

# BNP Paribas Open

Tuesday, October 12, 2021

## Victoria Azarenka

Press Conference



V. AZARENKA/A. Sasnovich

6-3, 6-4

THE MODERATOR: Why don't you just walk us through your match.

VICTORIA AZARENKA: I thought it was a pretty solid performance overall. I felt that I was in control most of the times, which was kind of my goal today.

I think that the end I rushed a little bit to finish the match on my serve. The next game I really played well. I think that was a quick turnaround so I'm happy with that.

But overall pretty solid performance.

THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

**Q. You played the big moments today well. Given where you are, coming back over the last several years, how confident are you with your level with having won this event in the past?**

VICTORIA AZARENKA: Honestly I don't think that any kind of past victories does have any impact on it. The only way I can see as benefit is the experience that you kind of build from there.

I'm especially, like, this last couple weeks, month, I'm working more, kind of changing a bit my game, adding a little bit new things. That is something that kind of doesn't help me to look back and kind of rely on those previous years.

I don't really think about that that much.

**Q. You're saying you're trying out new things. What are some of those new things and how long does it take to get fully comfortable with changes normally?**

VICTORIA AZARENKA: I don't think there is an answer. I wish there was one, that you can say, Okay, it's going to take me this amount of time. I think it really takes as much time as it will take. The more I will think how long is it

going to take me the longer the process is going to go on.

Right now I'm just focusing on one match at a time. I think it took awhile for me to understand maybe I need to implement some new changes in my game because I've been pretty successful with my game over the years.

I'm trying to be a little bit more aggressive. The game is faster. There's not that many rallies. Trying to use that into my advantage as well.

**Q. Do you think maybe you got a bit complacent, you went for the same thing for an extended period? I'm not saying you didn't want to learn anything but you just felt you were quite satisfied with where your game was.**

VICTORIA AZARENKA: Well, I don't necessarily say it's satisfying. It's kind of looking at my ratio of winning is pretty high. When something works as a percentage, if you look at the data, it's kind of hard to be like, Okay, well, no, maybe I need to change my game, even though most of the times it does work.

It's not more about being complacent, it's about do I want to change those kind of 10% where I need a little bit extra. I think it takes a certain understanding. I think when you are successful and you've been to the highest of the top, sometimes the ego is a bit hard to over-talk.

I think for me I feel like it's just a natural process of awareness that comes together.

**Q. Sasnovich after her last match when she was asked about you kind of talked a bit about your tactical acuity. When she has to go play a player she'll pull up the video of you playing that player. Do you agree with that first off? Do you feel that's something that's come naturally to you or something that has evolved?**

VICTORIA AZARENKA: Well, that's really nice of her to say. I'm honored to hear that. Especially when somebody from my country is kind of looking up to me, it's really awesome, makes me feel good.

But in terms of identifying, I think that's really something that I'm able to do real well. I think kind of the difficulty for me is that I create those difficulties for myself where I'm not being rational and I'm trying to kind of be stubborn, put the game plan that I want to do, kind of prove to myself that I can do it even though maybe it's not the right way. I have been many times making my life more difficult than I should do.

In terms of seeing the player, identifying the player, always been pretty good with that. In terms of coaching, I don't necessarily would say that I've learned that much from coaching in terms of tactical standpoint.

Yeah, I watched a lot of tennis before. I think it does in a way come natural to me, too, to see what they are. But one thing is analyzing that, and the second thing is actually doing it. Those two things, when they come together, that's a skill.

**Q. In terms of the decision makers out there, who would you say are the great ones that you have faced and how do you work on that skill?**

VICTORIA AZARENKA: That's a good question. Decision makers?

I would say that Kim Clijsters was one. I mean, I haven't really faced her in her last comeback, but the comeback before that when I played some matches against her, it was pretty challenging because she was able to kind of switch some of the momentums, big points. Looked like she was very sure of what she was doing. I will definitely say her as one player.

I would say Serena, obviously, also knows how to shift momentums, what to do in the big points. I think it all comes down to I wouldn't say fearlessness, but more like braveness. At this point when you're at the top level, nobody's going to give you anything. It matters how much you want it, how much you're going to take it in your own hands. I think that is the ability that helps you with the decision making.

**Q. Do you feel you're more brave fresh on the tour, nothing to lose...**

VICTORIA AZARENKA: Would you speak up. I have a hard time hearing you.

**Q. Do you think you're more brave or courageous early on in your career or later on when you have experience?**

VICTORIA AZARENKA: I think it's a different way you can

look at it. I think when you just come on the tour, when you have nothing to lose, it's kind of a short-lived fearlessness before it comes into pressure where you have to repeat that over and over again.

Then experience, when you are experienced, you sometimes can overthink. Sometimes you can just rely on things that have worked in the past, kind of use that as your own tool.

At any point I think it's not easy. I think it's the willingness of going through it. I always enjoyed playing under pressure because that gave me a certain adrenaline of kind of going more forward, rising to the occasion. I always enjoyed that.

In terms of when you come on the tour, fearlessness, I've had that feeling when you play against players who have nothing to lose, they are different players. To do that consistently, it's something that doesn't just happen. You still need experience, being able to repeat that over and over again.

**Q. You are a strong woman. When you are looking towards a change, does it typically come from you, telling your team, or do they bring feedback to you? What is one of the best decisions you've made in your career?**

VICTORIA AZARENKA: Best decisions was to have my son, for sure. My best decision ever.

In terms of, as you mentioned, very strong woman, for somebody to convince me into something, it's a pretty challenging achievement. Unless I want to change and I actually see the point of it, it will be hard.

But I think my experience on tour kind of gives me also that more open-mindedness to kind of see a bigger picture. I can hear that this may be a good idea, this can be a good idea. But until I come to the point where, yes, this is something that needs to happen, it's tough to kind of go over that hump.

It took me a little bit of time, not much, I wouldn't say that much. Yeah, I'm looking forward to it. It's something that actually makes me more motivated than just going out there competing. It's something that I have to look forward to, kind of structure how I can see improvement, which comes from experience. I don't think I was able to do that much when I was younger.

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