

Grampians Trophy

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Melbourne, Victoria, Australia

Heather Watson

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Questions, please.

Q. You came out of the hotel quarantine on Friday evening and went straight to practice on Rod Laver. Talk about how that practice went and how you're feeling since last week now that you've hit the courts.

HEATHER WATSON: Yeah, I was super excited to practice as soon as we got out of quarantine, and my coach and I both thought it would be the best thing to do, considering we had been in that room for 15 days. So, yeah, we really enjoyed it and we got a bit lucky, actually, because we accidentally got dropped off here at the main site when we were supposed to be dropped off at the NTC to practice there, and it was like 1 a.m., so we were like we are here now. We might as well hit on Rod Laver.

Q. What have you done since you got out of quarantine? Things have been tough, but have you had a chance to explore?

HEATHER WATSON: No, we haven't had any time to explore because it's all catch-up, really, so we have been at the club every day from breakfast until dinner and practicing as much as we can. We managed to get two days of three hours on the practice court and then today the same thing. So just trying to prepare as best as we can for the first match, which is tomorrow.

Q. How are you feeling going into that?

HEATHER WATSON: It's obviously unusual circumstances, so I'm just, it will be interesting to see how my body is tomorrow, just see how it goes, but I'm not really putting a lot of pressure on myself for this next tournament. And, yeah, like I said, it's a really unique situation, so I've just got to sort of play it by ear, play it day by day.

Q. Aside from that, are you excited to be back in Melbourne, and excited leading into the AO?

HEATHER WATSON: Yeah, absolutely, I love Melbourne. This swing of tournaments is probably my favorite swing of the year, up there with the grass court season, of course. I love Melbourne. I always say every

time I'm here, I could easily live here, just the life-style, the city, how popular sport is here, it's just, it's a perfect fit for me.

Q. In terms of your experience for the two weeks, at what point did it just kind of settle in and you were able to just kind of go through the quarantine and get as prepped and mentally prepared to get out as you possibly could?

HEATHER WATSON: Well, it obviously took us by surprise. I think every player didn't realize or most, the majority didn't realize this would, that would be the case, that we would be in a hard quarantine for two weeks. Anyway, so when we did find that out, I think it was maybe the third or fourth day, I was sure we would stay for the 14 days and we wouldn't be let out because I remember at home when I was younger I used to watch the, these like Australian border control programs on TV and they were always savage, so I knew that we were in there for the 14 days. So I accepted that pretty quickly.

It was definitely tough. I wouldn't say there was anything fun or easy about it. I just tried every day to be as positive as I could. I tried to exercise every day, which I did manage to do, bar day number 10, which was a killer for me. Yeah, I think the thing I just, now, after coming out, I just appreciate all the small things, like fresh air, like space, things that people, you don't usually think of. But now when I'm sitting in the car even if it's a bit cold outside I have to have the windows open because I just feel like a bit claustrophobic. So the last few days we have been so happy and I think that's just because we're just appreciating all the little things and enjoying just life.

Q. Has there been anything that you've been able to do in the last three days, other than being at the courts, that you wouldn't necessarily be able to do if you were back in London?

HEATHER WATSON: Honestly, no, we haven't. We have only been out, I think, three days, so we have had to just practice first thing and last thing in the day. Take care of my body because I'm sore in a lot of places. So, yeah, just been doing that and trying to prepare as best as I can for my match tomorrow.

But in the next few weeks or so I will really enjoy living a normal life here.



Q. It's not a bad city for that.

HEATHER WATSON: No, exactly.

Q. As you said, you've been working a lot, doing a lot of practices and doing a lot of fitness work to get ready for this week and obviously for the AO. What exactly are you looking for the most in terms of what you think you might have lost in those 14 days that you're trying to kind of catch up with as quickly as possible?

HEATHER WATSON: Well, doing fitness every day has definitely helped me maintain it to some extent. Obviously I've lost some because I didn't have a gym in my room. But I've managed to keep up my cardio, which was good, and helped so much coming out. It's just all those small muscles that you use playing tennis, it's such a lopsided sport, so for me in particular my forearm and wrist is pretty sore.

Also the hard skin on my hands and feet have gone down, so more likely to get blisters, so my feet have been sore as well, which are things I usually never experience. So, yeah, just looking after those.

Q. What is the challenge, then, for you and your team in terms of wanting to obviously hit the courts, hit as many balls, do all that sort of stuff, while at the same time protecting the body, being concerned about blisters and things that, yeah, where overuse could exacerbate a problem?

HEATHER WATSON: Yeah, that's been really important for us. We have been -- it's hard to find that balance, getting that right, because we just want to practice as much as possible, but at the same time not get injured before I even play the tournament or something that could jeopardize the Australian Open.

So we're thinking long-term for the Australian Open and, like I said, not putting any pressure on my match tomorrow.

Q. In terms of your pre-season and your preparation for all this, can you just kind of give me the rundown of what that was like, was it any different than your pre-seasons and preps in the past? And then also just given all that and going into the hard quarantine, do your expectations or anything or the pressure change at all for the AO or does it remain the same for you?

HEATHER WATSON: Well, my preparations, I did my pre-season in London, which I never ever usually do. I'm always in Florida. But the only reason I didn't do it in Florida was because we weren't allowed to enter the country there.

I've got to say, there's a reason why I choose to do it in Florida. It wasn't fun being indoors all day every day, in the cold, and it's dark, you never see any sunlight. So, yeah, that wasn't ideal and not what I wanted to do. But that being said, I had a really good pre-season. I'm stronger than I've ever been before. I have been working really hard with my fitness coach, Charlie, so coming into this new year I was feeling super fit and strong. Quarantine has pushed that back a bit so now I'm trying to make up for that again.

In terms of pressure, I mean, I always put pressure on myself, so I would say it's different now. Like I said before, I'm thinking more long-term towards the Australian Open and just taking it day by day and see how I go.

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