

Western & Southern Open

Saturday, August 21, 2021

Cincinnati, Ohio, USA

Ashleigh Barty

Press Conference



A. BARTY/A. Kerber

6-2, 7-5

THE MODERATOR: Congratulations. You've reached your first final here at Western & Southern Open. Just talk us through your excitement over that and how the match went from your perspective.

ASHLEIGH BARTY: Yeah, I feel like it's been a really nice week of building momentum both kind of in the way I have been playing my matches, and obviously to be in another match playing for a title is really exciting, particularly here at Cincinnati. It's such a world-class event, an event that's been going on for years and years. To be able to be playing tomorrow in a final match is really cool.

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. What do you think the major difference was today between winning the match and losing the match against Angie?

ASHLEIGH BARTY: I think I did a pretty good job on my service games. I was able to serve well and get some cheap points off my first serve.

Angie is a hell of a returner, one of the best in the game, so I wanted to try and take that away from her as best I could today. I think being able to, in the end, go with her early on in that second set and kind of grapple the momentum back to get back to 3-All was a big point, and I think overall it was a pretty good match.

Q. Did you have to make an adjustment to be playing the first match of the day at 11:00?

ASHLEIGH BARTY: Oh, it's just on my schedule. You're scheduled to play, you warm up and do your normal routine. To me doesn't really matter what time of the day it is.

I'm typically a bit of an early bird anyway. I'm usually up in the mornings quite early, so it doesn't faze me.

Q. Can I just ask you about the way you're playing at the moment? Do you feel you can still take things to another level? If you were to look at a scale of 1 to 10 with 10 at the best, where would you place yourself at the moment?

ASHLEIGH BARTY: I am at the moment exactly where I am. There is no point rating my performance from today against previous matches. They are all unique, they are all different, and I think each match has different circumstances.

So I think it's impossible to compare myself to any other matches. Obviously you've got a different opponent as well. I feel like I'm playing well at the moment. We have been able to execute game plans well. I feel like I'm moving well, and I've got control of the ball. That's all I can ask of myself.

Q. Did the Wimbledon semi come into your mind at all going into this match today?

ASHLEIGH BARTY: All of my previous matches with Angie. Obviously we learn from them all. We've got a very close head-to-head. She's made me work for every single point, every single match that we have played.

Angie has got an incredible ability to raise her level when it matters most. She was able to do that early in the second set today, and I was happy I was able to get momentum back and find a way to kind of close it out on my terms.

Q. Just talking about that second set, you know, you had the overhead for 3-Love and things got kind of complicated from there. Can you talk about kind of the shifting sense of that second set and how you were able to get over the line at the end?

ASHLEIGH BARTY: Yeah, I didn't feel like I did a lot wrong. In the games at 2-Love and 2-1, I felt the overhead, the ball just kept coming and kept coming with the wind and I got a little bit stuck under it. Angie came up with some really good stuff and tough points through that period.

Even the same, at 2-All, I felt like I was able to set up points well and then missed kind of the execution with the last little bit. That was frustrating me, I think, because I knew that Angie was -- she was lifting and I needed to go with her, and not being able to execute the points when I had set them up the way that I wanted to was frustrating, but I think in the end, being able to get at that momentum back with the break straightaway, then it was a bit of a tug of war, again both being able to control the service games. I felt like I was able to build pressure on Angie's games, but we both did a good job of getting out of some tough holds late in that second set.

I think in the end, with the new balls, just being a little bit more aggressive and taking it on a bit more and just trusting myself to actually get after it, and in a way accept if I was going to miss I was going to miss in the right way. I think that in the end of the second set was big.

Q. Looking ahead to tomorrow, obviously you know Kaja really well, but in the event you play Jil, how well do you know her game? How much have you been tracking her progress through the event, and what would you expect there?

ASHLEIGH BARTY: I don't know Jil a lot. I have seen bits and pieces. I know she's got the ability to move and run and defend. She's got a great slice backhand, and she's got variety off her forehand. She can flatten it out if she wants to or she can flip it up and change the tempo of the match.

She had a great start to the year. I think she struggled with her body and a few injuries throughout the middle section, but she's got a hell of a game that's able to disrupt opponents.

I think if I do play Jil, it's a new challenge for me, a new challenge for her, and one I think we both look forward to.

Q. A nontennis question I have been asking a couple of the players. What do you do on long-haul flights? How do you manage the time? We know all too well about extreme long-haul flights, but do you sleep right through? Do you read? Do you watch movies? Do you take your own food? How do you handle a long haul?

ASHLEIGH BARTY: Usually watch a movie or two and try and sleep, that's about it. If I can't sleep, I'll watch a few more movies. I keep it pretty simple.

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