

# Western & Southern Open

Wednesday, August 18, 2021

Cincinnati, Ohio, USA

## Ashleigh Barty

Press Conference



A. BARTY/H. Watson

6-4, 7-6

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

**Q. Can you just talk through the match and just how you felt out there? It seemed a little bit scratchy at times but able to close it out in the end.**

ASHLEIGH BARTY: Yeah, I think serve was always going to be a massive part of it from both of us. The court on Grandstand is pretty quick. It always feels a little bit different to the other courts here in Cincinnati for whatever reason. I think it was just going to take time to adjust to how the balls reacted to it.

Obviously Heather has been playing some really good stuff of late, and particularly here winning a couple matches through quallies and a first round. You know it's always going to be tough against someone who is familiar in those conditions.

Just had to allow myself some time just to get used to what was happening and kind of allow myself to play around a little bit and find what was going to be suitable in those conditions.

I mean, this is probably the first day we have had where it's been pure sunshine, a bit more like a typical Cincinnati as well. Practicing when it's been a bit more humid and heavy has been different. Just allowing myself some time to adjust and be patient with that was going to be important today.

**Q. When you have been practicing, I'm curious what your thoughts were kind of how the conditions were playing? Or is it, as you alluded to now, so different depending on what the weather is like on any given day?**

ASHLEIGH BARTY: Yeah, it is different. I mean, I'm not sure last year, obviously it was played in New York last year, but we have changed to the US Open balls this time around, so it's a different ball to typically what we've used

here in Cincy, and that's certainly taken some adjusting.

Yeah, I think obviously not playing here for a couple years, it takes just a little bit of extra time to kind of remember what kind of works and what doesn't and give yourself that time to adjust.

So I think practicing has been a little bit scratchy, but that's okay. You know, it's never going to be exactly how you want it and it's just about chipping away. I think today was one of those matches where I just had to find a way to give myself an opportunity to hopefully find a little bit better tomorrow and find that trust and that rhythm a bit more tomorrow.

**Q. Some of the finer points you were just talking about is conditions and balls and all that. Do you think people really grasp all the nuances and the fiddly little things that a player has to go through when they are in a match and that the general public don't appreciate all those little issues that might be relevant to a player? What do you think? Somebody, a fan or somebody in the public might just say, Well, big deal, they are playing with balls on a hard court, they should just get on with it.**

ASHLEIGH BARTY: Well, we should just get on with it (smiling). That's certainly the attitude is just these are the cards we have been dealt and the conditions we are playing in. So just play and get on with it.

Even though there are differences in every court, difference playing day to night, difference when the balls are older to when they are newer, obviously different balls here to what we have been using previously for years and years and years in playing here at Cincinnati, and I think it's probably a little bit difficult to see on television.

If you're in the stands, you can probably see a little bit more the way the ball on some courts will skid off the court. Other ones are quite high and bouncy and slow and grippy, and you can almost see the difference in the court surface live. As soon as you walk out onto a court, you can feel it on the foot whether it's gritty, whether it's slick or how it's going to play.

**ASAP** sports . . . when all is said, we're done.®

I think that's probably something that a lot of people don't see, and I think the best players in the world are able to make that adjustment over, you know, in a pretty quick time to feel comfortable.

Even though they may not feel 100% comfortable, they're able to make those adjustments and kind of find a foundation, a base level that's pretty damn good. That's a challenge every time you come to a different city, a different place, somewhere new where you're playing, is adjusting to those conditions and accepting that challenge as quickly as you can.

**Q. Believe me, I wasn't having a go at you. It was that maybe the public don't appreciate what all an individual player has to go through to produce a big result or a good win.**

ASHLEIGH BARTY: Yeah, but I think I love that analogy of just getting on with it, and that's completely taken in the right way. No, I promise you, I think a lot of that is accepting that this is the conditions that we are playing in.

Whether you're playing in New York when it's 95 degrees, humid as all get out, and you're playing in a day, it changes dramatically to when you're second night match. I think being able to adjust to those maybe the public doesn't see that, but I also guarantee you that there are people out there that do understand that.

I think as players, for us, it's about accepting it and hopefully those changes and those small adjustments make for some pretty good viewing on the telly or for those people at home.

**Q. What do you see as your job? What does what you do, what does it encompass from one thing right through to the other extreme? What do you see as your work, your job? I'm curious because of a comment that was made in another press conference the other day.**

ASHLEIGH BARTY: My job is to hit a yellow tennis ball inside some lines in as simple a form as that. I think a responsibility more than a job is to do it in the most authentic way that I can.

Everyone is unique. Everyone plays the sport differently. Everyone has different personalities. I think tennis is an extremely global sport, and we are essentially a big traveling family, traveling circus, however you want to put it, that you have all these different cultures and different people, different personalities coming together week in, week out, and moving from one spot to another.

I think the challenge is trying to do that the best you can individually, trying to do that the best you can. I think trying to play the sport and play the game in the right way has always been a massive pillar for me, a massive value that I try and do no matter where I am in the world. But in a very, very simple term, I get to play a game for a living and try and do that as best I can.

**Q. What are all the different aspects that come into your job? What would you say is all part of that job?**

ASHLEIGH BARTY: Well, I mean, it's quite a long list like it is for any other career. You know, you ask a teacher, a midwife, a nurse, they have a lot of different things that bring together what their job is.

I think for us we have the travel, we have the training, we have the unpredictability, we have media, your opponent on the other side of the court. There are so many different things that come and make tennis so unique and so enjoyable.

**Q. I was wondering if you could let us know how you feel from a physical standpoint after the fairly eventful summer you had, from Wimbledon onwards. Have you recovered completely? Do you feel 100% for this tournament and the US Open?**

ASHLEIGH BARTY: Yeah, I feel good. I feel like I'm ready to play. As an athlete, maybe you're never 100%, but I'm as close to it as you're ever going to get.

I feel comfortable and ready. I feel excited to be playing here in Cincinnati, and knowing that we're moving on to New York, one of the best tournaments and one of the best atmospheres in the world, I think that brings excitement. But I feel good, I feel ready, and certainly been a big year and we've still got a bit to go yet.

**Q. Looking ahead to facing Vika, a person you know very, very well, can you just talk about that matchup for us, especially in Cincinnati, given the way the courts are playing?**

ASHLEIGH BARTY: Yeah, Vika's one of the best competitors you'll ever come across. For me, one of my best mates on the tour. Every time we play each other, we have a way of bringing out a really good level.

I think obviously she's defending champion here, has won this tournament before, and these conditions has a kind of a first-ball, first-strike kind of favorable. I think it's going to be really tough for me to neutralize, tough to wrestle that momentum, but I have to try and do it as best I can,

bringing in that variety and taking the ball out of her hip pocket as often as I can.

I think she's extremely confident at the moment, she's been playing well, obviously loves these conditions, but it will be a good match no matter what. I think it will be a real test to kind of show where my level is at and we just go out there and enjoy it tomorrow and see how we go.

**Q. For you, if you want to table this question for another time, that's totally fine, as well, but curious what it's like for you to be halfway to a career Grand Slam? Knowing that you're an incredible hard court player, one of them is, you know, on home soil in Melbourne where you have done well, and another in the US where you have played well. I know you haven't processed Wimbledon but I had to ask. If you want to table it, that's fine.**

ASHLEIGH BARTY: Yeah, look, I hadn't even thought about it. It took me 25 years to get the first two, so let's hope it doesn't take another 25 to get the next two. We'll leave it at that (smiling).

FastScripts by ASAP Sports