

BNP Paribas Open

Sunday, October 10, 2021

Victoria Azarenka

Press Conference



V. AZARENKA/P. Kvitova

7-5, 6-4

THE MODERATOR: Vika, could you walk us through the match, how you performed tonight.

VICTORIA AZARENKA: I think it was a good match. It was very close, which I knew it was going to be, going to be kind of hard to catch rhythm. It was a lot of firsts, whoever gets the opportunity to kind of move the ball first, be aggressive. I wasn't expecting too many big rallies.

But, yeah, I thought it was good. I'm happy with the way I closed out the both sets. I think those were important moments. I took those opportunities into my own hands.

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. Petra in the second set seemed like she was getting on a roll. What were you telling yourself? What was the key in terms of closing it out so cleanly?

VICTORIA AZARENKA: It was important to just stay there, really take my opportunities, not to let her. If she gets in the groove in couple points, not to kind of let her extend that streak, if you want to call it that.

I was trying to still create opportunities for myself, be more aggressive, and honestly just believing also that what I'm doing is right and see how I can execute that. So intention was good. Execution followed after.

Q. Next match you'll play Aliaksandra Sasnovich. What do you expect from that match?

VICTORIA AZARENKA: I think it will be interesting match. It's not that often that I get to play somebody from my country, except Aryna. We've been meeting quite a few times (smiling).

But it's awesome to see. First of all, I'm very happy that Sascha has progressed into the fourth round. She had a little bit I think less good results lately, so it's an awesome achievement for her.

It's going to be an interesting match. I think she's playing very freely, nothing to lose. There's always a bit of danger in opponents like that. But I'm honestly looking forward. I know everybody say that they want to focus on themselves, but I am really here to focus on how I can improve my game.

I think it takes sometimes really time to understand that maybe there are some things that needs to be changed. This is where I am. I want to see how I can implement those changes and work forward.

Q. What does it feel like to play this fall classic edition of Indian Wells? Does it feel different? What is the vibe?

VICTORIA AZARENKA: It's been such a crazy like almost two years now that it not necessarily feels like very weird. I'm just honestly very glad that we do have a tournament.

Indian Wells, it feels like it's been forever ago here. I said that earlier on the court. I think sometimes when you play every year same tournament, you kind of take it for granted. So I really felt grateful coming here again and kind of seeing how beautiful this place is, how well-organized the tournament is.

Yeah, I missed that.

Q. Today is World Mental Health Day. How has your conception of the importance of mental health, tools and tricks that you use, how has that evolved?

VICTORIA AZARENKA: Well, I think the world is changing their perception of what mental health is. We have that empathy when we see somebody who is physically hurt and you can go, Oh, and feel a certain emotion, empathic emotion towards somebody.

Mental health is something that is invisible. I think it is as strong, as powerful as any physical health. Hopefully there will be a lot more tools out there how to cope with this, how to deal with this. Yeah, I mean, awareness is really, really important.

I think in sports mental health can be a bit dangerous. I spoke about it last year where people try to bring psychologists in and stuff only for performance-based. Somebody from maybe outside of your team can influence that for you to be a better player.

I think that mental health is everything there is. It's how well you feel not necessarily on the court, but off the court. To prepare young people now with all the social media, how are they able to sustain their balance, their inner balance with themselves. I think that's super important.

In the end of the day we're all people, have emotions. No matter how much someone is trying to play a certain role or wear a certain mask, it's all very visible to a good eye.

I think it's an important conversation. I hope this conversation continues. I hope there's a lot more tools and people don't use that in self-promoting way as well. I think that's very important.

Yeah, I think the more empathetic we can be towards each other, understand. I read this quote, posted it yesterday: If we would fight so hard to understand rather than be right, I think that would make a big difference in the world.

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