

Internazionali BNL d'Italia

Monday, 10 May 2021

Roma, Italia

Ashleigh Barty

Press Conference



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THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. In the past you have tended not to play so many events. You have scheduled quite smartly. I was wondering what this period has been like for you where it's been tournament after tournament, and you have gone deep in all of them. Physically and mentally how has that been for you?

ASHLEIGH BARTY: It's been exciting to be back. I think scheduling for probably the last four or five years of my career has always been something that I have tried to stick to. I like to commit to tournaments. I like to play those tournaments.

At times we have had periods where we have gone back to back in tournaments, but this stretch has certainly been pretty full on and really exciting. Been really nice just to play matches again. I think getting into the swing of things, used to playing week after week is important. Mentally and physically I feel good. It's just about now preparing as best that I can to play here in Rome and try and play well.

Q. I am writing about surfing. I think you're friends with Steph Gilmore. Wondering what your first memory is of her and given all the stuff that she's...

ASHLEIGH BARTY: Yeah, Steph's an incredible person, a genuine legend of Australian sport. I'm very lucky to be able to call her a friend. I know she was just surfing overnight at Margaret River at home, so I was watching her heats and watching her final. But she's a great girl. She's a great Aussie.

I think we relate to each other quite well in a sense. We've got a great sense of humor. She understands my sense of humor. She's pretty laid back and I really love that about her.

Q. Serena was just in here a little while ago and says she's had a very intense training block on clay back in the U.S., several weeks in France. It seemed straightforward, but what does that tell you? Do you think she's coming in with a renewed purpose into

Rome and especially Paris?

ASHLEIGH BARTY: I mean, her scheduling choice and her training choices are her choices. I can't sit here and comment on them. I have made my choices for my career, so I don't really know how to answer that question for you because it's not career and they are not my choices.

Q. Have you had a chance to practice yet, maybe get acclimated to different conditions in Rome in comparison to Madrid?

ASHLEIGH BARTY: No, no, not yet. We just arrived here into Rome yesterday afternoon. Had yesterday off. Just cruised around a little bit, and today just going through bits and pieces. We will hit a few balls tomorrow and work from there.

But not yet. Just being able to acclimatize to the beautiful weather. It's been bright sunshine. Certainly no complaints.

Q. The ATP yesterday released like a document stating they were going to ease up bubble restrictions. I want to get your opinion on that. I hear the WTA is still reviewing that type of information.

ASHLEIGH BARTY: Yeah, I'd heard that as well. I haven't seen the document. I haven't seen what they released, but I have heard whispers that they were going to relax their bubble and such.

But for me, I know they're chatting to our player council and chatting to everyone about those decisions, because I think each tournament we go to, each country we go to, they have different rules and regulations. I think for the WTA they have put in their rules and regulations which we abide by, and then for each tournament it's, you know, it's about keeping everyone safe, keeping everyone healthy and abiding by the rules to whatever place we are in and whatever city we are in.

I think for me it's more about doing the right thing for the right reasons and then knowing that we've got an opportunity to play tennis. I'm very grateful for that, so I think we need to continue to do the right things and keep everyone safe and healthy.

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Q. After Madrid, what did you do before you left there and when you got into Rome?

ASHLEIGH BARTY: We left the courts, we went down to the lobby and had a burger and a beer, and then we slept and we flew here. That was about it. Yeah, pretty crazy one. Just packed up our bags and off we went. Certainly nothing fancy from our point of view.

Q. What are you doing with the trophies you have been collecting along on the road?

ASHLEIGH BARTY: Oh, yeah, I mean, I'm very lucky to be in a position in the last few weeks where we have been playing for titles and it's been really exciting. Thankfully we are able to ship those home, which are a nice surprise on mum and dad's doorstep.

Q. You say you haven't trained here in Rome yet, but based on your last experience in 2019, how would you describe the differences between Madrid and Rome in terms of surface and style play of game?

ASHLEIGH BARTY: Yeah, they are very different conditions. Obviously in Madrid there is a little bit of altitude. The ball can be quite quick and flighty through the air. Here in Rome it can be quick as well. Typically the clay feels a little bit thicker. Obviously sea level changes that a little bit.

But each and every year the conditions are a bit different. Depends on the weather, as well. If it's warm, it's different to when it's cold or rainy. I think we just prepare as best we can for the conditions that we think we will play in, and then whatever those conditions are on the day that we play, we adapt and try and do the best we can.

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