rounding into form, moving in the right direction getting ready for New York?

VICTORIA AZARENKA: Well, I definitely feel a lot better with my body. Unfortunately right before I had a little freaky accident with twisting my ankle out of nowhere right before Montreal in Washington. Thankfully that was nothing serious and I could really move on from it very quickly.

I felt that in preparation to this tournament like my body was feeling better. I felt that I was able to regroup a little bit. It's been a bit of a hard season for me so far with, as you said, a little bit too many uncertainties and frustrations where I had to figure out certain things, how to manage them better.

I felt the break that I took was really needed for me. I feel more refreshed. I definitely feel a lot more happy on the court, which was really, really important. I felt that it was showing the way I was on the court in Montreal.

Q. The match against Sakkari felt like a turning point kind of match in the way you competed. Is that what you're talking about?

VICTORIA AZARENKA: Yeah, I mean, I think it's more from the outside, the focus is more on the result. For me at this point it's more of how I feel and how I approach the match. Even the match that I lost, I felt that my attitude was really positive. I thought that I was trying to find solutions.

There are things that didn't work out for me on that day, but the important part was that I was looking for it, I was very aware, very focused on trying to find solutions.

Those things for me were really important to feel again on the court.

Q. Andy Roddick was on Tennis Channel talking about how we talk about clay court specialists and grass court specialists, but never talk about hard court specialists. It was in a conversation with respect to you. The question was placed to the panel whether or not we're not talking about you enough. What is your reaction to that, how we see or don't see or value or don't players who excel on concrete?



VICTORIA AZARENKA: To be fair, I feel like those terms of clay court specialist and grass court specialist are a bit outdated. I don't think anybody expected Krejčíková to win the French Open or that she was a clay court specialist, at least to me. Or Ash also, I don't think that she has shown any big results before Wimbledon, and here we are, we have a champion.

I don't necessarily feel the same way of the specialists. I think at times there are players who are playing better. I think the tennis game is changing. I honestly don't feel that much of a specialist per surface because we've seen in that way quite few surprising winners of certain tournaments. I mean, not surprising, but the surface that they have won maybe events that are a bit more surprising than others.

Q. Would you want to go back to an era where there were specialists? People say the speeds have homogenized, no more serve-and-volleyers.

VICTORIA AZARENKA: I wasn't playing in the era where I would say that was really distinguished. I can't really say if I want to go back there.

I'm really not the person who thinks too much how it used to be, fantasizing about the future. My whole goal is to try to enjoy my life, what it is, really be in the moment and be present.

Those type of things, as fun they are sometimes to think about, I just don't really spend my time doing that.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports