

Internazionali BNL d'Italia

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Ashleigh Barty

Press Conference



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C. GAUFF/A. Barty

4-6, 1-2 [Ret.]

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. Sorry for the bad luck. Can you just explain what happened and maybe also why you still were playing despite the guys weren't playing on center court?

ASHLEIGH BARTY: The men weren't playing, did you say?

Q. No. The match was suspended while you were playing.

ASHLEIGH BARTY: Okay. I mean, obviously it was raining, has been raining all, most of the afternoon. I can't comment on why they weren't playing. Maybe their court was more wet. I'm not sure.

But obviously a tough one for us to finish a tournament here in Rome for the way that we had to. We had to pull out obviously.

Yeah, disappointing, no doubt. But it's important that I listen to my body and give it time to rest and recover and make sure that in a couple weeks' time we're 100% fit for Roland Garros.

Q. Is it the arm issue or is it the thigh issue?

ASHLEIGH BARTY: Arm issue.

Q. I'm sorry for you, for the problem you got. And also for the fact that, I mean, it's never nice to stop playing. I'd like to know, I had the impression that Novak Djokovic didn't want to play since it was rainy conditions, wet, and all these kind of things. Were you asked if you would have preferred to postpone the match, I mean, to not play? Or nobody raised the problem?

ASHLEIGH BARTY: Oh, I think the conditions were tough, without a doubt. Like you said, we were on and off a

couple of times. But, I mean, Coco and I, we were accepting of the situation, and it's unfortunate that I wasn't able to finish the match. It was important that I listen to my body and make sure that, know that I can be fit for Roland Garros.

But I can't comment on Novak. I mean, I haven't seen him. I haven't seen their court. I have been on the other side of the site for the last few hours preparing for my match and getting ready to play my match. So I can't comment on what he may or may not have said or may or may not have done.

Q. Do you think these wet conditions didn't help your muscular problem? I mean, sometimes when it's wet it's better not to have to play. So did you think before maybe I shouldn't, or it became worse and worse while you were playing?

ASHLEIGH BARTY: Yeah, it became worse while we were playing. So I think that's the challenging thing is to make the decision to stop. It's never nice. It's the thing that I hate the most is not being able to finish a tennis match.

But the pain was becoming too severe, so it was important that I listen to my body and of course try and do the right thing, knowing that we have a Grand Slam in two weeks' time.

Q. Tough luck. Just in terms of having to come on and come off, and I know the sleeve wasn't on your arm to start the match and then it came on, so where were you feeling it? Was it just like in maybe the heavy conditions kind of impacting it a little bit more as time went on in the serve? If you could just give a little detail as to how it was feeling.

ASHLEIGH BARTY: Yeah, the conditions are brutal, coming on and off. Obviously it was a little bit heavier today with the rain as well the balls were getting quite heavy. Yeah, I felt like I wasn't able to serve anywhere near 100%. It was kind of manufacturing a little bit.

But at the end, it came to a point where it wasn't management. It was getting worse. I think that's where it's important to understand my body and understand my injury. It's a pre-existing injury, an issue we have had troubles with before. So it's important to know that we

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know what the recovery looks like and not allow it to get to a stage where it becomes uncontrollable in a sense where we can't recover from it.

So I think it's important to understand that. Yeah, as tough as it is -- yeah, I mean, I hate withdrawing. I mean, I hate pulling out of a match halfway through. It's not in my makeup, not what I like to do, but it was really important today that I listen to what my body was telling me to make sure that in a couple weeks' time we're good to go.

Q. I know that it's so close since the match was over, but, you know, I mean, at this point is it just a matter of leaving the racquets in the bag for a little bit? Obviously it will be your first week off in quite a long time. Going forward in terms of the recovery and everything, what are you looking to do to get your body ready for Paris?

ASHLEIGH BARTY: Yeah, it needs time to recover, and that means a little bit of time with no racquets, but it's also important to kind of increase the load gradually and being able to use a training week to get the right load into it and it's really important without tipping it over the edge.

I'm confident in my team that we know how to manage this injury, and we just need to do the right things now and make the right decisions now to know that in a couple weeks it will be fine.

Q. I don't want to belabor this at all. I'm just wondering, is there a firm diagnosis of the injury? You said you have dealt with it before. When was the first time you experienced this?

ASHLEIGH BARTY: Yeah, it's something I have had to manage over my career. I mean, it's an injury that began when I was quite young, when I was 15 or 16 years old.

Yeah, I mean, it just pops up every now and again. I think the conditions today certainly didn't help that, but I mean, we're confident we know how to manage it, so we just kind of move on and know that the right decision was made today, as hard as it is, but we know that in a couple weeks we'll be good.

Q. I'm just wondering, is there a name to the injury? Is it a muscle spasm, a tear, anything?

ASHLEIGH BARTY: Yeah, just my right arm.

Q. Just wondering what you made of Coco's game? I think it was the first time you were playing her. Anything specific stand out?

ASHLEIGH BARTY: Yeah, she's got a great game. Obviously she's had a great week. Disappointing not to be able to finish the match out with her.

She's certainly got an exciting future. I enjoyed the little time that we did have out there. Obviously challenging conditions and a challenging outcome for me.

But, yeah, she takes the game on. She's aggressive, she's fearless, and I think this is going to be the first of many big tournaments for her. Hopefully she's able to continue to play well and kind of do her thing.

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